

A Beef Producer's guide for use of antibiotics

Judicious use of antibiotics is no longer just a good idea — it's essential if we want to have antibiotics in our toolbox going forward. Here are 14 things to keep in mind when using antibiotics with your cattle.

1. **Prevent problems.** Emphasize appropriate husbandry and hygiene, routine health examinations and vaccinations.
2. **Select and use antibiotics carefully.** Consult with your veterinarian on the selection and use of antibiotics. Have a valid reason to use an antibiotic. Consider therapeutic alternatives
3. **Avoid using antibiotics important in human medicine as first-line therapy.** Avoid medications that are important to treating strategic human or animal infections as the first antibiotic.
4. **Use the laboratory to help you select antibiotics.** Cultures and susceptibility test results should be used to aid in the selection of antibiotics, whenever possible.
5. **Combination antibiotic therapy is discouraged** unless there is clear evidence the specific practice is beneficial. Select and dose an antibiotic to effect a cure.
6. **Avoid inappropriate antibiotic use.** Confine therapeutic antibiotic use to proven clinical indications, avoiding inappropriate uses such as for viral infections w/o bacterial complication.
7. **Treatment programs should reflect best-use principles.** Regimens for therapeutic antimicrobial use should be optimized using current pharmacological information and principles.
8. **Treat the lowest number of animals possible.** Limit antibiotic use to sick or at-risk animals.
9. **Treat for the recommended time period** to minimize the potential for bacteria to become resistant to antimicrobials.
10. **Avoid environmental contamination with antibiotics.** minimize antimicrobials reaching the environment through spillage, contaminated ground runoff or aerosolization.
11. **Keep records of antibiotic use.** Accurate records of treatment and outcome should be used to evaluate therapeutic regimens; always follow proper withdrawal times.
12. **Follow label directions.** Follow label instructions, and never use antibiotics other than as labeled without a valid veterinary prescription.
13. **Extra-label antibiotic use must follow FDA regulations.** Prescriptions, including extra-label use of medications, must meet the Animal Medicinal Drug Use Clarification Act
14. **Subtherapeutic antibiotic use is discouraged.** Antibiotic use should be limited to prevent or control disease and should not be used if the principal intent is to improve performance.