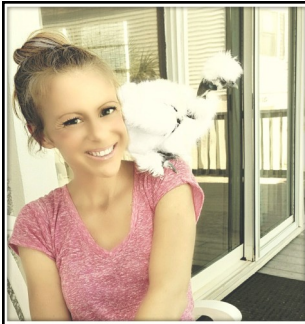


## "We Will Need A Prescription For What?!"



**Gretchen Suggs**  
**Sweetheart Silkies, Inc**

I can clearly remember a few years ago having a chat with some friends online. They were discussing the new

“Judicious use of Antimicrobials” Act and the laws which would be enforced in the future. This new law would place certain restrictions on “medically important” antimicrobials commonly used as an additive to feed or water for livestock, making them prescription only. A bit panicky, they were questioning when this law would take place? What drugs would be affected? Where would they, as simple backyard poultry enthusiasts, find the medications they now purchase at their local Tractor Supply Store? The ones we use for various conditions such as coccidia, intestinal parasites, respiratory illness, etc.? I quickly spoke up and stated (quite sure of myself) “there is no way this law would ever pass! Too many variables and too many different markets would be affected negatively!” Well, unfortunately, today I am eating those words as I was very wrong.

Because there is a lot of confusion and misinformation out there regarding these new laws going into place, I feel it is important to educate the backyard poultry enthusiasts, as knowledge is power and being prepared is essential. It is most important to understand *why* the FDA is taking these measures, know when the law takes effect and most importantly **what drugs will be affected and how to prepare to treat your chickens**. I will provide a partial list of antimicrobials which will be pulled off the market as “OTC” (Over the Counter) a way for you to begin to prepare. Lastly I will end by giving you a few web links so you can stay up to date on the process and governing of these meds by the FDA.

**WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL??** Contrary to popular belief, this is not a conspiracy among the government to make things impossible for us backyard poultry folks. To understand why this law has been passed, it is important to understand how antimicrobial feed and water additives, on a large commercial production scale, affect humans. Most of the drugs we use as silkie breeders in our poultry are also used in humans. We use them on a very small scale, and because we are talking exhibition silkies, we generally are not consuming these birds. The commercial farms that use these same antimicrobials, until now have had little regulation on these medicated additives. We have depended on our country's farmers to use these drugs responsibly. However, let's jump back to our small scale hobby farm: how many times have you dewormed a hen in hopes it would fix her soft shell egg issue... without actually having a fecal test done? Have you ever administered Oxytetracycline without having a culture and sensitivity done to know it is the correct antibiotic in which the problem bacteria will be sensitive to? Of course you have, we all have. Herein lies the problem.

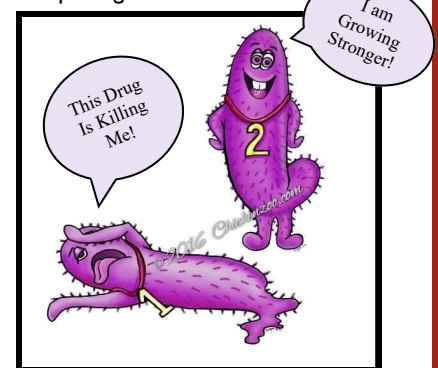
**“Contrary to popular belief, this is not a conspiracy among the government to make things impossible for us backyard poultry folks.”**

“No one is discounting the importance of these medications to animals.” stated Jim Kohl, Quality Assurance Manager for McKee Foods and Consultant for the FDA. He explained that “Antimicrobials are vital medicines for the treatment of bacterial infections in both humans and animals. Antimicrobials have also proved to be important for sustainable livestock production and for the control of animal infections that could be passed on to humans.” He went on to mention, “The benefit to human health in the proper use of antimicrobials in food animals is related to the ability for these drugs to combat infectious disease that can be transferred to humans. If we consumed

food from untreated animals, it would have a direct and dire impact on the human population and environment.”

Jim went on to add that, “studies now show the use of antimicrobials in food animals is not without risks.” In recent years, concerns about the use of antimicrobial products in food producing animals have focused on human food safety. The foods we eat of animal origin are many times identified as the cause of human food borne disease. More importantly - unregulated use of medicated feed/water additives in food animals is the reason for *resistant* food borne pathogens that may affect us today. Pathogens that are sensitive to an antimicrobial administered to an animal are killed and put at a competitive disadvantage, while pathogens lingering in the background build resistance.

**Example:** I have a silkie. I decide that since Penicillin is all I have on hand, I will treat her with that. Success! Bacteria #1 is sensitive to Penicillin, and is now set to be eliminated, yet my silkie hen has an Enemy Bacteria #2 lying dormant in the background, also being exposed to Penicillin. Enemy Bacteria #1 is dying off, my hen is getting healthier. Enemy Bacteria #2 it is NOT dying off. Why? Because it is not sensitive the administered antibiotic and it is developing and changing to evolve into a bacteria that have the ability to be resistant. Because of this “survival of the fittest”, unregulated antimicrobial agents are slowly increasing the prevalence of resistant pathogens.



