



Guidelines for the Proper Management of Medicinal Product in Farms

The animal keeper of the farm should undertake to:

1. Keep animal records (commonly known as herd book) on the farm.
2. Ensure that he can provide proof of purchase and possession of medicinal product.
3. Get medicinal products only from authorised/approved sources.
4. Retain the yellow copy of the veterinary prescription in case of a hard copy of a prescription.
5. Understand that veterinary prescription for antibiotics and hormones are non-renewable.
6. Have an Animal Health Control Programme (AHCP).
7. Ensure the responsibility of the professional responsible for AHCP is real and not nominal.
8. Consult the Animal Health and Welfare Department on vaccination policies.
9. Dispose of any unused medicinal products or waste in the appropriate way.
10. Avoid the use of antibiotics to prevent diseases.
11. Take the animals for slaughter only after the withdrawal period has elapsed.
12. Report any adverse reactions or lack of efficacy.
13. Ensure that the animals are being fed properly.
14. Keep a clean environment in the farm.
15. Keep an optimum environment for the animals
16. Keep all the records and documents for a period of not less than three (5) years
17. Follow the principles of animal welfare

The requirements more in detail

1. *Keep animal records on the farm.* The herd book should include the following information:
 - (a) date of administration of the medicinal product;
 - (b) name/strength/pharmaceutical form of the medicinal product;
 - (c) quantity administered;
 - (d) identification of the animals treated;
 - (e) condition for which the medicinal product was administered;
 - (f) name and signature of veterinary surgeon who ordered/administered the medicine;

The records should be kept in chronological order. The farmer may be asked to provide the quantity and type of antimicrobial administered to each animal species.

2. *Ensure that he can provide proof of purchase and possession of medicinal product* to the authorised officer of the Animal Health and Welfare Department during official inspection or audits. Invoices or receipts may be requested during official inspections in order to show clearly from whom and in what quantities the medicinal products were obtained.
3. *Get medicinal products only from authorised/approved sources.* These can only be obtained from approved veterinary pharmacies, authorised veterinary wholesale dealers, pharmacies selling medicines for human use and warranted veterinary surgeons. Only authorised sources can guarantee that products preserves the products ' quality and effectiveness.

4. *Retain the yellow copy of the veterinary prescription* after the medicine has been dispensed. All yellow copies of the prescription shall be kept in tidy and orderly manner. The veterinary prescriptions should be kept in chronological order. Ideally the electronic veterinary prescription is used rather than hard copies. In this case keep the SMS you receive on your mobile phone.
5. *Understand that veterinary prescription for antibiotics and hormones are non-renewable.* Other prescriptions may be renewable depending on the type of medicinal product. Veterinary prescriptions for antibiotics are valid for 5 days.
6. *Have an Animal Health Control (AHCP) Programme under the responsibility of a professional registered with the Veterinary Services Council and follow it.* This will provide a big improvement in the health status of the animals and their welfare.
7. *Ensure that the responsibility for the AHCP of the professional registered with the Veterinary Services Council is real and not nominal.* Evidence that indicates that the responsibility assumed by the professional will be looked through when the Animal Health and Welfare Department conducts its inspections.
8. *Consult the Animal Health and Welfare Department* on vaccination policies prior to the use of certain vaccines on the farm. Certain diseases or strains of diseases are not present in Malta. Getting a vaccine with these diseases or strains can introduce them in the territory.
9. *Dispose of any unused medicinal products or waste materials derived from medicinal products of in the appropriate way.* The keeper of the farm can consult Waste Serve in order to get the relevant guidance. Medicinal products are chemicals that may persist in the environment for a long period of time if not disposed of properly.
10. *Avoid the use of antibiotics to prevent diseases* in animals, enhance their performance or promote growth. This practice will not kill bacteria. On the contrary it will select resistant bacteria that may be extremely difficult to eradicate.
11. *Take the animals for slaughter only after the withdrawal period has elapsed* (or according with cascade rules) indicated on the medicinal product specifications. If a withdrawal period is not respected, unacceptable quantities of residues of the medicinal products may remain in the meat, milk or eggs. The residues may be consumed by people causing harmful effects.
12. *Report any adverse reactions or lack of efficacy* to the of veterinary medicinal products Veterinary Medicines Section. This will help the section to remove defective products/ batches from the market or discover a new adverse effect of the product.
13. *Ensure that the animals are being fed properly.* The health of an animal depends in great part on what it eats. Nowadays there are a lot of special formulas for animals that change the gut flora of the animal and help it to fight disease in a more natural way. Some animals (e.g. piglets) can be weaned at an older age to prevent common diseases at that stage.

- 14 *Keep a clean environment in the farm* that avoids contamination and spread of microbes. The premises must be kept clean and measures that prevent the introduction of diseases must be in place. This is crucial to prevent disease and reduce reliance on antibiotics. Antibiotics should never be used to compensate lack of hygiene.
- 15 *Keep an optimum environment for the animals.* Farmers must ensure that animals are not too crowded and that they have the correct temperature and ventilation. Fans and heaters must be installed if necessary.
- 16 *Keep all the records and documents for a period of not less than five (5) years* in a neat and orderly way. Inspectors from regulatory entities can verify compliance only if records are available. If no records are available the inspectors have to assume the worst.
- 17 *Follow the principles of animal welfare.* When with interaction with animals farmers pay attention to the Animal welfare they would be hitting two birds with one stone. That is, they respect the principle that they deserve a proper life with respect, dignity and compassion; as well as reducing the risk associated with the use of medicines due to fewer animal illnesses

