Hello, Neighbors! Change is often the hallmark of a new year. An important change that affects managers of food producing animals is a new FDA regulation that restricts access to some medications that were previously available over-the-counter.

Implications of the FDA veterinary feed directive
By Heather Kolich, ANR agent

On the first day of 2017, the Food and Drug Administration’s Veterinary Feed Directive went into effect, restricting the availability of many types of medication for food producing animals. The VFD targets medications that are important in both animal and human health. The objective of the directive is to slow the development of antibiotic-resistant strains of bacteria.

When drug therapy is called for, animal owners and caretakers have always been charged with using medications only on the animal species and for the treatment purposes specified on the medication label. While food animal owners still have a humane obligation to treat sick animals, the FDA regulation removes over-the-counter availability from certain animal medications that have counterparts in human healthcare.

Now, before a producer may purchase feed products that contain medically-important antimicrobials, he or she must obtain a written order from a veterinarian who has a relationship with the animal producer and has examined the animals to be treated. The written order must contain specific information, including an expiration date of the order. When the order expires, the producer must stop using the medicated feed. Speaking before agricultural professionals at the Georgia Ag Forecast in Marietta earlier this month, University of Georgia Assistant Professor of Veterinary Medicine Brent Credille explained that medicated feed remaining after the veterinarian’s order expires may be stored, but may not be fed to animals unless and until a new VFD order calling for the medication in that feed is provided by the veterinarian.
Prior to enforcement of the FDA regulation, some medicated feed labels indicated that using the product would improve weight gain or conversion of feed to food products. To further clarify that antimicrobials may be administered only to treat or prevent disease, the FDA’s new directive prohibits use of claims of improved feed efficiency on the labels of medicated feed products.

For antimicrobials administered through the animals' water source, the veterinarian must write a prescription. Instructions for use are provided on the medication label.

While the VFD strives to mitigate the development of antimicrobial-resistant bacteria, the requirement that food animal producers have a client and patient relationship with a veterinarian before they can obtain medications to treat sick animals creates a challenge to producers in areas with a scarcity of large animal vets, vets with a background in avian medicine, and/or vets with knowledge of honeybees. Fortunately for the latter, the Northeast Center for Beekeeping has begun compiling a database of veterinarians with an interest in treating honeybees. Beekeepers can find bee-friendly veterinarians in their state through a tool on the www.BeeVets.com website.

What can producers do to protect animal health?
Focus on disease prevention:

- Vaccinate where possible to prevent disease
- Use dewormers as necessary to maintain health
- Provide nutrition appropriate to animal’s age and stage of production
- Use biosecurity measures to prevent introduction of disease into animal populations
- Monitor animals frequently for signs of stress and illness

When illness breaks:

- Act quickly to properly diagnose illness and begin appropriate treatment in early stages
- If antimicrobials are called for, follow veterinarian directions for administration of medications
- Follow up with veterinarian if animals do not respond as expected to drug treatment
- Keep records indicating:
  - Diagnosis of illness
  - Which animals were treated
  - Which medications were used and how they were given
  - Dates and doses administered
  - Name of person who administered the medications

Animal producers, veterinarians, and feed distributors are all required to keep a copy of the written VFD, in its original form, on record for two years.
FRESH AND LOCAL FOODS for February -- SPINACH
By Barbara Worley, FACS agent

Spinach was a “super food” long before super foods were trendy. Full of vitamins A, C and iron, the beautiful green leafy vegetable was first cultivated in Persia (modern day Iran) more than 2000 years ago. Popeye ate copious amounts that made his biceps “pop,” and children have made puckered faces for years at the thought of eating the versatile green leaves.

I grew up eating spinach, mainly in salads. My mother made the best spinach salad dressing that she would shake up in a mason jar. I can still picture her reaching for it on the top shelf above the stove where she kept it – it was a jar she kept solely for that purpose. The dressing was the perfect sweet-sour blend to pour over the greens that were topped with protein packed eggs, salty bacon, red onions and the most delightfully crunchy water chestnuts, which were my favorite part.

Fresh spinach also makes a great addition to soups, pasta dishes, and casseroles. Whether enjoyed cooked or raw, there are endless possibilities to enjoy spinach as part of an everyday diet.

Mom’s Spinach Salad

**Salad:**
4 slices bacon, or more to taste
1 (16 ounce) bag fresh spinach, stems removed
2 hard-cooked eggs, chopped
1 4 oz can sliced water chestnuts, drained
1 small red onion, thinly sliced

**Dressing:**
½ cup white sugar
1/3 cup ketchup
¼ cup vegetable oil
¼ cup vinegar
2 tsp. Worchestershire sauce

Place the bacon into a skillet over medium heat and cook until browned and crisp, turning often, about 10 minutes. Transfer the bacon to paper towels to absorb excess grease. Crumble the bacon when cool.

