

8. SOP 5 – Training and Communication

Effective communication of standard procedures on a beef cattle operation means consistent results. Communicating SOPs and procedures to the people who need to know is important to success of the VBP program on your cattle operation.

- One person in the beef cattle operation has been trained in the Verified Beef Production program to become familiar with VBP requirements.
- Family members and/or staff in the beef cattle operation understand their respective tasks relating to SOPs and “Must Do” requirements of the Verified Beef Production program. This helps improve knowledge of how their actions may impact food safety.
- If a mistake occurs due to human error, communicate with the individual to ensure proper procedures are followed.
- Record keeping requirements are clearly communicated to family members and/or staff who are responsible for procedures requiring records and/or records check.
- Family members and/or staff in a feedlot understand the importance of using washroom facilities and do not use feedbunks or sites containing feed for cattle in lieu of staff facilities. Parasites and bacteria can be transferred from humans to cattle in this manner.
- Persons working on the beef cattle operation are prepared to answer questions on procedures they are responsible for, relating to “Must Do” requirements of the VBP program.

Documented Protocols

It is highly recommended that routine procedures be documented for use by persons on your beef cattle operation, which identify common ailments and the routine products used to treat them. This would include but is not limited to: vaccinations, diseases and common antibiotics used, parasite controls and mixing medicated ingredients in feed or water. This is especially important for clear communication if there are 2 or more persons who regularly undertake these procedures.

- These documented procedures are called a *Protocol*, and can be used as a reference for family members and/or staff. It can also be an effective training document.
- The *Processing and Treating Protocol* identifies actions should a broken needle occur or a needle fragment is potentially left in the muscle or hide of an animal.
- The *Processing and Treating Protocol* may also identify actions should an animal receive an unintended dosage or product or anything different from label directions. This would include who to contact, what to do, and instructions on where to record the actions.
- A *Medicated Feed and Water Mixing Protocol* is highly recommended to ensure proper mixing and use of feed medications. It should identify the sequence of activities needed to ensure medicated ingredients are successfully mixed throughout a ration or in water.
- All persons have access to written procedures including the beef cattle operation’s own *Processing and Treating Protocol* and *Medicated Feed and Water Mixing Protocol* if they are undertaking activity related to these procedures.

Your protocol should cover only the routine procedures when using animal health products or feed medications, and should be a simple and easy reference so that all may use it when needed.

A veterinarian is an excellent resource to assist in developing a *Processing and Treating Protocol*, as is a nutritionist when developing a *Medicated Feed and Water Mixing Protocol*.

9. Annual check on important procedures and records

Someone designated from your beef cattle operation reviews on an annual basis the “Must Do” VBP requirements - including drug treatment, medicated feed, and shipping records to ensure they are complete. Then they sign the record and date it, which is an annual monitoring that the beef cattle operation is up-to-date with the SOPs. This is known as *verification* and is essentially a once per year check with “additional eyes” that provide added confidence in the VBP program.

This verification process must be completed once annually and includes:

- Review of processing and treatment records for completeness.
- Review of records to provide evidence that a withdrawal time check was completed prior to shipping.
- Review of record containing any broken needles and evidence that information was provided to the next buyer.
- Written veterinary prescriptions if products are used in extra-label manner.
- Review of records for medicated feed or medicated water for completeness.
- Review of any errors relating to Must Do’s (grey shaded), and any information on actions taken to rectify the situation.
- The person doing the annual verification signs or initials, and dates as evidence that this verification took place.