

Veterinary Feed Directives

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I've been trying to avoid this next topic just like many other people, partially because there's so many questions that still aren't answered. The topic is the Veterinary Feed Directive or VFD. This is all coming about over very real concerns of antimicrobial resistance for medically important human use drugs. And let me also point out that many of the real problems comes as much in un-necessary use of antibiotics in humans as in livestock. But everyone's going to be paying the piper on this issue. The VFD is not going to go away. It officially went into effect on October 1st of last year, although real enforcement isn't slated to occur until January 1, 2017. The days of just going to the feed store and getting some antibiotic feed for anaplasmosis or pink eye are over. All antibiotic containing feed will require a script from a vet and the vet, the feed store and you the producer will all have to have and keep copies of these for two years. It can't be a verbal VFD, but it can be electronic, but the paper copy has to arrive in five days. There will have to be a valid veterinary-client-patient relationship. As to what qualifies for that, the best example I've heard is if you call the vet and tell him to come to the calving pasture and the vet doesn't need any more directions than that, you have one. The vets and the feed store will be under the most scrutiny, but producers will be too. Will they really enforce this? Did they come checking for off road diesel in fuel tanks of trucks at sale barns? This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Mineral nutrition in cattle

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I like to correlate mineral nutrition in cattle to vitamin usage by humans. We all know you need 'em, and that's where a lot of it ends. Mineral supplementation of cattle is a moving target based on time of year, type of cattle, stage of growth or development of the cattle and what they are eating. Before we go any further let me add that just like there's snake oil for crop production, there's also snake oil for minerals in cattle nutrition. If it sounds too good to be true, it is. We can highlight a few minerals that are going to be needed every year at least sometime during the year. Phosphorus is number one. Calcium and potassium fall into the next two slots with magnesium coming in there under special situations, especially on wheat pasture in the spring. Then the trace minerals come into play and of course the vitamins. There is an absolutely fascinating interaction of all the different minerals in bovine nutrition and too much of one can cause a deficiency of another. It's crazy. One thing not to forget in all of this discussion is that sodium and chlorine need to be offered to cattle at all times and most of us do that with free choice salt. Occasionally we have to watch out for getting too much of something in the cattle diets. We never used to worry about sulfur until we started using distiller's grains that tends to concentrate sulfur. We can take the easy way out and always use trace mineralized salt hoping we don't miss something. Or you can work with a good nutritionist to save money by not feeding mineral when you don't have to, but making sure it's there when they really need it. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

So you're going to a bull sale

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Those who attended the winter ranch management program in Alta Vista a couple of weeks ago heard a great presentation from Dr. Bob Weaber about bull selection. I'm not going to go through all the selection tools he talked about but a segment of his talk that was really great was preparing to attend a bull sale. If you know you need one or two new bulls for your herd you really need to start doing your homework before the sale catalog arrives in the mail. Figure out what traits you are really looking for. If you sell calves at weaning, don't get too concerned about terminal traits. Look at things like birth weight and ease of calving. If you are also going to keep back heifers for replacement or to build the herd, look at those maternal traits too. If all those EPDs get confusing, we do have some good bulletins to help you understand it all. Next, set a budget and match up the bulls for sale with your needs and then create a list 3 to 4 times longer than you need. You want to have a lot of options so you don't switch into panic mode and buy something you don't need or is outside of your budget. If you really want to spend some time looking at the bulls and talking to the owner, don't wait for sale day, go there 3 or 4 weeks in advance. On sale day, arrive early to do your final inspection. It's hard to inspect the bulls when you also want to be visiting with friends you may not have seen for awhile - come on, let's face it - these are social as well as business events. Then shorten up the list and always be asking yourself if you're doing what's easy, or doing what's profitable. They aren't the same. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420

KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.