Antibiotic Use in the Poultry Industry

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Current Changes

- Compliance with guidance 209 and 213 is on schedule. Most companies have already completed the transition.

- Most difficulties have involved developing and implementing processes for issuing, communicating, and archiving VFDs.

- Poultry industry has uniformly supported these changes.
Most important disease of broilers is coccidiosis. This is an intestinal protozoal disease found in every chicken house.

Coccidiosis is easily controlled by a prevention dosage of non-medically important antibiotics called ionophores.

Damage caused in the intestine by coccidiosis often leads to a serious clostridial disease called necrotic enteritis. This disease requires treatment with medically important antibiotics.

Live vaccines for coccidiosis still induce an unacceptable incidence of necrotic enteritis.

Necrotic enteritis can be prevented by using a prevention dosage of antibiotic in the feed during the known period of susceptibility.
Respiratory viruses are prevalent within the poultry industry. Some, such as infectious bronchitis virus exist in a constant state of mutation and change. This makes effective vaccination very difficult.

The end result of viral respiratory disease in a bird is secondary bacterial airsacculitis. This condition can only be treated effectively with medically important antibiotics.
Is it better to use a non-medically important antibiotic to prevent coccidiosis and necrotic enteritis or use no antibiotics and treat sick flocks with medically important antibiotics?

Should flocks with bacterial airsacculitis be treated with medically important antibiotics?

What do you do with flocks treated with antibiotics in a “no antibiotics ever” program?

Is it ethical to allow flocks to get sick when we know how to safely prevent the disease?