



## 4-H Animal Owner Responsibilities: Be Aware of Drug Residues

Sally W. Barney, Extension Specialist, 4-H Youth Development

### What are drug residues?

When you give an animal a medication, the drug usually travels throughout the animal's body and may stay there for some time. The portion of the drug that remains in the animal's body after the drug has served its intended purpose is called the *drug residue*.

The Federal Drug Administration (FDA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) have regulations regarding drug residues in farm animals, or the products from farm animals, marketed for food. All 4-H members who own animals must follow these regulations.

### What harm comes from drug residues?

Drug residues in an animal's system could be passed on to humans if the human consumes that animal's meat or products (like eggs or milk) from that animal before the residues have cleared its body.

### What should you know and do about drug residues?

Each feed or drug manufactured for animal use must carry a label. The label will tell you exactly what the product contains and how to administer or feed it. If there is a danger that some of the product given will remain in the animal's system as a residue for any length of time, the instructions will include a *withdrawal time*. Withdrawal time means the length of time the animal must have been off the product for all residues to have worked their way through and out of the animal's body.

If you adhere to all stated withdrawal times before marketing or consuming the animal's meat or any products (such as milk or eggs), you will help keep the human food supply safe.

As a responsible animal owner you should use the following guidelines:

- ❖ Know exactly what you are giving your animal at all times.
- ❖ Read all labels carefully and follow directions exactly.
- ❖ Follow label directions and withdrawal times.
- ❖ Use only FDA approved drugs, chemicals and feed additives.
- ❖ Consult with your veterinarian if you have any questions regarding withdrawal times for any drugs he/she might administer.
- ❖ Keep good records on each animal, including treatment dates and medications or medicated feeds used.
- ❖ Plan ahead. If you are going to market an animal, make sure the animal is residue free. This includes preparing ahead for 4-H auction sales.

- ❖ Properly store medications in a clean dry, enclosed area away from feed.
- ❖ Consult your veterinarian if you have any questions.
- ❖ Remember, feed, worming medications, antibiotics, growth stimulants, or other animal products might be involved. Read the label!

### Activities

Study various labels from wormers, antibiotics, medicated feed and other products. Identify correct dosages and withdrawal times. Have a veterinarian talk to your 4-H club or your family about animal medications and health supplies.

Practice good animal health management; prepare a place at home for safe storage of animal medical supplies.

Begin a recordkeeping process that will help you avoid the problem of drug residues.

Adapted from: Iowa State University: "Important Information for 4-H Market Animal Exhibitors". Prepared by James D. McKean, Darrell Trampel, Extension Veterinarians; Deb Hall, 4-H Youth Development Specialist, Melva Berkland, Extension Communication Specialist.

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