

Records

To ensure consumer confidence and maintain market share, beef and dairy producers must be able to document the safety of their product. Through appropriate written documentation of products and processes used in managing beef and dairy cattle, producers can prevent residue problems. As a result, consumer confidence is strengthened. In addition, records showing and verifying the age and source of cattle are essential for value-added export markets.

Meat and milk products are routinely tested for violative residues by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. If a problem is detected, good records can help demonstrate responsible management. Effective documentation shows compliance with BQA training, proper animal identification, and effective and responsible use of drugs, pesticides, and herbicides. All records must be maintained in a permanent or written format for a minimum of three years. Producers and commercial haulers of cattle are responsible for ensuring that cattle are free of potential residues.

The record keeping forms in this chapter can be used as is or as a reference for developing a good record keeping system. Computerized systems make extensive evaluation easy and efficient; however, hand-kept record systems are still very effective. Each system has its own merits. The important thing is to be consistent in keeping records that are legible, easily retrieved, and maintained for a period of at least 36 months.

Maintaining Proper Records

Cattle producers must be able to document all the steps of production. Good production records allow for documentation, analysis, and improved financial decisions.

Maintaining a permanent record of all animal treatments is crucial for keeping drug residues out of meat and milk. Records should also provide a history so you and your veterinarian can better prescribe meaningful therapy and ensure that animals do not get sold for harvest or milk is marketed before the withdrawal time has expired. Records also serve as protection in case of regulatory follow-up.

It is important that all information recorded be maintained for at least three years.

Components of a Treatment Record

The treatment record should contain the following basic information:

- Treatment date
- Animal or group or lot identification
- Withdrawal time to slaughter for medication given
- Product used and manufacturer's lot/serial number
- Dosage given
- Route of administration (SQ, IM, etc.)
- Individual who administered the drug

It is important to have each animal permanently and uniquely identified to maintain an accurate treatment record.

Treatment record forms, found at the end of this chapter, can help record your cattle treatments.

Example Record Forms

The example record sheets are for use in developing a system to accumulate all the information relevant to beef and dairy quality and safety.

This system of records need not be complicated. A simple yet accurate system that allows the producer to document management practices on specific groups of cattle, individual animals, and the farming operation in general is all that is needed.