

Quality Care Matters

A Column about Beef & Dairy Animal Care



Talk to Your Veterinarian About Residue Avoidance

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You talk to your veterinarian about many things — new vaccines, results of the herd check and even the score of the weekend basketball game. But when did you last ask your veterinarian about drug residue avoidance?

According to research from Penn State, it's a conversation that should be added to your next scheduled herd check.

- Nearly 80 percent of producers do not have written treatment protocols.
- Half of dairies do not always keep written treatment records.
- More than 20 percent of producers administer extra-label medication without always having written orders or guidelines from their veterinarian.

What's at Stake?

There's a lot at stake for the industry's future and our ability to continue using pharmaceuticals to ensure healthy animals. We have the safest food supply in the world and any meat flagged for a residue is removed from the food supply. Even still, news about residues erodes public confidence in the ability of producers to correctly utilize animal health products.

Dairy cows are 20 times more likely than beef cows and 400 times more likely than feedlot cattle to be flagged for a carcass residue. These numbers are unacceptable and a reason to assess practices potentially contributing to the problem.

Where Do Residues Come From?

According to residues reported by the Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) from 2009, there are several compounds that consistently are to blame for meat residue violations in cull dairy cows.

Penicillin is the leading cause of the violative carcass residues found in cull dairy cows and is responsible for nearly 30 percent of residues reported in 2009. Residues from penicillin typically occur in situations where the herd veterinarian is not involved in treatment decisions and the drug is used in an extra-label fashion. Penicillin is only labeled for the treatment of pneumonia or shipping fever. Any other usage must be done under veterinary guidance. The veterinarian is responsible for prescribing the treatment dosage and protocol as well as ensuring an extended withholding time is in place before the cow could be slaughtered and enter the food supply.

Other leading causes include flunixin and sulfadimethoxine. Flunixin residue violations are typically the result of improper administration. The drug is only labeled to be administered intravenously (IV) and any other method of administration, such as intramuscular, will have a dramatic effect on the withholding time.

Sulfadimethoxine can occur when a drug is used extra-label or when a formulation not labeled for use in dairy cattle is administered. Desfuroylceftiofur residues can be the result of extra-label use without veterinary oversight or confusion around the different ceftiofur compounds and how the meat and milk withholding times differ.

What Can Be Done?

In most cases, residues can be attributed to mistakes that are easily avoidable with proper involvement by the herd veterinarian and routine training of farm staff and family members. There are several easy steps to follow.

Step 1. Maintain a valid veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR).

Every dairy producer should work with a herd veterinarian who makes timely visits to the dairy and is responsible for making animal health judgments. Keep in mind, the VCPR is only valid for animals the veterinarian routinely works with on his or her visit and will not cover cattle at other facilities.

Step 2. Develop and document written protocols for disease.

Work with your veterinarian to draft protocols that cover major herd health events and provide a clear course of action once a disease is diagnosed. These protocols should tell farm workers what drug they should use, how and for what it should be used, as well as milk and meat withholding times. All protocols should be written in a notebook or included in a herd software program like PC Dart or DairyComp 305.

Step 3. Maintain accurate records of all treated animals.

Systems should be put in place to ensure all treated animals are properly recorded and never leave the operation before an appropriate withholding time has been reached. Leg bands, clips or crayons are simple tools for effective visual identification of treated cattle. All farm workers must be able to understand the record-keeping and identification program as well as its importance.

Step 4. Train everyone who administers pharmaceuticals.

Everyone on the dairy who administers drugs should go through a training program in which they learn the established farm protocols for disease detection and treatment. Just like the milking routine, proper retraining, at least four times per year, should be held with the involvement of the herd veterinarian to prevent procedural drift.

You're a meat producer, too.

It's important to keep in mind that you not only produce milk for the food supply, but meat as well. Make a conscious effort to send healthy, mobile cattle to slaughter. Federal inspectors are more closely looking for meat residue violations. Any limping or thin cattle as well as those with recent signs of surgery or disease will be selected for additional screening.

The consequences of a violation are severe and long-lasting. First-time residue violators will be contacted by the state dairy inspector to identify what led to the residue violation. Repeat offenders may be inspected by federal officials. All producers who have a cull cow flagged for a trace residue violation are added to the database of residue offenders available to the public, and many newspapers and residue watchdog websites are publishing articles about violations. Repeat residue violators can have their facility quarantined and lose the right to ship cull cows to slaughter for entry into the food system. Legal action is even possible.

Don't wait until you've had a residue violation to look more closely at residue avoidance. Now is the time to start conversations to ensure responsible use of pharmaceutical products on dairy operations.

John Ligo Honored For BQA Efforts Captures National Award at Annual Cattlemen's Convention

BEDFORD, Pa. — On Feb. 3, two producers were honored with the annual national Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) award.

The award recognizes outstanding beef and dairy producers from across the country who incorporate BQA principles as part of the day-to-day activities on their operations. The winners were selected based on their commitment to beef quality assurance while operating sustainable cattle operations.

The 2011 winners were John Ligo, LiTerra Farms of Mercer, Pa. (dairy), and Mike Milicevic, Lykes Bros. Inc. of Okeechobee, Fla. (beef).

LiTerra was founded by John and Judy Ligo in 1988. In order to "close the loop" on nutrients and be more sustainable economically, a 200-cow dairy was built from scratch in 1990. Four herds were purchased and the dairy herd has been closed since 1991. LiTerra's livestock operations include 230 dairy cows producing nearly 5 million pounds of milk annually. Additionally, LiTerra Farms owns 180 homebred dairy replacements. There is also a beef cow-calf enterprise plus replacements and cattle on feed. One other enterprise is a registered seedstock operation comprising of 50 head that includes national grand champions.