Place the spinach into a large salad bowl and sprinkle with crumbled bacon, hard-cooked eggs, water chestnuts, and onion. Gently toss the salad.

In a jar, combine dressing ingredients and shake until combined. Pour the dressing over the salad. Enjoy!
FEBRUARY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES WITH EXTENSION

Forsyth County Schools College and Career Fair – February 2, 2017
Thinking about college and career options? Stop by the UGA Extension booth at the Forsyth Conference Center to chat with Extension agents, a UGA ambassador, learn about opportunities in the high-tech world of agriculture and animal science, and learn how 4-H can help you prepare for college.

Enhancing the Safety of Locally Grown Foods – February 3, 2017
Whether you’re growing fresh produce for local markets, to supplement food assistance programs, or for school garden experiences, food safety is a top priority. Through this training, UGA Extension agents Josh Fuder, Alexis Roberts, and Heather Kolich will equip food producers and market managers with knowledge and safe handling practices to prevent food contamination and protect yourself and your clients.

When: Friday, February 3, 2017 from 8:30-noon
Where: Cherokee County Administration Building, 1130 Bluffs Parkway, Canton
Cost: $5 per person; includes materials and a certificate of completion
Registration deadline: February 1, 2017
Registration form: http://extension.uga.edu/calendar/event.cfm?pk_id=11248

Native Azaleas Lunch and Learn Lecture – February 8, 2017
Join the Forsyth County Master Gardener Extension Volunteers at their February Lunch and Learn program. Bring your lunch and learn about native azaleas from Charles Andrews, a member of the American Rhododendron Society.

When: Wednesday, February 8, 2017 at 12:30 p.m.
Where: Post Road Library, 5010 Post Road, Cumming, 30040
Cost: Free – but bring your own lunch!
Registration deadline: February 6, 2017
To Register: Email billroper@bellsouth.net by Monday, February 6, 2017.

Soup and Talk – February 15, 2017
Forsyth County Parks and Recreation and Extension have teamed up to bring you a program of interesting nature topics and a delicious lunch catered by local restaurants. In February, you'll learn about frogs and toads and what they tell us about the environment. Learn more and register!

Dig In with Master Gardeners – February 18, 2017
Forsyth County Master Gardener Extension Volunteers support gardens all around the county. On February 18, they invite families to “dig in” with them and learn about roots and their importance, and enjoy some hands-on activities to help you start your own family garden at home. Learn more and sign up!
Lotus Propagation Workshop – February 25, 2017
If you’ve visited Forsyth County Extension during the summer, you’ve probably noticed the striking pink lotus flowers in the pond at the Learning for Life Garden. If you’d like to add lotus flowers to your water garden, join us for a hands-on workshop to learn how to propagate and grow them. Participants will go home with lotus seeds and a fresh tuber. Register now!

When: Saturday, February 25, 2017 from 10-11:30 a.m.
Where: Forsyth County Extension Office, 875 Lanier 400 Parkway, Cumming 30040
Cost: $15 per person
Registration deadline: Wednesday, February 22, 2017

ADVENTURES WITH 4-H

Cloverleaf Camp: 4th-6th Graders – Register now!
At this week long summer camp at Wahsega 4-H Center in Dahlonega, Georgia, campers participate in a wide variety of activities including three high ropes courses (zip line, climbing wall, and flying squirrel), archery, tubing, gold panning, stream & forest ecology, snakes class, wilderness survival, water games, and a friendly competition. At night, we have campfires, a talent show, and a hillbilly costume party! Sign up began on January 23rd, but there is still space available. For more information, and to download the camp application/flyer, you can visit the Summer Camp Information page under 4-H Youth Development of our website (http://ugaextension.org/county-offices/forsyth.html) or contact the 4-H staff at 770-887-2418.

Cloverleaf County Project Achievement (CPA): 4th-6th Graders – February 23, 2017
County Project Achievement (CPA) is a great opportunity for 4th-6th graders to practice and build their public speaking skills. This fun event allows 4-H’ers to create a 3-5 minute presentation on any topic that they find interesting! This free activity will be held on Thursday, February 23rd at Shiloh Point Elementary School (8145 Majors Road, Cumming) from 6:00-8:00pm. The deadline to sign up is February 17th. For more information, and to sign up, you can visit the Upcoming Events page under 4-H Youth Development on our website (http://ugaextension.org/county-offices/forsyth.html) or contact the 4-H staff at 770-887-2418.

Poultry Judging: 4th-12th Graders
We are starting sign-ups for the 2017 4-H Poultry Judging Team! On this team, 4-H’ers will learn the standards used in poultry and egg production and marketing, then how to apply such standards in realistic situations. At the weekly hands-on practices, they will examine eggs for quality, identify ready to cook parts, and even learn to identify quality and potential egg production of live hens! Practices will be Tuesdays beginning February 28th and end with the competition in early May. For more information and to sign up contact Mr. Jack at ilowery2@uga.edu or at (770) 887-2418.