

Understanding Label Usage

There are two basic drug classes: 1) over-the-counter (OTC) and 2) prescription (Rx).

OTC medications can be purchased from a farm store without a written prescription. Prescription medications are obtained through a pharmacy and only when prescribed by a veterinarian. In both cases, follow your veterinarian's guidance and direction when making medical decisions about your animal. You also need to understand drug label usage.

| Use | Description |
|-----------------|---|
| Label Use | Using a medication as EXACTLY indicated on the label. |
| Extra-Label Use | Using a medication in a manner other than what is stated on the label but with the guidance of a veterinarian. Examples of extra-label use include giving an increased dosage, using a different route of administration, changing duration of treatment, treating a disease or condition not listed on the label, or treating a species not listed on the label. |
| Off-Label Use | Using a medication in a manner other than what is stated on the label and <i>without</i> guidance from a veterinarian under the extra-label policy. This is ILLEGAL. |

Use your knowledge to match each scenario to the correct label usage. Answer A, B or C in the blanks below.

- A. Label Use
- B. Extra-Label Use
- C. Off-Label Use

1. _____ You notice your cow has a swollen hock and is limping. You would like to use an anti-inflammatory drug to help with the swelling. Your veterinarian prescribes a drug for use in your cow even though the label states it is to be used only in horses.
2. _____ Your heifer bloats at the fair. You are at the fair and have tried walking her, but it doesn't help. Your advisor tells you to tube your heifer and administer vegetable oil to counter the froth. He tells you this is a common practice and that the vet would tell you to do the same thing. You follow the advisor's instructions.
3. _____ You purchase an over-the-counter de-wormer for your heifer at a local feed store. You decide to increase the dosage from what the label recommends to make sure all of the parasites are taken care of.
4. _____ Your calf has a temperature of 103 degrees F and is coughing. Your veterinarian stops by the farm when you are not home and diagnoses the calf with pneumonia. He leaves a syringe with an antibiotic. You follow the instructions the veterinarian left and give the drug SQ in the neck.

5. _____ You have a veterinary feed directive (VFD) to feed a starter pellet to your younger calves to prevent coccidiosis. Your feed salesperson is running late with your family's order of pellet grain for your lactating cows. You decide to give your milk cow a scoop of the calf starter pellet so that she can eat during milking.
6. _____ While giving annual vaccinations, you are running low on needles and syringes and decide to mix two vaccines together in one syringe to save on supplies. You don't think your veterinarian will have a problem with it.
7. _____ You have a two-month-old calf that has scours. You decide to purchase an anti-diarrheal that does not require a prescription or a veterinary feed directive (VFD) at the feed store to help your calf. You talk to your vet after purchasing the drug and follow the dosing instructions on the package.
8. _____ Your cow's rear right foot and leg are swollen and tender. The veterinarian has diagnosed her with a hoof abscess. The infection has begun spreading up her leg. Your vet gives your cow a higher dose of an antibiotic than what is recommended on the label.

Key: 1 B, 2 C, 3 C, 4 A, 5 C, 6 C, 7 A, 8 B.