

MEDICINE USE IN FOOD ANIMALS: ADDRESSING CONSUMER CONCERNS ABOUT ANTIBIOTIC RESIDUES

Most consumers are generations removed from working with and caring for farm animals. So it's easy to understand why many are concerned by the use of antibiotics and other medicines in food animals and what that means to their family's health. And often media coverage and meat labels, like "antibiotic free," add to their uncertainty rather than help answer questions.

Here are some facts that may help:

ANTIBIOTIC RESIDUES

FACT: *Antibiotic residue in meat is not the same as antibiotic resistant bacteria contaminating meat. Human- and public-health experts across the globe agree that the simple act of eating properly cooked meat does not contribute to the likelihood that a person will develop an illness resistant to antibiotic treatment.*

Many safeguards are in place that keep antibiotic residues in foods at extremely low levels — in fact, well below the "safe" thresholds that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and regulatory agencies worldwide establish. The FDA and regulatory authorities globally regulate and approve all medicines used in animals, just as they do medicines for humans. Many studies are done to understand exactly how an antibiotic breaks down and is excreted by the animal to reduce any chance that the antibiotic, in an active form, would be present in meat or milk at levels that would affect human health. And the FDA requires producers to withhold animals that receive antibiotics from entering the food supply for a specific period of time to ensure that the medicine has cleared the animal's system. The FDA and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) have systems in place to monitor and test meat and milk, and violators face stiff fines and, in some cases, prosecution if their products contain residues.

BUT ARE ANTIBIOTIC RESIDUES FOUND IN MILK AND MEAT?

Sometimes. But very rarely. The latest information from government monitoring programs (2012) states that less than 0.017% of all bulk milk tankers tested positive for residue violations. And if any tanker of milk is found positive, that milk is discarded and never reaches the consumer. Just over a tenth of one percent (0.13%) of meat tested positive. This sampling is conducted through the Food Safety Inspection Service Monitoring Plan (2013), which is based on sampling meat obtained from healthy food animals. So there still is work to be done, but the system is working well. No residue violations were found in poultry meat.

WHAT ARE ZOETIS, THE INDUSTRY AND THE GOVERNMENT DOING TO REDUCE THE CHANCES OF RESIDUES IN MEAT OR MILK?

After studying the habits of producers with violations, the FDA identified the lack of record keeping of medicine use on the farm as the most common reason. Therefore, Zoetis works with veterinarians and producers every day to train them on proper medicine use and rigorous record keeping. These programs have proven successful in improving the tracking of treated animals, ensuring that farmers meet the high quality standards expected both by regulatory authorities and consumers.

WHAT IS ZOETIS DOING?

- **RESEARCH:** Zoetis is actively researching new vaccines, compounds and variations of existing medicines to help meet evolving animal health needs. We are exploring fail-safe medicines in ensuring that the right amount of medication is delivered to animals to restore health.
- **GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT:** We believe in strong government oversight for the approval and terms of use for all antibiotics. We strongly support monitoring and testing of the food supply to: 1) ensure antibiotic residues are not in the milk and meat; 2) monitor bacteria to help identify trends that will lead to better understanding of residue causes; and 3) help identify more effective safeguards in the food chain.

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- **VETERINARY SUPPORT:** We know that there is a direct relationship between on-farm involvement of veterinarians and the quality of animal care, which in turn has direct food safety implications. One of our top priorities at Zoetis is supporting needs of the veterinary profession — making sure that there are enough rural veterinarians in the future and that those already in the field are highly trained and have access to emerging information. That's why we spend more than \$9 million annually on programs that support educational symposia, veterinary teaching hospitals and allied organizations, and we offer scholarship programs for deserving veterinarians in training. We offer a Residue Free Guarantee™ for some of our medicines, enlisting veterinarians and animal health workers to be part of the solution in further reducing residue violations by understanding and following label instructions and accurate record keeping. And we highlight “what good looks like” on the farm through a series of Veterinarians on Call webisodes.

This system of checks and balances between animal health companies, farmers and the government is a critical component of ensuring both animal and human health. Zoetis continuously works with each of these stakeholders on ways to improve this system in order to help ensure the effectiveness of these medicines for years to come.

References

¹ Milk residues information: <http://www.nmpf.org/sites/default/files/FDA-Milk-Drug-Residue-2012-Annual-Report.pdf>.

² Meat residue information: http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/f511ad0e-d148-4bec-95c7-22774e731f7c/2011_Red_Book.pdf?MOD=AJPERES.

³ FDA approval process: http://www.foodinsight.org/Fact_Sheet_FDA_s_Approval_Process_for_Food_Animal_Antibiotics ; <http://www.ahi.org/issues-advocacy/animal-antibiotics/fda-approval>

⁴ Layers of safeguards in place: <http://www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/%20SafetyHealth/AntimicrobialResistance/JudiciousUseofAntimicrobials/default.htm>

⁵ Residues vs. resistance: <http://hurdhealth.com/2013/08/14/its-all-antibiotic-free-baby/>

⁶ Residue Free Guarantee: <https://online.zoetis.com/us/en/Dairy/AvoidResidues/Pages/index.html>

⁷ YouTube® Veterinarians on Call: <http://www.youtube.com/user/veterinariansoncall>

⁸ CDC – food safety: <http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/facts.html#whatprotect>

***Residue Free Guarantee:** If you use a Zoetis-branded ceftiofur product according to label indications, and experience a violative ceftiofur milk or meat residue, Zoetis will compensate you for the beef market value of the animal or purchase the tanker of milk at fair market value. You must purchase the product from a Zoetis-approved supplier, use the product according to label indications, have documentation of the product purchase and treatment records, and have conducted training on appropriate use to ensure proper dose and route of administration of the product. Extra-label use as prescribed by a veterinarian is excluded from the guarantee. If you experience a ceftiofur residue violation after following label indications and the above steps, contact Zoetis VMIPS Veterinary Medical Information and Product Support (VMIPS) at 800-366-5288 to report the situation.