

JANUARY 2001 – LARGE ANIMAL NEWS

ANTIBIOTIC RESIDUE TESTING FOR MILK AND SLAUGHTER

Testing animals for milk or slaughter antibiotic residues is often a frustrating experience. Tests used historically have been too sensitive for their purposes. The rule for years was to test every treated animal for residues before shipping milk, or cows for slaughter. That recommendation was encouraged by the USDA and veterinarians alike. Currently recommendations have changed. **The current rule, recommended also by the Pasteurized Milk Ordinance, is that if an animal is treated with a commercially manufactured product according to label directions, then label milk and slaughter recommendations should be followed and testing for residues is not necessary.** For the most part our veterinary practice follows label directions when recommending antibiotic use. Some exceptions exist and follow.

Milk residue testing is probably the most frustrating. The problem encountered is that animals will test positive at the plant for an excessively long time. Usually one of two problems has occurred. Penicillin tends to be the first problem. The label dose originally devised was 1cc per 100lbs body weight. At that dose the milk and slaughter recommendations on the label are accurate. Rarely do we find that dose effective any more. We tend to dose at 3 times that rate. As a result antibiotic residues are unpredictable, to the point where our practice rarely recommends penicillin use at all. We have gone to other antibiotics which are more effective, and have reliable antibiotic residue guidelines. The second problem with milk testing is that many milk plants are using excessively sensitive tests. Many residue tests are designed for bulk tank testing, not individual cow testing. If you are having a problem getting a cow into the tank on a commercially available product, question the test which is being used. An old reliable for cows is the Delvo SP. It usually is a good test for individual cows. It's disadvantage is that it takes 3 hours to run and plants don't like that. Request that test if a problem exists getting a cow into the tank. Or if there is a question as to what antibiotic milk is being tested for, (many times the plant will ask) give us a call and we can help.

The antibiotic which we tend to use way over label recommendations is Pirsue®, particularly with respect to milk withhold. If there is a question and you have used it 4-6 times rather than just 2 treatments, the antibiotic which the plant is checking for is pirlimycin. Other products which we use (except penicillin) have reliable withholdings.

Urine testing for slaughter is going to become more limited. The LAST test currently in use is going to be discontinued. The advantage of this test was that it could detect any form of antibiotic present in that animal's urine. It's historical disadvantage was that it detects residues at an excessively low, insignificant level. As a result it has also often made it difficult to get cows on the truck-particularly if penicillin was used. Because of test sensitivity and reduced use it will no longer be available. In it's place we have the Meat Safe test. This test detects the antibiotic which creates >95% of antibiotic related violations: PENICILLIN and it's related antibiotics (ampicillin, Dariclox®,

Dryclox®). **It will not detect other forms of antibiotics.** From now on if you request urine testing for antibiotics, we will need to know all products used and WHEN last used. **Record keeping is crucial.** In most instances drugs used have reliable slaughter withholds on their label. For those drugs which don't, or for the penicillin related drugs, we can either make recommendations for you or provide the Meat Safe test. **If you cannot tell us what products were used and when, we will not be able to help you.**

2001 is upon us. Times are hard in our industry. We wish all the best for everyone in the new year, particularly good health. We appreciate working together to try and make your farm as prosperous as it can be. Our practice is committed to improving herd health maintenance services which we provide, and proving to being an asset to your operation.

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