



## 10 RECOMMENDATIONS for the RESPONSIBLE & JUDICIOUS USE OF ANTIBIOTICS

### LIVESTOCK & HORSES

Antibiotics are essential medicines for Australian livestock and horses. They are used to treat and prevent infections that cause distress and suffering in our animals, assist Australian farmers to achieve and maintain high animal welfare standards, and enable safe and sustainable food production.

However, when antibiotics are used inappropriately, bacteria can develop resistance to those antibiotics, and common infections in both humans and animals can become extremely difficult to treat, and sometimes life-threatening.

It is critical that these important medicines are used carefully and responsibly, to minimise the development of bacterial resistance and make sure that these important medicines remain effective in the future.

Animal Medicines Australia (AMA) and the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) support the responsible and judicious use of all veterinary medicines. These tips will help **you** to use antibiotics responsibly and safely.



**Antibiotics are prescribed by your veterinarian only when needed and should only be used under the direct guidance of your veterinarian.**

- There are many causes of infection and illness, and the inappropriate use of antibiotics will only prolong (or worsen) the animal's suffering.
- When individual animals within a herd or flock are sick, many more animals may be at risk of infection. In some situations, it may be appropriate to treat animals who are not obviously sick to prevent further spread of the disease.



**Follow the directions of your vet and the instructions on the product label, regarding the dose and frequency of treatment of your animals.**

- For antibiotics to be effective, the right type of antibiotic must be used, in the right amount and in the right way, for the right length of time. Your vet will consider these factors when selecting which antibiotic to use.
- Make sure that you complete the entire course of treatment. Infections may not be completely resolved, even when there are outward signs of improvement.



**Observe all withholding periods and export slaughter intervals as specified on the product label, as advised by your veterinarian or as advised by the product manufacturer.**

- Keep accurate and complete animal health records to enable treated individuals to be identified and separated from untreated animals if required.
- Some medicines cannot be used in production animals, but may be used for pet animals of the same species (eg: pet sheep) - check with the prescribing veterinarian.



**Whenever possible, use only Australian Pesticides & Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) registered animal medicines for production animals.**

- If you do not use APVMA-registered products, there is a risk that the product may contain unregistered or unidentified ingredients, which may reduce the effectiveness of the medicine and potentially affect the production value of the treated animals.
- In some cases, there may not be an APVMA-registered antibiotic for that particular animal species or infection. In this situation, veterinarians are legally permitted to prescribe other antibiotics.



**Contact your vet if there is no improvement within the expected period, or if the infection appears to be spreading to other animals.**

- Do not stop giving the antibiotic, or change the dose, without consulting your vet.



**Your vet may suggest diagnostic tests to confirm the cause of the infection and to identify which antibiotic will be most effective.**

- These tests are especially important if the animal has already been treated with an antibiotic and the infection has not resolved.
- Diagnostic tests will help the animal to recover faster, with fewer complications, and avoid unnecessary treatment with ineffective medicines.



**Do not give antibiotics prescribed for one animal to another (even if they are the same species and their illnesses look similar), and never give human antibiotics to an animal.**

- The medication could be inappropriate for the current condition, it could be expired and no longer effective (or even dangerous) and individual animals can have unpredictable allergic reactions that may be life-threatening.
- Some human medicines are toxic to animals, even in tiny doses.



**Wear disposable gloves when treating animals. Wash your hands and thoroughly clean all equipment after dispensing medication to reduce the spread of infection.**

- This is especially important after direct contact with an infection site (for example, after treating a cow with mastitis). Bacteria are easily transferred between animals and just washing your hands may not be sufficient to prevent the spread of the infection to other animals.
- Good hygiene practices, such as disinfecting footwear and cleaning equipment between each herd/flock, will reduce the spread of infections between groups of animals.



**Always store antibiotics out of reach of children and animals, and strictly follow the label instructions for storage conditions.**

- Read the product label and follow all directions for the safe storage and handling of the product, as well as the disposal of unused product and packaging.
- Ensure that appropriate workplace training and on-farm procedures are in place to safely manage the storage and use of all animal medicines.



**Keep your livestock healthy. Healthy livestock have a better quality of life, are more productive and less likely to develop bacterial infections that require antibiotic treatment.**

- Use integrated disease control programmes to manage the health of your livestock, including biosecurity practices, hygiene and sanitation, vaccinations, parasite and pest control, quality nutrition and pasture management, housing conditions, and good animal welfare standards.



#### REMEMBER:

**If you have ANY questions, talk to your vet. Your vet is a highly trained expert and the best source of advice regarding the health of your livestock.**



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