

Responsible Use of Antimicrobials in Dry Cow Management

RUMA® guidelines for the responsible use of antimicrobials by dairy farmers in Dry Cow Management have been designed to provide quick and easy to read guiding principles that can be used by those involved in managing dry cow periods.

These guidelines summarise the responsibilities of dairy farmers, give advice on strategies to reduce the need for usage and, where necessary, how to use antimicrobials responsibly to safeguard the health and welfare of their animals in Dry Cow Management. They should be read together with the comprehensive RUMA guidelines for the responsible use of antimicrobials in cattle and other livestock.

In order for medicines to be used responsibly they must be lawfully obtained and used in accordance with the label directions or veterinary advice

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For Farmers*

The use of animal medicines carries with it responsibilities. Under UK legislation, all antimicrobials are licensed for specific species and uses.

A product will not be authorised unless very stringent requirements are met. The use of antimicrobials is under the direct responsibility of veterinary surgeons.

Farmers, however, have a very considerable role to play in ensuring that the directions of the veterinary surgeon are properly carried out and in developing and applying disease control measures which minimise the need for antimicrobial use.

*"Farmers" includes all those on farm involved in looking after the animals e.g. stock-keepers

GUIDELINES FOR THE RESPONSIBLE USE OF ANTIMICROBIALS IN DRY COW MANAGEMENT

All farmers have a responsibility for the health and welfare of the animals on their farm. Farmers and stock-keepers can play a major role in ensuring the responsible use of antibiotics and other antimicrobials on farms by following these guidelines.

- All dairy farmers must be totally committed to producing safe food.
- Dairy farmers should together with the farm's veterinary surgeon draw up, implement and regularly review a herd health plan that outlines routine preventive measures (e.g. milking machine testing, teat dip, parlour hygiene) and disease control policy, including dry cow therapy.
- Dry Cow Management is an essential part of a dairy farmer's routine to ensure the health and welfare of their cows.
- The dry cow period is a high risk time for acquisition of new bacterial infections.
- The current concerns over the use of antibiotics and possible implications with antimicrobial resistance mean it is timely to review the concept of treating all cows at the end of lactation to both prevent new infections and treat any existing infections.

Dairy farmers should

- Develop, implement and regularly review a dry cow strategy for your cows with your vet.
- Record all mastitis cases and treatments.
- Monitor the farm's and each cow's bacteriological status by
 - bulk milk cell count value,
 - routine screening for bacteria and patterns of antimicrobial resistance
 - individual cow cell counts.
- Use the monitoring results with your vet to decide the appropriate treatment for each cow you are drying off
 - do nothing and monitor closely for the potential development of mastitis (a health and welfare risk for the cow)
 - use an internal teat sealant

- use a dry cow antibiotic
- use both an internal teat sealant and antibiotic.

- Accurate information must be given to the attending veterinary surgeon to ensure that the correct diagnosis can be made, medication chosen and dosage calculated.
- Dairy farmers will receive clear instructions regarding diagnosis, medication, dosage and administration from their veterinary surgeon. Ensure this is available to all who are involved in the care of the animals concerned.
- The prescribing veterinary surgeon must be made aware of other medicines being administered to the animal(s) concerned so that adverse reactions can be avoided.
- Do not borrow medicines or move products between farms. All prescribed antimicrobials are specific to the site and population for which they are prescribed.
- Do not use illegally obtained antibiotics.
- Make sure that the appropriate withdrawal period is complied with before the slaughter of treated animals or inclusion of milk from treated cows to the bulk milk tank. The withdrawal time required will be specified on the label of the medicine and is the minimum required. The veterinary surgeon may extend this in certain circumstances.
- Appropriate information on all medicines used should be kept on file and readily available to stock-keepers e.g. product data sheets, package inserts or safety data (COSHH) sheets.
- An animal medicines record book/on-line record, copies of relevant regulations and Codes of Practice must be kept safely on farm (e.g. the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) Code of Practice on the Responsible Use of Animal Medicines on the Farm available at www.vmd.defra.gov.uk).
- Accurate information recording the identity of the treated cattle and the nature of the condition being treated must be kept. Records should also include the batch number, amount and expiry date of the medicine used, plus treatment time and date information for each animal treated and the withdrawal period that must be observed. Medicine records required by legislation must be kept for at least five years (even if the cattle in question have been slaughtered).

The Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture Alliance (RUMA®) was established in November 1997 to promote the highest standards of food safety, animal health and animal welfare in British livestock farming.

A unique initiative involving organisations representing every stage of the "farm to fork" process, RUMA aims to promote a co-ordinated and integrated approach to best practice. RUMA membership spans the livestock industry and includes organisations representing interests in agriculture, veterinary practice, the pharmaceutical industry, retail, consumers and animal welfare interests.

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RUMA is made up of the following organisations:

Agricultural Industries Confederation (AIC)
AHDB – Dairy (formerly known as Dairy Co)
AHDB – Pigs (formerly known as BPEX) and AHDB – Beef and Lamb (formerly known as EBLEX)
Animal Health Distributors Association (AHDA)
Animal Medicines Training Regulatory Authority (AMTRA)
Assured Food Standards (AFS) better known as Red Tractor Assurance
British Egg Industry Council (BEIC)
British Poultry Council (BPC)
British Retail Consortium (BRC)
British Veterinary Association (BVA)
City and Guilds Land Based Services
Dairy UK
Game Farmers' Association (GFA)
Linking Environment & Farming (LEAF)
National Beef Association (NBA)
National Farmers' Union (NFU)
National Office of Animal Health (NOAH)
National Pig Association (NPA)
National Sheep Association (NSA)
NFU Scotland (NFUS)
Royal Association of British Dairy Farmers (RABDF)
Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS)
Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)
Scottish Salmon Producers' Organisation (SSPO)