

Follow the 5R's to Prevent Veterinary Drug Residues

1: Relationships: Develop good relationships with people involved in the process

- Establish a good veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR)
- Review veterinary recommendations with employees/family members who work on the farm
- Provide employees/family members with regular training on the prevention of milk and meat residues as well as farm protocols for handling animals that have been treated

2: Responsible Use: Use and handle veterinary drugs responsibly

- Store veterinary drugs for lactating and non-lactating animals separately to prevent mix-ups
- Store medicated feeds in a way that would prevent accidental use
- Properly label and store Over-the-Counter, Prescription and Extra-label drugs, including with appropriate milk and meat withholding and withdrawal times.
- Develop animal treatment protocols with the help of the farm veterinarian
- Minimize use of veterinary drugs to times when they are medically necessary (less use = fewer chances for a residue)

3: Recordkeeping: Maintain good records to document treatments

- Use a good system to identify individual animals
- Maintain a recordkeeping system to document all treatments given
- Identify the animal before it is treated
- Record the treatment before it is administered
- Review treatment records prior to selling an animal or her milk.
- Keep treatment records for at least TWO years
- Establish a system for identifying and separating treated animals

4: Respect: Respect withdrawal times and usage limitations

- Use only veterinary drugs that are approved by FDA for use in the species you are treating
- Abide by withdrawal periods set by the drug manufacturers and your veterinarian (if using extra-label)
- Do not use veterinary drugs extra-label without the permission of a veterinarian and follow extra-label instructions and withdrawal times

5: Remove doubt

- Test milk from treated cows for residues
- Test bulk tank prior to milk leaving the farm, every day, every time
- Test milk from newly purchased animals prior to adding milk to bulk tank

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Need more resources?

There are many resources available for producers on ways to implement the 5 R's, including sample or actual forms for recordkeeping and tracking of treatments. MDA recommends reviewing the following resource materials for additional information.

Example Records:

- Recommended Drug List
- Animal Treatment Plan
- Daily Treatment Record
 - Option 1: Herd
 - Option 2: Individual Animal
- Pre-marketing resources
 - Option 1: Pre-marketing Checklist
 - Option 2: Marketing Log

Factsheets and Other Resources:

- Adulterated Milk Factsheet
- Establishing a Veterinary Client Patient Relationship
- Drug and Chemical Control Quick Reference Card
- Drug Class Quick Reference Card
- Animal Treatment Protocol Guidelines
- Milk Residue Penalties
- Best Practices for On-Farm Drug Use
- On-Farm Testing
- State Testing Procedures

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