

FDA Bans Ruminant Animal Proteins

The following information is a short fact sheet on how the FDA ban on the feeding of ruminant protein to ruminants affects 4-H youth projects and an example form that 4-H and FFA members can use to request the feed supplier to certify that the feed that they provided to the youth member was in compliance with the FDA regulation 21 CFR 589.2000.

These records relate to Good Production Practice #9 in the respective 4-H project and record books. Youth should be encouraged to maintain these records on the "Attach Your Own Feed Tag" page in the Quality Assurance Section of their book and on the "Feed Expense Record" page in the Record Book Section of the 4-H project and record book (name of the feed product and name and address of the feed supplier should be provided).

**The FDA ban on the feeding of ruminant-derived protein to ruminants:
What does it mean for youth livestock exhibitors?**

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Why did the ban occur and what are its implications?

Feeding ruminant-derived proteins to ruminants is prohibited in the United States as one of the safeguards used to prevent the introduction or transmission of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE; also called “mad cow disease”) into our cattle, sheep, goat, and other ruminant animal flocks and herds. It is believed that the feeding of rendered cattle or sheep tissues, usually as meat and bone meal, to supply additional protein in ruminant animal diets was responsible for the spread of BSE in the United Kingdom and perhaps elsewhere in Europe. In 1997, the FDA implemented a rule that prohibits the feeding of most mammalian-derived animal protein to ruminant animals. Actually the ban is on the feeding of mammalian-derived protein to ruminants, except for blood, blood products, gelatin, milk, milk products, protein derived solely from swine and equine sources, and inspected meat products which have been offered for human food and further heat processed for food, such as plate waste from restaurants and other institutions. With these exceptions, the restriction is mainly on ruminant derived protein. Feed manufacturers are required to place a warning on any bag of feed that contains prohibited material according to the ban, stating “Do not feed to cattle or other ruminants.” Feed manufacturers are required to keep detailed records for at least one year. Also, individuals responsible for feeding ruminant animals must maintain copies of all purchase invoices for all feeds received that contain animal protein and copies of labeling for feeds containing animal protein products for a minimum of one year.

How does this affect junior fair exhibitors?

If you exhibit a ruminant animal (cattle, sheep, and goats) in a junior fair livestock exhibition where the animal is to be sold near the end of the fair, you may be requested to sign a statement certifying that you have not fed any ruminant-derived protein to your show animal. This is already being asked in many markets. Certification at the point of sale has come about as a result of requests for assurances by food manufacturers and retail suppliers of animal food products that the animals used in our food supply have not been fed ruminant-derived protein. Remember, your project animals are entering the food chain just like all the other animals in commercial food production units.

What do I need to do to comply?

The FDA rule only applies to ruminant animals (cattle, sheep, and goats). If you intend to exhibit and sell one of these animals, you should find out from your feed supplier whether the complete feed, or any supplements you add to the feed, that is given to your animals contains any ruminant-derived protein. You may wish to ask your supplier to provide their answer in writing. A sample request form is provided for your use. The records required due to the FDA ban on animal protein feeding must be maintained for a minimum of one year, but as part of your Quality Assurance Program, you are encouraged to keep copies of these documents and other project records for two years.

FDA Bans Nitrofurans

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) bans two topical nitrofurans.

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One of the treatments producers and youth exhibitors have used commonly in the past for pinkeye has been topical sprays or puffer bottles containing the familiar yellow nitrofurazone powders. These products have also been used for treatment of minor cuts and wounds on many animal species. This class of compounds has been banned from all systemic uses in food animals for some time, but some topical uses have been allowed.

In the past, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) permitted two approved topical nitrofurans to be used in cattle. These products were: furazolidone aerosol powder (trade names such as Topazone and Furox aerosol) and nitrofurazone topical powder for pinkeye and wounds (trade names such as NFZ Puffer and P.E. 7). Because recent research has shown that detectable residues can occur in edible tissues after treatment of the eye with these products and because these compounds are considered potential cancer causing agents, the FDA has banned all uses of these products in all food animals effective in May of 2002.

This action places these products in the same class as clenbuterol, chloramphenicol, diethylstilbestrol and others. Extra label use by veterinarians is also prohibited. Some of these drug products that are banned may still remain in commercial distribution channels with their old labels that indicate use in food-producing animals. As of December 2002, some web sites are still listing these products as available and indicate they can be used in cattle, sheep and goats. There also may be some of these products still in the medicine cabinets or show boxes of youth exhibitors.

The FDA wishes to remind producers and veterinarians, however, that the new rule supersedes these labels and such products cannot be used in food animals. It would be a good idea for producers and youth exhibitors to check their medical supplies and destroy these products if they have them. Because there may be additional brand names besides the ones mentioned above, they should check the list of ingredients and look for "nitrofurazone" and "furazolidone" to determine whether the product contains the banned drugs. Use of these products in food producing animals may create a situation where these animals can never be marketed for food. The FDA's order became effective May 7, 2002.