

10 Tips for Better Handling and Administering of Vaccines

Vaccinations are an important key to proper animal health and herd health management. And, to ensure that vaccination is as effective as possible, proper vaccine handling and administration are very important. The following tips from Dale Grotelueschen, veterinarian with Pfizer Animal Health, will help get you on the right path to better herd health management:



1. Consult your veterinarian to develop a protocol that fits the health goals of your operation.
2. Select a quality product. Consult your veterinarian to ensure you are selecting the right products for your use. It is important to purchase only federally licensed vaccines, such as Pfizer Animal Health products, from a reliable source.
3. Carefully read the label to maximize the value and effectiveness of the vaccine. It is important to understand precautions so vaccines are given at the right stage of the animals' lives, to animals of the right age, in the proper dosage and at the appropriate intervals, if more than one dose is needed.
4. Store the vaccines according to label directions, paying particular attention to ensure correct temperature and light conditions.
5. When transporting vaccines to chute side, store them in a cooler with an ice pack. Keep the cooler and products in the shade.
6. Always use a sterile transfer needle or disposable syringe when rehydrating products.
7. Mix only one vaccine bottle at a time prior to administration. A good rule of thumb is not to mix more vaccines than will be used in one hour.
8. Subcutaneous injections are the preferred route whenever label instructions allow. All injections should be given in the neck.
9. Make sure to use new, sharp needles and the correct gauge size for the vaccine being used and the size of the animal. Change needles every 10–15 animals, and never re-enter a vaccine bottle with a used needle.
10. Always properly clean equipment and syringes after vaccinating. Grotelueschen suggests using the following steps to assure your equipment is sterilized:
 - Wash reusable syringes in hot, distilled water. First wash the outside and then take the syringe apart to wash it thoroughly.
 - Fill the syringe with water and cover with damp paper towels.
 - Place the wrapped syringe in an open resealable plastic bag and place the bag in the microwave on high for five minutes. The damp paper towels prevent the metal parts from sparking.
 - Also sterilize transfer needles in the microwave; wrap in damp paper towels, place in an open resealable plastic bag and microwave on high for 30 seconds. **HW**