

Food Safety Program, for Farms

Proper Storage of Animal Health Products

Handling and storing livestock medications

Choose suitable storage facilities

Proper handling and storage of livestock medications can protect your meat and milk products from contamination from drug residue. Using proper storage facilities not only ensures medications remain effective – it also helps reduce potential errors in products and treatment.

The ideal location for a storage unit is a clean, dry, frost-free area, such as a farm office or utility room. Animal health products should also be protected from changes in temperature, sunlight, dust, moisture, animals and insects.

Different medications – different temperatures

Temperatures play a major role in how medications are stored. Many antibiotics are heat-sensitive. Store these products in a refrigerator at a temperature between 2°C and 8°C to maintain their potency. Various other products require storage in a cool (below 15°C), but not refrigerated, location. Vaccines with modified live organisms are less effective if stored at room temperature.

Check product labels for information on storage temperatures.



Light sensitivity

Some products decompose when exposed to light. Manufacturers package these products in light-resistant containers. Continue to protect these products by storing them in light resistant areas.

Organizing storage

Different classes of products (ex: antibiotics, vaccines, de-wormers) – or products for different species – should be stored on separate shelves with labels. By keeping your storage areas organized, you reduce the potential for error.

Safety/Security

Always lock storage units to prevent access by children and to prevent theft.

Inventory management

Successfully manage your on-farm medication inventory.

- Buy drugs in quantities that will be used within a reasonable amount of time.
- Before buying, check product expiry dates.
- Use products with older expiry dates first.
- Check open containers to ensure stoppers and caps have proper seals. Products with leaking seals should be used immediately or properly disposed.
- Always check the contents of stored opened containers before using. If there is any discolouration or cloudiness, properly dispose.
- Clean and reorganize your storage unit and refrigerator regularly.

PROPER DISPOSAL OF MEDICATIONS

Safe disposal of livestock medications is crucial. It ensures farm employees, family, untreated livestock and the environment are protected from accidental exposure to potentially hazardous chemicals.

Note: Some veterinarians and manufacturers will accept product returns. Take the product back to where you bought it.

Disposing of products safely

Ensure safe disposal of livestock medications.

- Animal pesticides (ex: de-wormers, louse control products) must be disposed of the way crop pesticides are.
- Never reuse livestock medicine containers.
- Keep containers that are to be disposed of away from children, livestock and pets.
- Most washed containers (with the exception of pesticide containers) may be disposed in landfill sites. Check with your municipality.
- In some municipalities, medications can be disposed on household hazardous waste days. Consult your municipality.

Remember:

Proper storage and handling of veterinary medications ensure drug effectiveness and reduce potential for treatment error.

Consult your veterinarian:

Learn more about preventive, animal health management and the proper use of livestock medications.

For information on the Food Safety Program, for Farms, contact your local Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives [GO Office](#), or visit our website at manitoba.ca/agriculture.