



LKL Safety Note

Safe Use of Veterinary Medicines

As a Dairy farmer, it's essential that you take the necessary steps to protect the health of your animals. Maintaining good health is important to ensure acceptable standards of animal welfare, but such measures will also maximise the productivity of your herd.




Veterinary medicines include, for example, antibiotics, vaccines, wormers, (anthelmintics). Some veterinary medicines contain hazardous substances that may be harmful to human health and so the legislation requires you to look at how you store, handle and use the substance and carry out a risk assessment as required by the **COSHH Regs.** (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002)

When you need to administer veterinary medicines to livestock, you will need effective control measures to reduce the risks to human health, for example:

COSHH regulations recommend using a **Hierarchy of controls measures to work safely.**

- **Firstly obtain the Safety Data sheet for the medicine** to find out the safety information available.
- **Decide which of the range of authorised treatments is most effective in preventing or controlling the condition in animals but poses the least risk to people and the environment.** Use less hazardous products if possible e.g. water based rather than oil based. (In one severe incident with an oil based antibiotic injection injury resulted in an amputation of a finger)
- **Look at the potential routes of exposure to staff.** Vet medicines can get into the body in a variety of ways such as absorption through the skin and puncture wounds from accidental injections, ingestion from accidentally swallowing or contamination on hands when eating or drinking and inhalation from breathing in an aerosol. Remember also some animal diseases are infectious to humans via zoonosis.

Consider your options for control measures to reduce risk: -

- **Having suitable facilities to ensure that animals are safely restrained** is important to prevent injury to staff from kicking, trapping of a limb and needle stick injury such as a cattle crush. 
- **Look at control measures in the application such as applicators with shrouded needles; automatic needle guards or other protective devices** can significantly reduce the risk of accidental injections or other needle stick injuries. Using devices containing a reservoir of disinfectant through which the needle is drawn before each injection, can reduce risk of infection from injuries involving 'dirty' needles. 
- **Try and carry out operations in areas of good general ventilation.**
- **Consult the safety data sheet to identify what PPE is required** including gloves, gauntlets, safety goggles and masks as necessary, and train staff in using them.
- **Provide facilities for the safe disposal of sharps such as sharp bins.** 
- **Ensure good personal hygiene.** All cuts and abrasions should be covered with waterproof dressings. Any splashes on skin should be washed off immediately and contaminated clothing changed. Adequate washing facilities should be available and staff should practice good hand hygiene.
- **Have suitable lockable storage facilities including separate refrigerators if that is required.** Storage containers or areas should be fire resistant for 30 minutes. Do not keep more medicines than you need or keep out of date medicines. Discuss with your vet how to suitably dispose of out of date medicines.
- **Keep an inventory of everything stored along with the COSHH data sheets.**
- **Have plans for emergencies including knowing the nearest hospital.** If someone accidentally injects themselves, take them to the nearest hospital along with the safety data sheet of the product, to get treatment.

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Veterinary medicines records are required to be kept for 5 years and should contain the supplier details, date and quantity acquired, when it was administered and for how long for, ID of the animal treated and who by etc.

For **Tool Box talks** with staff on these subject areas of Vet Med storage, record keeping and Vet Med handling, see these guidance notes and YouTube video below from HSE and DairyCo (see below for links)

Our Regional Manager and Trainer, James Picot, can now offer LKL staff training in the Safe handling of Veterinary medicines and discuss compliance with the Little Red Tractor Scheme requirements. Contact your Regional Manager for more information.

Toolbox Talk resources: -

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ais16.pdf> Guidance on **Vet Med storage**

<https://youtu.be/7171UNHUjrs> Video by DairyCo on **vaccinations and record keeping**

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/as31.pdf> Guidance on **Vet Med handling**



Look After Yourself This Winter

With the colder months on the way – there are a few things to think about in order to keep yourself safe and healthy around the farm during the winter. Below are some top tips to think about.

Layer up - Clothing :- Layer up to help avoid cold stress and possible hypothermia if working out doors for extended periods of time. Manmade fabrics can be often better than cotton as they wick moisture away from the body, add a wool or fleece layer then a waterproof jacket. Don't forget to shed layers when working indoors and replace wet layers regularly. Wear a hat as you can lose a large percentage of heat through your head.

Glove up – Find some suitable gloves that have good insulation and flexibility. Extremities like hands and feet are most likely to get cold and numb and can lead to issues with not being able to grip or handle tools or equipment correctly and slowing down of movements.

Boot up – Ensure that boots have good rubber soles with good grips to provide better traction on wet, muddy, slippery and icy patches around the farm. A good pair of insulating thick walking socks help keep feet warm.

Warm up and Fuel up - Take regular short breaks in a warm indoor welfare space - Ensure that welfare spaces are adequately heated and staff can dry outdoor clothing. Drink warm sweet beverages (Preferably not too much caffeine) and eat high calorie snacks, such as fruit & nuts and meals. Its important to keep well fuelled when working out in the cold and wet, as food is digested it can help the body generate 10% more heat.

Avoid Slip ups and Grit up - Have a plan to clear routes around your farm buildings, and have a stock of gritting material and salt. Keep walkways clear of debris, water, ice and slippery materials. Where paths get too muddy use matting and aggregates to improve traction or provide alternative routes until they dry out. Ensure good outdoor lighting.

Buddy up - Avoid lone working where possible - Before going out on your land alone, always tell someone where you are going, and how long you will be gone for, Carry a charged mobile phone and a torch, wear suitable clothing, take a drink and snack.

All at LKL wish you a Safe, Healthy & Happy Christmas

By Michelle Jeal, LKL Health & Safety Advisor



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