SAFE AND RESPONSIBLE ANIMAL TREATMENTS

Livestock Production Assurance

The Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) program is the Australian livestock industry's on-farm program covering food safety, animal welfare and biosecurity. It is part of the integrity system used by the red meat industry to meet the stringent requirements of our domestic and export markets. Customer confidence in Australian red meat underpins the success and growth of Australia's livestock industry, and protects the livelihoods of more than 180,000 producers.

When producers become LPA-accredited, they are promising to meet LPA's requirements and fulfil their responsility in the production of safe and ethical red meat. The management of **safe and responsible animal treatments** is just one of seven elements that producers need to satisfy to become LPA-accredited.

Every LPA-accredited producer must ensure that animal treatments are administered in a safe and responsible manner that minimises the risk of chemical residues and physical hazards.

How should medicines be stored?

The veterinary medicines used to treat livestock must be stored in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. Check carefully for instructions regarding storage including refrigeration requirements and protection from sunlight.

Livestock must not be treated with any veterinary medicine that is not in its original container, is contaminated or spoilt in any way, or has passed the product expiry date.

Unwanted medicines and empty containers must be disposed of in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and local environment protection authority requirements.

What is a withholding period?

The withholding period for meat is the minimum time after an animal is treated with a veterinary medicine before it may be legally slaughtered for human consumption.

Withholding periods are set to ensure that chemical residues, if any, in the carcase are below the maximum residue limit allowed for that chemical in food in Australia. In general, slaughter and feeder animals should not be treated with a veterinary medicine if the withholding period exceeds the expected date of departure from a property.

What is an Export Slaughter Interval?

Many veterinary medicines and pesticides now have an Export Slaughter Interval (ESI) listed in addition to the meat withholding period. The ESI is the minimum time recommended after an animal is treated before slaughter for consumption in an overseas country that has a lower maximum residue limit than applies in Australia.

ESIs are revised throughout the year, which means the ESI printed on your National Vendor Declaration (NVD) forms may be out of date.

To ensure that you have the latest version, visit **www.apvma.gov.au/esi.**

LPA REQUIREMENTS

What?

As a livestock producer, you must guarantee that you use veterinary medicines only when necessary, that animals that are treated get an effective course of treatment and that there is minimal risk of adverse side effects, including carcase residue or physical contaminants.

Before registering any veterinary medicine or pesticide, the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) must ensure it is not a risk to public health or the environment, is safe and effective and will not damage Australian exports. It is essential, however, that all animal treatments are stored and used appropriately and that animals are not slaughtered while they may still have unacceptable chemical residues.

To demonstrate this you must:

- *Keep records of all animal treatments*
- *Complete a chemical user's course*
- *Note in a diary when equipment utilised for animal treatment is cleaned*
- *Where required ensure you have any written authorisations for veterinarian medicines*
- *Record animals that may have been exposed to physical contaminants such as broken needles*
- *Every animal treated with a hormonal growth promotant (HGP) must also be identified with a triangular ear mark.*

How?

The safe and responsible animal treatments checklist includes seven questions to ensure a livestock producer is doing all they can to store and administer animal treatments in a safe and responsible manner to minimise the risk of unacceptable chemical residues.

It is recommended producers document and file responses to the safe and responsible animal treatments checklist, and make them available should the property be subject to an LPA audit. Templates to assist you with your record keeping are available on the ISC website at **www.integritysystems.com.au/recordkeeping/**.

When?

Records should be updated every time animals are treated with veterinary medicines.

Why?

Australia's food safety record is essential to consumers of red meat, both locally and in the countries we export to. This means it's fundamental to the future of our red meat industry.

If animal treatments are not used responsibly, stock may suffer and the meat they produce may contain unacceptable chemical residues or pose a physical hazard. Any food safety issue has the potential to impact consumers and puts the entire industry at risk.

At a producer level, repercussions may include failure to be paid for the livestock, and possible legal liability for the resulting costs faced by processors and the rest of the supply chain.

Checklist:

1. *Do you only allow people who are trained and/or competent to administer animal treatments?*

☐ *Yes* ☐ *No* ☐ *Unsure*

Anyone applying or handling chemicals must be able to demonstrate competency in the storage, handling, preparation, use and disposal of chemicals. Ideally livestock producers will hold or be under the supervision of someone that has a current recognised chemical user's certificate. Certificates should be stored and presented during the LPA audit.

2. *When treating animals, do you abide by the legal directions (e.g. as written on the label) or written directions from a vet and only use approved veterinary medicines?*

☐ *Yes* ☐ *No* ☐ *Unsure*

The intended use, application method and dose rates of veterinary medicines must be understood prior to use. This means reading the labels and administering medicines in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. To ensure that livestock receive the appropriate treatment, only veterinary medicines approved by the APVMA should be used.

3. *Are veterinary medicines stored according to instructions on the label and kept in a place safe from animals?*

☐ *Yes* ☐ *No* ☐ *Unsure*

Veterinary medicines can lose their effectiveness if not stored appropriately and should always be kept according to the manufacturer's instructions. They should also be kept securely away from animals to minimise the risk of unnecessary contamination of livestock.

4. *Do you ensure that any equipment used to administer or measure animal treatments is working correctly before use and clean it before and after you use it?*

☐ *Yes* ☐ *No* ☐ *Unsure*

So that animals receive the correct dose of their treatment and that the treatment is not contaminated, it is essential to calibrate chemical application equipment and check it for operational efficiency before using. Equipment to administer or measure animal treatments must also be thoroughly cleaned before and after each use.

5. *Are management systems in place to prevent cross-contamination between treated and non-treated animals?*

☐ *Yes* ☐ *No* ☐ *Unsure*

Cross contamination between treated animals with untreated animals poses a risk to food safety. This can commonly occur through urine or milk and management systems must be in place to prevent this from happening. It is important that treated livestock are clearly identified and in the case of young animals (eg calves) that treated livestock are segregated from non-treated livestock for the duration of the applicable Withholding Period (WHP) and/or Export Slaughter Interval (ESI).

6. *Do you administer veterinary medicines injections in the neck (unless site specific) and minimise damage to the site?*

☐ *Yes* ☐ *No* ☐ *Unsure*

Choosing the administration site of veterinary medicine injections should take into consideration the relative value of the meat cut. This means that injections should be administered into the neck unless they are site specific.

Damage to the injection site should be minimised by ensuring that no more than 10ml of intramuscular injection is administered in any one spot, except where injections are site specific.

7. *Do you record animal treatments, including adverse reactions, and pass this on when selling stock?*

☐ *Yes* ☐ *No* ☐ *Unsure*

Animal treatments should be recorded and passed on when selling stock, by completing an LPA NVD. Adverse reactions to medicines should be monitored to minimise the risk of unknown chemical residue.

Where relevant, the producer should also record on the LPA NVD details of the WHP and ESI to ensure that livestock are not processed for human consumption before these have expired and or where a physical contaminant is known to be present in an animal.

Records should include:

- *Treatment date*
- *Animal/mob identification*
- *Chemical/medicine used, including batch number and expiry date*
- *Dose rate*
- *Relevant Withholding Period and/or Export Slaughter Interval (and date of expiry) or date animal is first eligible for sale*
- *Adverse reactions (if applicable)*
- *Broken needle still in animal (if applicable)*

Learn more

A dedicated module within LPA Learning explains what you need to know regarding LPA's requirements for safe and responsible animal treatments. Information is also provided on the ISC website (**www.integritysystems.com.au/on-farm-assurance/safe-and-responsible-animal-treatments/**).

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