

Please have someone present to guide the auditor around the premises, and let family members and/or staff know that the auditor may ask them questions regarding their role within the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Records relating to the Standard Operating Procedures will also need to be available.

4. SOP 1 – Animal Health Management

The goal of procedures in this SOP is to minimize the risk of drug residues, antibiotic resistant bacteria and broken needles in cattle.

Drug residues and broken needles are not “removable” after cattle leave the premises, so producers must pay particular attention to these potential risks within their operations.

If cattle are exposed to chemicals such as those found at garbage sites, (for example lead batteries, used pesticide equipment/containers, treated seed) contact a veterinarian for appropriate action. Sudden and unexplained deaths may be due to poisoning. An investigation should take place, so that a food safety incident doesn't occur when salvaging survivor animals.

Animal Identification - linking treated cattle with their withdrawal times

The purpose is to clearly link the animal with its treatment or vaccination record for the duration of the withdrawal period. The VBP program allows for individual animal identification and group/pen identification in the case of group treatments.

In the case of group treatments when animals are not individually identified, all cattle in the group must be held for the required period for the drug product with the longest withdrawal time. If cattle are removed from the treatment group, they must be individually identified and held for the longest withdrawal period for that group.

If marking cattle with spray paint or crayons, check the product label to ensure it is approved for use in livestock.

a) Storing Animal Health Products

- Store animal health products according to label directions. Improper storage could lead to altered withdrawal times and chemical residues in cattle, or reduce product effectiveness.
- Keep storage areas organized to reduce the chances of people using improper medications, and ensure labels are clearly readable. If labels are not readable, post a copy of the product label insert (extra paper from product boxes or a printout) where people can access them.
- If receiving or storing products intended for other species of livestock, store on a separate shelf or in a manner which clearly indicates these products are not for use in beef cattle. This is to avoid potential mix-ups and unintentional use.
- Discard drugs that have expired or have been accidentally frozen or exposed to excess heat.
- Dispose of used and outdated animal health products in a manner that does not contaminate cattle feed or water.

b) Using Animal Health Products

This refers to the use of injectable, oral, implanted or topical products used to assist the treatment of diseases, conditions or otherwise assist in the health of beef cattle.

All pharmaceutical products registered in Canada have a DIN number on the packaging. Health Canada regulations prohibit the use of some drugs in food-producing animals. This prohibition may not be stated on products originating in other countries.

To ensure that products are approved for use in beef cattle, look for the wording “for livestock”, “veterinary use”, “for food-producing animals” or beef cattle recommendations on the label.

- Use all products according to label directions, or in the case of extra-label use, according to a written veterinary prescription. This means that all cattle shipped to slaughter have met the required withdrawal times prior to shipping to avoid a potential residue.
- Ensure family members, staff or volunteer help working on your beef cattle operation understand how products are used and are familiar with standard procedures on your operation.
- Record all individual animal or group treatments on a permanent record which includes: the date(s), animal(s) identification, product used, dosage, route of administration (eg. Sub-Q or IM) withdrawal time, and initials or signature of person doing the task.
- Securely restrain cattle to avoid potential bent or broken needles. Use only sharp needles (not dull or burred), and do not straighten needles for re-use. This is to avoid the potential for breaking a needle and leaving a fragment in the hide or muscle.
- Make sure syringes and other equipment deliver the intended amount of product, and are in good working order.
- Visually inspect needles after use to ensure they are intact on the syringe and not bent.
- Use appropriate needle length and size relating to product viscosity and route of injection. This is to help avoid against bent or broken needles.
- Follow a routine procedure to clean needles, syringes and other animal health equipment to avoid cross-contamination of drugs and other pharmaceuticals.
- Discard used needles into a sharps container and in a manner that does not present a risk to cattle, other animals and people.
- Injectable products are given in the neck, and the subcutaneous (sub-Q or SC) method is preferred when identified on the product label.
- The use of “detectable” needles which do not break as easily is recommended.

