CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF
FOOD & AGRICULTURE
Karen Ross, Secretary

November 3, 2026

Dear California Fair Junior Livestock Show Exhibitor and Auction Participant:

The California Department of Food and Agriculture's (CDFA) role is to ensure in every way possible a safe and wholesome supply of meat, milk, and eggs for the benefit of the consumer. Each California Fair Junior Livestock Auction exhibitor is producing a local source of food for members of their community. In addition to all local and state fair rules, you are responsible for following state and federal laws and regulations which ensure that meat, milk, and egg products from these animals can safely be consumed by your buyer.

You, as the exhibitor and seller of market-ready animals, will be responsible for any illegal drug use or carcass tampering. If there is evidence of illegal drug use or carcass tampering, a United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and/or state investigation will occur to determine the appropriate regulatory action. The extent of the exhibitor's intention or knowledge of the drug or substance found in the animal is not a valid defense under the law.

There are many decisions you have to make over the course of raising your livestock animal: various feeds and supplements to choose from; proper care in the event of illness; learning fitting techniques; and at times even conflicting advice from friends, family, breeders, and advisors**. The most important thing you can do to ensure you maintain a safe and ethically raised animal is to ask questions, understand the practices and products administered, and follow the label instructions of any product.**

To help maintain the legacy of Junior Livestock Auctions at California Fairs, CDFA's Safe Animal Feed Education Program (SAFE) has prepared the attached packet of educational materials to help ensure your awareness of state and federal laws and regulations and help guide your decisions on safe and proper use of all feed and drug products.

Sincerely,

Karen Ross

Karen Ross
Secretary

Enclosure

cc: Natalie Krout-Greenberg, Director
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Livestock Drug Residue Avoidance Guidelines

Ensuring California Fair Livestock Exhibitors Produce Safe Food

Each California fair livestock exhibitor is an important member of the human food supply chain and is raising a product for human consumption. Ensuring food safety through judicious use of livestock drugs and feed additives is required by the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (the Act) and by State law in Food and Agricultural Code (FAC), specifically sections 15072.5 and 14355.

The individuals responsible for raising and marketing fair show animals, including non-terminal exhibitions and breeding stock, are subject to all state and federal feed, drug, and food safety laws.

Any person that markets animals containing illegal substances or residues may be subject to regulatory action. The occurrence of illegal residue is regarded by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as *prima facie* evidence of improper drug use and may be an appropriate subject for enforcement action.

Exhibitors are responsible for ensuring that residues, whether intentional or unintentional, are not present in their animals.

Under the Act, FDA requires pre-market approval of all substances administered to an animal, including feed additives and animal drugs, to ensure potentially harmful residues do not enter the human food supply. FDA establishes approved levels of use, efficacy of drugs for each application, and withdrawal times based on scientific data to ensure residues are not present in an animal when it enters the human food supply.

Use of an Approved Animal Drug Contrary to Label Directions is a Violation of the Act.

Uses that are contrary to label directions include:

- × Ignoring labeled withdrawal times.
- × Using the drug in a species not indicated on the label.
- × Using the drug to treat a condition not indicated on the label.
- × Administering the drug at a different dosage than stated on the label.
- × Administering the drug in a different manner than indicated on the label (i.e. oral vs injection and type of injection).
- × Otherwise failing to follow label directions for use and administration of the drug.

Use of an Unapproved Animal Drug is a Violation of the Act.

Unapproved means any product or ingredient not approved by FDA for the intended species of animal and intended use. This includes, but is not limited to:

- × Any diuretic, tranquilizer, unapproved growth stimulant, or other unapproved medication meant for human usage.
- × Feed and feed supplements that contain unapproved ingredients.
- × Products labeled “all natural” that are not FDA-approved may contain ingredients that can result in a positive test.
- × Do not assume every product you can purchase over the counter is lawful or safe to administer to your livestock.
- × Do not assume products that are intended for human consumption are safe or lawful to administer to your animal.

You have an absolute responsibility to know what is in the feed and supplements you are giving your animals.

Here are some examples of drug use that have resulted in disqualification:

- Exposure to nicotine, caffeine, theobromine, etc. from use of coffee, chocolate and other stimulants.
- Use of human drugs (i.e. Benadryl, Advil, Tylenol, Pepto-Bismol, Lidocaine).
- Administering an off-label animal drug such as an antibiotic, hormone, corticosteroid, beta-agonist, anti-inflammatories, antipyretics, diuretics or anesthetics, without veterinary direction.

Remember, “off label” includes use in a different species or production class (growing vs. breeding) of animal unless otherwise prescribed by your veterinarian or not following withdrawal times. Off label use may result in longer withdrawal times and subsequent tissue drug residue.

Additionally, administering any substance internally or externally to an animal to change appearance for show is both unethical and may be in violation of the Act as tampering and adulterating the carcass.

Wondering if a product found in the market is approved for use? The Safe Animal Feed Education (SAFE) Program can answer questions! safe@cdfa.ca.gov.

Commercial Feed Regulatory Program and Livestock Drug Program: 916-900-5022 • feed_lvstk@cdfa.ca.gov

YOUTH FAIR EXHIBITOR

LIVESTOCK PROJECT DRUG RESIDUE AVOIDANCE DECISION TREE

START

Does your animal need medicine to treat or prevent illness or injury?

NO → Are you wanting to give a product that claims to change your animal's behavior, alter growth, affect body structure or function, or otherwise alter performance?

NO → **The product is likely a feed or feed supplement for providing only nutrition.**

YES → Always follow label directions for all feed and medications given to your animal. Only administer products labeled for use in your specific species and class of animal unless otherwise prescribed by you veterinarian. For all prescription and OTC drugs, maintain records of each treatment including the product name, animal identification, condition treated, dates of treatment, dosage given, and labeled withdrawal times.

YES → **Has a veterinarian prescribed medication?**

YES → Always follow label directions for all feed and medications given to your animal. Only administer products labeled for use in your specific species and class of animal unless otherwise prescribed by you veterinarian. For all prescription and OTC drugs, maintain records of each treatment including the product name, animal identification, condition treated, dates of treatment, dosage given, and labeled withdrawal times.

NO → Are you sure this over-the-counter (OTC) product is approved, safe, and effective for the intended use of your species of animal? Not every product offered in the marketplace is safe and legal for food producing animals. Any FDA-approved drugs will include specific directions for use on the label. If you are unsure, check with your veterinarian.

YES → **YES.** Local fair rules still may not allow "performance enhancing drugs," even when they are legal to use in your species of animal. Be sure to check your local fair rules.

→ Always follow label directions for all feed and medications given to your animal. Only administer products labeled for use in your specific species and class of animal unless otherwise prescribed by you veterinarian. For all prescription and OTC drugs, maintain records of each treatment including the product name, animal identification, condition treated, dates of treatment, dosage given, and labeled withdrawal times.

NO → **NO.** Any products intended to have these effects on your animal that are not FDA-approved are likely unsafe and illegal to use. Even "all-natural" products may contain ingredients that are unsafe.

→ Always follow label directions for all feed and medications given to your animal. Only administer products labeled for use in your specific species and class of animal unless otherwise prescribed by you veterinarian. For all prescription and OTC drugs, maintain records of each treatment including the product name, animal identification, condition treated, dates of treatment, dosage given, and labeled withdrawal times.

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