

A STORY OF A STEAK

RESPONSIBLE BEEF

IMPLEMENTING ANTIBIOTIC STEWARDSHIP AT THE FARM LEVEL

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As veterinarians and producers, we are playing a role in the enhancement of antimicrobial resistance. It's out of the barn, so to speak – the risk of resistance never goes to zero. In the previous article, "Understanding Antibiotic Resistance and Its Impact on Treating BRD," we looked at initiatives taking place at the industry level, but there is another role to be played by us as individuals in appropriately and judiciously administering antibiotics to animals.



Step 1: INITIATE PREVENTATIVE HEALTH AND CARE

The question we should continue to ask is if we can design programs that will reduce our need for antibiotics. Vaccinating early and improving nutrition and housing can give an animal a sound health advantage, possibly eliminating the need for antibiotics in the first place. Bettering the animal's chances of not getting sick is the first step to antibiotic stewardship.

Step 2: ADMINISTER THE RIGHT ANTIBIOTIC AT THE RIGHT TIME FOR THE RIGHT ANIMAL

The second step to being good stewards of antibiotic use is to ensure that we're using antibiotics we know or expect to work for the specific disease or bacteria causing issues. A combination of experience and diagnostic testing can aid significantly in this decision-making. Whether it's a veterinarian or producer, the person diagnosing the animal has to be trained to identify the cause of an illness, as antibiotics only work on bacterial infections. Veterinarians and producers should also have plans in place for when to stop antibiotic treatments.

Step 3: COMMIT TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The last step of what antibiotic stewardship looks like within livestock operations is the completion of the cycle – a commitment to evaluate if a specific preventative health plan and antibiotic treatments, when needed, are working. Even if you think you have the right antibiotic for the right disease or bacteria, continue to monitor the effectiveness of an antibiotic and consider alternative, more targeted treatments, if possible.

BETTERING THE ANIMAL'S CHANCES OF NOT GETTING SICK IS THE FIRST STEP TO ANTIBIOTIC STEWARDSHIP.

– Dr. Brian Lubbers, D.V.M.



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