If something goes wrong:

- If a broken needle occurs, identify the suspect animal and record the incidence on a permanent record. If the animal is being sold, the next owner must be informed of the broken needle in the specific animal. Alternatively the animal may be euthanized or slaughtered for own use.
- If animals are treated with the wrong product or dosage, identify the animal, record the incidence, contact a veterinarian, and record actions taken. This includes actions to avoid a potential residue and what was done to avoid a repeat occurrence of the identified error. For example, actions could include holding cattle for a longer period, or in the case of slaughter cattle – contacting the slaughter plant immediately.

c) Extra-label use and withdrawal times

One of the important components of the VBP program is to follow label directions for pharmaceutical products, or in the case of extra-label use, an up-to-date written veterinary prescription. This helps to ensure responsible use of veterinary products, manage against potential antibiotic-resistant bacteria, and provides a scientifically sound estimate of withdrawal time.

Extra-label use - is any use of a product that is not indicated on the label, including:

i) use in species or for indications (disease/other conditions) not listed on the label; ii) use at dosage levels different from those stated on the label; iii) use of a different route, frequency, duration or timing of treatment; iv) failure to observe the stated withdrawal period. This is also referred to as "off-label".

Withdrawal period - is the minimum time from the last treatment of a pharmaceutical product, to the earliest time when meat from beef cattle should be consumed. Essentially it is the time required before cattle are "safe to ship" and is usually measured in days.

Prescription Drug – are drugs denoted with a "P_r" on the label which are restricted to sale and use by order of a licensed veterinarian, to protect the drugs therapeutic usefulness or to minimise harm. They require a proper diagnosis of the case or recent knowledge of the health of the particular animals and are not available "on demand". These drugs cannot be sold over-the-counter and must be adequately labelled with specific instructions for use. Prescription drugs do *not* require a veterinary prescription unless they are used in an extra-label manner.

Prescription – is a written order for a medication stating amount of drug or mixture of drugs for specific cattle or set of conditions, from a licensed veterinarian with whom you have a proper veterinarian/client/patient relationship. The VBP program requires that the veterinary prescription includes at least the following:

- Veterinarian and clinic
- Date
- Client
- Patient identification or indication for use
- Name of product
- Dosage, frequency, route and duration of treatment
- Withdrawal for meat
- Special warnings (special storage, human safety warnings, etc)

In order to assist those working on the beef cattle operation:

- **Keep a copy of any written veterinary prescriptions used within the last two years.** This proves you are using any drugs extra-label with veterinary advice and/or supervision.
- A copy of the label inserts (found in product boxes) or printout from a Compendium of Veterinary Products is available for reference to those needing the information and using the products. This helps to ensure products are used according to label directions.

d) Cull Cows and Bulls

Cull cattle present a potential food safety concern due to the use of animal health products in their lifetime and particularly within the last two months prior to shipping. In many cases, cattle become culls at calving time due to problems which may involve drug treatments. In the fall season, group treatments with parasiticides may also be a potential hazard when cows are culled later on (eg. pregnancy checked), and may not have met their withdrawal times.

Withdrawal times can be inadvertently forgotten, so pay particular attention when shipping cull cows or cull bulls. Even if not intended for slaughter, keep in mind that the next buyer may have an incidence where emergency slaughter is required and unknowingly face a chemical residue incidence.

Also, note the weight ranges for shipped slaughter cows if applicable - in order to more accurately estimate cattle weights when calculating dosage rates for animal health products.

e) Purchased Cattle

For cattle coming on to the beef cattle operation, it is advisable to find out if they were given any animal health products and have not met their withdrawal times. This is in case of emergency slaughter or sale of the cattle, before they have been held for a sufficient time to meet their withdrawal times. This is particularly important when products have been used with long withdrawal times (eg. 60 days).

If you are feeding the cattle for less than 60 days and they are to be sold for slaughter, make every attempt to clarify what they have been treated with when purchasing or upon arrival at your beef cattle operation. If in doubt, hold them for 60 days to avoid potential chemical residues.

f) Hormonal Implants

While hormonal implants are approved with zero withdrawal times, producers are required to record usage to demonstrate proper procedure. This includes following label directions for the size and type of cattle being processed.