

# How to Use Antibiotics Judiciously on Your Ranch

The Beef Quality Assurance Program (BQA) provides 14 Guidelines for the Judicious Use of Antibiotics, which are outlined here. Ranchers can find more information on these guidelines in the BQA Antibiotics Stewardship for Beef Producers Guidebook, according to the [U.S. Roundtable for Sustainable Beef](#).

1. **Prevent problems.** Emphasize appropriate husbandry and hygiene, routine health examinations and vaccinations.
2. **Adhere to FDA guidance.** Follow label instructions and FDA guidance for the use of all antibiotics. The use of antibiotics medically important in human medicine should only be used after careful consideration. If a rancher uses medically important feed grade antibiotics, it must be under the guidance of a veterinary feed directive (VFD).
3. **Select and use antibiotics carefully.** Consult with your veterinarian on the selection and use of antibiotics, under the premise of a valid veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR). Have a valid reason to use an antibiotic. Appropriate therapeutic alternatives should be considered prior to using antimicrobial therapy.
4. **Use the laboratory to help select antibiotics.** Use cultures and sensitivity test results to aid in the selection of antibiotics whenever possible.
5. **Combination antibiotic therapy is discouraged unless there is clear evidence the specific practice is beneficial.** Select and dose an antibiotic to affect a cure.
6. **Avoid inappropriate antibiotic use.** Confine therapeutic antibiotic use to proven clinical indications. Avoid inappropriate uses such as for viral infections without bacterial complication.
7. **Treatment programs should reflect best use principles.** Optimize regimens for therapeutic antimicrobial use using current pharmacological information and principles.
8. **Treat the fewest number of animals possible.** Limit antibiotic use to sick or at-risk animals.
9. **Treat for the recommended time period.** To minimize the potential for bacteria to become resistant to antimicrobials.
10. **Avoid environmental contamination with antibiotics.** Take steps to minimize antimicrobials reaching the environment through spillage, contaminated ground run off or aerosolization.
11. **Keep records of antibiotic use.** Use accurate records of treatment and outcome to evaluate therapeutic regimens and always follow proper meat and milk withdrawal times. Keep records for a minimum of two (2) years or longer based on state and local regulations.
12. **Follow label directions:** Follow label instructions and never use antibiotics other than as labeled without a valid veterinary prescription.
13. **Extra label antibiotic use must follow FDA regulations.** Prescriptions, including extra label use of medications, must meet the Animal Medicinal Drug Use Clarification Act (AMDUCA) amendments to the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act and its regulations. This includes having a valid VCPR.
14. **Medically important antibiotic use should be limited to treat, prevent or control disease.** Don't use medically important antibiotics if the principal intent is to improve performance. Antibiotics that are medically important to human medicine may not be used for performance.

**SOURCE:** AVMA, AABP, and AVC guidance on Appropriate Veterinary Antibiotic Use

This resource was compiled from industry resources from the U.S. Roundtable for Sustainable Beef, Beef Quality Assurance, The National Grazing Lands Coalition, USDA, and the many university research and extension services that support U.S. ranchers. This resource was made possible by the founding partners of Trust In Beef.

