



AMR BULLETIN

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Storage of veterinary medicines

Correct storage can improve the effectiveness of veterinary medicines. Their storage requirements are detailed on product labels. In addition, Farm Assurance schemes also require that medicines are stored and handled appropriately.

Location

- The ideal location for a storage unit is in a clean, dry, frost-free area, such as a farm office or utility room. A clean, organised refrigerator makes an ideal storage unit for medicines.
- Animal health products should be protected from temperature changes, sunlight (manufacturers package light-sensitive products (for example, injectable tetracyclines) in light-resistant containers), dust, moisture, animals and insects.
- Keep medicines in their original containers, ideally in a secure and locked unit, out of the reach of children, animals or anyone not supposed to handle them.
- Medicines should not be kept with human or animal food or drink and they should also be stored away from syringes and dosing guns. Different classes of products (such as antibiotics, vaccines, anthelmintics, anti-inflammatories) should be stored on separate shelves to reduce the potential for treatment error.
- Where medicated feed is stored on farm, feed bins should be clearly labelled.

Temperature

- Storage temperatures can be critical, so that the medicine works with maximum efficacy.
- Vaccines need to be kept in a cold chain, between 2 and 8 degrees. It may take as little as 20 minutes for vaccine temperature to reach that of the surrounding conditions, so ensure cool storage of medicines during transport, for example, in a cool box. Purchase vaccines just before they are needed.
- Check if vaccines need to be brought up to a higher temperature before administration. Use vaccines within the timeframe described, as some have a short shelf life once the vial is opened.
- Most antibiotics are heat sensitive: store them in a refrigerator at a temperature between 2° and 8° C to maintain potency.
- Many other products require storage in a cool (below 15° C) but non-refrigerated location.
- Check farm fridges (put a maximum-minimum thermometer on the fridge). It may be financially worthwhile to invest in a remote fridge temperature sensor monitor that works through a smartphone app.



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