

# FARM SUPPLY STORES WILL SOON BE UNABLE TO SELL ANTIBIOTICS



## ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE IS A REAL THREAT TO WORLD HEALTH

Human health, animal health and global health are all being impacted by bacteria mutating and becoming resistant to antibiotics. Bacteria are an incredible life form that can reproduce in just minutes. These organisms are capable of rapidly mutating to become drug-resistant “superbugs”.

The use of antibiotics in human or veterinary medicine is a relatively recent phenomenon. The first antibiotic, penicillin, was discovered by Alexander Fleming in 1928. Over the decades that followed, several other antibiotics were developed. At the same time, bacteria were already mutating to become drug resistant. It’s been a race pitting human ingenuity against one of the oldest, simplest and most adaptive forms of life.

**Unfortunately for human, animal and global health, the bacteria are winning.**

The emergence of highly resistant bacteria is a worldwide phenomenon that is literally threatening modern medicine. When an antibiotic is introduced into a body, all of the body’s bacteria are exposed to the drug. Harmless and often beneficial bacteria that live on the skin, gut, respiratory tract and other areas are also being impacted. On a microscopic level, bacteria susceptible to the drug are killed or fail to reproduce. However, those that have mutated to a resistant form continue multiplying. The result is that the viability of modern medical procedures like joint replacements and organ transplants is threatened by the risk of developing potentially untreatable (and potentially fatal) postoperative bacterial infections.

Both physicians and veterinarians are ethically obligated to prescribe antibiotics only when indicated. Providing an antibiotic requires the patient be examined with enough informed diagnostic testing to ensure that an antibiotic is indicated and that the most appropriate drug is selected.

**Starting in 2017, distribution of antibiotics by farm supply stores is being phased out. Soon, veterinarians will be the only legal prescribers of antibiotics for animals.**

Animal owners and livestock producers have an equally important role to play in addressing this health care crisis. Antibiotics need to be taken as directed. Missing a dose or failing to take the entire prescription creates an environment that encourages resistant bacteria to thrive. All livestock producers will need to become informed about the changes to drug legislation coming later this year.

