

Penn State Cooperative Extension Capitol Region Dairy Team

WHAT EVERY DAIRY PRODUCER SHOULD KNOW BEFORE TREATING A SICK COW

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Dairy producers are responsible for the safe use of animal health products. This includes withdrawing milk during and after treatment according to label instructions. Meat withdrawal is equally important, and is separately labeled and typically much longer than for milk.

Some medicinal compounds take many months to clear the body's filtering system, comprised of organs such as the kidneys which are targeted for testing by USDA inspectors.

Antibiotic meat residues were the second most frequent problem cited by packers in the 1999 National Market Cow and Bull Quality Audit. As the media spotlight centers on animal health and food safety issues, government regulators are stepping up their surveillance for these residues in cow and bull beef. Packers are spending more money to address these issues, and they are beginning to require producers to certify that they have followed



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FDA regulations and are marketing animals which will contain no illegal drug residues in the meat or filtering organs.

Violators risk increased penalties and reduced access to markets. And the entire dairy and livestock industry is at risk for increased regulation of the animal health products producers depend upon.

Penn State University meat scientist Dr. William Henning noted that for dairy beef processors, antibiotic residue avoidance is top priority because they have a quality and safety commitment

to consumers. Dairy producers share that commitment every time they cull an animal. In general, producers are doing a good job with meat residues avoidance; however, everyone pays for the proverbial "five percenters."

According to USDA's Residue Monitoring Program, the overall incidence of antibiotic meat residue violations is very small and declining. However, dairy cows and dairy bob calves still have the highest rate of violative residue among all classes of cattle.

Ultimately, the final food product of every dairy animal is beef. So, the time to consider the meat withdrawal period is before treating. Producers and their veterinarians have an obligation to consider the cow's final destination when making choices about her treatment.

The best way to avoid marketing animals that are severely disabled, or animals with treatment residues in the body, is to evaluate health conditions early, before they get out of hand. Waiting to treat for overt signs of illness is costly, and jeopardizes the health of the herd as a unit. Plus, the producer runs a greater risk of losing the cows, or losing the option of marketing the animal for its beef value.

Researchers estimate that each year, 30 percent of dairy cows come to the packing plant with clinically apparent inflammation of the mammary gland, which presents challenges at the plant. Also, 7 percent of cows are lame or disabled. On average, 39 pounds of carcass product is lost because of removal of arthritic joints and nearby tissue. These inflammatory conditions are typically treated with animal health products on the farm, before the animal is finally culled.

Cumberland Co. 4-H Dairy Roundup At Shippensburg

CARLISLE (Cumberland Co.)
— The Cumberland County 2003 4-H Dairy Round Up took place recently at the Shippensburg Fairgrounds. One of the highlights was the dairy showmanship competition.

The 2003 showmanship winners include Junior Showmanship Champion (ages 8-10), Kerri Wickard; Reserve Junior, Abby Harris; Intermediate Showmanship Champion (ages 11-13), Robert Weber; Reserve Intermediate Reserve, Janel Zinn; Senior and Overall Showmanship Champion (ages 14-18), Scott Walton; Reserve Senior, Sarah Wickard.

Amy Packard, Elizabethtown selected the following breed champions:

- AYRSHIRE**
Junior Champion: Michael Woods.
Reserve Junior Champion: Janel Zinn.
Senior Champion: Jennifer Zinn.
Reserve Senior Champion: Janel Zinn.
- GRAND CHAMPION**
Jennifer Zinn
- RESERVE GRAND CHAMPION**
Janel Zinn
- BROWN SWISS**
Junior Champion: Sarah Wickard.
Reserve Junior Champion: Kern Wickard.
- Senior Champion: Aaron Comman.**
Reserve Senior Champion: Sarah Wickard.

- GRAND CHAMPION**
Aaron Comman
- RESERVE GRAND CHAMPION**
Sarah Wickard
- GUERNSEY**
Junior Champion: Brian Nailor.
Reserve Junior Champion: Michael Woods.
- GRAND CHAMPION**
Brian Nailor
- RESERVE GRAND CHAMPION**
Michael Woods
- HOLSTEIN**
Junior Champion: Melissa Detman.
Reserve Junior Champion: Clayton Weber.
- Senior Champion: Aaron Comman.**
Reserve Senior Champion: Morgan Creek.
- GRAND CHAMPION**
Aaron Comman
- RESERVE GRAND CHAMPION**
Melissa Detman
- JERSEY**
Junior Champion: Tori Fuller.
Reserve Junior Champion: Manah Paynter.
- Senior Champion: Scott Walton.**
Reserve Senior Champion: Tori Fuller.
- GRAND CHAMPION**
Scott Walton
- RESERVE GRAND CHAMPION**
Tori Fuller
- MILKING SHORTHORN**
Junior Champion: Madison Miller.
Reserve Junior Champion: Madison Miller.
- Senior Champion: Brian Nailor.**
Reserve Senior Champion: Brian Nailor
- GRAND CHAMPION**
Brian Nailor
- RESERVE GRAND CHAMPION**
Brian Nailor

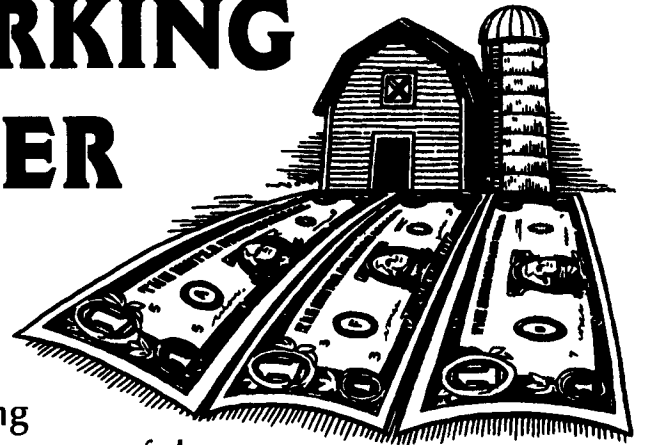
This is why more attention must be paid to early disease evaluation, culling, and treatment. When a producer makes the decision to treat, rather than cull persistent or declining health conditions, he believes the cow will recover to sound health. If the animal's health continues to decline while the prescribed meat withdrawal period is still in ef-

fect, euthanasia is the only option available.

Antibiotic use, observance of meat withdrawal, and the condition in which cows are culled are human health issues that are managed at the farm level.

Source: *The Pennsylvania Beef Council and the National Beef Association.*

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