Artwork Courtesy of  
Jennifer Pike

**WHICH DRUGS?** The FDA considers any antimicrobial that is used by both animals AND humans... to be “medically important”. These are the drugs that will be placed into the VFD (Veterinary Feed Directive) Ruling, and beginning January 2017, will only be available with a veterinarian’s prescription. The veterinarians, by law, must have a standing “doctor – patient” relationship, and have examined the patient or patients she is treating. Injectable medications, or medications formulated to be injected into the muscle or under the skin, will not be put on a restricted status. This means your Tylan Injectable, LA 200, etc... will still be over the counter beyond January 2017.

**SO HOW DO WE PREPARE?** The best way to prepare for this transition is to find a veterinarian willing to work with you and your flock. While your first thought may be expenses, you may find that many veterinarians who see your dog or cat, or your farm veterinarian will be willing to also see your chickens. Even if they do not regularly treat birds, they may be willing to trust your knowledge in treating your flock. Don’t lose hope as we approach 2017, as always, where there is a will there is a way! Wishing you a healthy & happy flock!

~ Gretchen Suggs  
Sweetheart Silkies

<b>Partial List of Commonly Used Water Soluble Antimicrobials Transitioning From OTC to Rx Status as of 01/2017</b>	
<b>ESTABLISHED DRUG NAME</b>	<b>PROPRIETARY DRUG NAME(S)</b>
Chlortetracycline	Aureomycin Pennchlor
Gentamicin	GentaMed Gentocin
Lincomycin	LincoMed Linxmed-SP
Lincomycin/Spectinomycin	L-S SpecLinx
Neomycin	NeoMed 325 Neo-Sol 50
Oxytetracycline	Pennox Tetroxy Tetroxy HCA
Penicillin	Penaqua Sol-G R-Pen Solu-Pen
Spectinomycin	Spectam Specto-Gard
Sulfadimethoxine	Albon Di-Methox Sulfamed-G
Sulfamethazine	SMZ-Med Sulmet
Sulfaquinoxaline	Domvet PoultrySulfa
Tetracycline	Duramycin Terra-Vet TetraMed
Hygromycin B (DeWormer)	Hygromix Strike III
Tylosin**	Tylan

<b>Partial List of Drugs that will Remain OTC</b> Some items listed may be considered "off-label" for Poultry	
<b>ESTABLISHED DRUG NAME</b>	<b>PROPRIETARY DRUG NAME(S)</b>
Amprolium	Corid Coccisure
Piperazine	Wazine
Ivermectin	Ivomec Agrimectin
Bacitracin	BMD Soluble 50%
Tiamulin	Denagard
Diclazuril	Clinacox
Albendazole	Valbazen
Fenbendazole	Safeguard Panacur
Tylosin Injectable***	Tylan 50 Tylan 200
Oxytetracycline Injectable***	LA 200
Penicillin Injectable***	Penicillin Procaine G Norocillin Agricillin
** Is already a prescription only product *** Any injectable formulated antimicrobials will not fall under the new VFD laws.	
<b>FOR THE ENTIRE LIST, PLEASE VISIT THE FDA WEBSITE</b>	

***“The best way to prepare for this transition is to find a veterinarian willing to work with you and your flock”***

<b>IMPORTANT TERMS TO KNOW</b>
<b>Antimicrobial:</b> An agent that kills microorganisms (fungus, yeast, bacteria) or inhibits their growth. More general than an antibiotic which only affects bacteria.
<b>Off Label:</b> Not approved by the FDA for use in a specific breed or for a specific ailment, but still dispensed by veterinarians, with that acknowledgement.
<b>Antibiotic:</b> A medicine that inhibits the growth of or destroys bacteria
<b>OTC:</b> Any drug which does not require a prescription to purchase. OTC stands for Over The Counter.
<b>VFD:</b> The new law going into effect January of 2017. Veterinary Feed Directive.
<b>Medically Important</b> Any antimicrobial drug which is considered important to both human health and animal health.
<b>Culture &amp; Sensitivity Test:</b> A two part lab test. A culture identifies the germ (such as bacteria or a fungus) that is causing the infection. Sensitivity test checks to see what kind of medicine, such as an antibiotic, will work best to treat the illness
<b>Pathogen:</b> A bacteria, virus, or other microorganism that can cause disease.

**IMPORTANT LINKS:**

**FDA’S WEBSITE:** <http://www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/NewsEvents/CVMUpdates/ucm499990.htm>

**ELANCO’S WEBSITE TO HELP UNDERSTAND THE NEW VFD:** <http://feedstuffs.com/vfd.aspx>

**ASSOCIATION OF AVIAN VETERINARIANS:** <http://www.aav.org>