Cattle numbers peak in mid-summer at approximately 850 head. LiTerra grows feed for the cattle on 1,100 acres that are owned and 400 acres that are rented.

Innovative BQA practices employed by LiTerra Livestock include:

- John and Judy have both been certified in Dairy Beef Quality Assurance (DBQA) for 10 years.
- The transportation of their own cattle quietly and carefully, focusing on low-stress handling.
- All treatment protocols require injections in the ear or in the triangle of the neck.
- Antibiotics are used sparingly because of the danger of contamination of both milk and beef.



John Ligo

- Bull calves sold into the veal market are well-started, clean and healthy prior to leaving the farm.
 - Dairy cattle are sold on a planned basis, not a "she needs to go" basis.
 - Some of the best farm land has been converted to permanent pasture between the milking facility and the highway just to graze mother cows along with their calves. The cattle have become the landscape.
 - DBQA certification is proudly displayed on a white board fence.
 - They have been able to sell beef to restaurants who market the beef as BQA-certified on the menu.
- John is previous chairman of the Pennsylvania Beef Council board of directors and has served as a leader with many of the state's dairy organizations.
- The National BQA award winners are selected annually by a committee of representatives from universities, state beef councils and cattle industry groups.
- For more information about the beef checkoff or BQA program, visit www.bqa.org, www.dbqa.org, www.MyBeefCheckoff.com or www.pa-bqa.org.

Pa. Beef Council, Cattlemen's Association Seek Beef Ambassador

The Pennsylvania Beef Council (PBC) and the Pennsylvania Cattlemen's Association (PCA) are seeking young adults, ages 17-20, who are interested in becoming the 2011 Pennsylvania Beef Ambassador. The 2011 competition will be held in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Beef Expo on March 24 at the Snider Agricultural Arena. The contest will begin at 2 p.m., with the winner announced at the 2011 PCA Awards Banquet.

The Pennsylvania Beef Ambassador will represent the PBC, PCA, and affiliate cattlemen's organizations at agricultural and consumer events across the state as Penn-

sylvania's beef spokesperson. At the end of his or her one-year reign, the winner of the state competition will receive a \$1,000 scholarship. The Beef Ambassador contest is designed to identify an individual who will fulfill the role of educating consumers and students about beef nutrition, food safety and stewardship practices of the beef industry.

For more information regarding program guidelines and the application, please contact Nichole Hockenberry, Pennsylvania Beef Council at 1-888-423-3372 or via email, nhockenberry@pabeef.org for further information.

Upcoming BQA Trainings

Please visit www.pa-bqa.org for more details on these upcoming trainings or contact Nichole Hockenberry at nhockenberry@pabeef.org or 888-4BEEFPA.

The training dates are as follows:

February 16

Gettysburg High School (Youth Training Program)

February 28

Northampton County Classroom Training, Extension Office Recertification: 6 - 7 p.m., Classroom Training: 7 - 9 p.m.

March 7

Northampton County Chute Side Training, Keifer Farm, Bangor: 6 - 8 p.m.

March 18

DACQA Training (Youth Program)

March 24

Classroom Training & Chute Side at Pennsylvania Beef Expo, Snider Ag Arena, University Park; Classroom Training: 12 - 1:30 p.m., Chute Side: 2 - 4 p.m.

March 29

Milton Hershey School (Youth Program)

April 7

Delaware Valley College (Youth Program)

April 28

Bedford County Chute Side, Location TBA; 6-8 p.m.

Two Steppin' Tenderloin

Total Recipe Time: 30 to 35 minutes
2 beef tenderloin steaks, cut 1-1/2 inches thick (about 5 to 6 ounces each)
3 cups fresh baby spinach, divided
2 tablespoons toasted sliced almonds
2 tablespoons shredded Parmesan cheese
1 clove garlic, coarsely chopped
1 cup plus 2 tablespoons water, divided
1 tablespoon olive oil
1/2 cup uncooked whole grain brown rice
1/2 teaspoon salt (optional)
2 tablespoons chopped dried cherries
Toasted sliced almonds (optional)

Place 2 cups spinach, almonds, cheese and garlic in food processor container. Cover; process until coarse paste forms. With motor running, slowly add 2 tablespoons water and oil until smooth. Season with salt, as desired. Set aside.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Heat ovenproof, nonstick skillet over medium heat. Place beef steaks in skillet and brown 2 minutes. Turn steaks over and place skillet into preheated oven; cook 13 to 18 minutes for medium rare to medium doneness, turning once.

Meanwhile, combine rice, remaining 1 cup water and salt, if desired, in medium saucepan; cook according to package directions. Chop remaining 1 cup spinach. Dur-

ing last 5 minutes of cooking, add chopped spinach to pan and continue to cook. Remove from heat, add cherries and 1 tablespoon pesto to rice; stir to combine.

Remove steaks from oven when internal temperature reaches 135 degrees for medium rare; 150 degrees for medium doneness. Remove steaks from pan; tent loosely with aluminum foil. Let stand 5 to 10 minutes. Temperature will continue to rise about 10 degrees to reach 145 degrees for medium rare; 160 degrees for medium doneness.

Serve steaks over brown rice with remaining pesto. Garnish rice with additional almonds, if desired.

Makes 2 servings

Cook's Tip: 1 package (8.8 ounces) ready-to-serve whole grain brown rice can be substituted.



FSIS Residue Violations from Cull Dairy Cattle, 2009

Penicillin	245
Flunixin	167
Sulfadimethoxine	142
Desfuroylceftiofur	77
Gentamicin	56
Sulfamethazine	47
Others	101