

Are You Up to Speed with the Cascade?

Staying within the law when using your veterinary medicines

New Veterinary Medicine Regulations (2024) means changes to the way medicines are used under the Cascade and the withdrawal periods that must be applied.

THE CASCADE

Using veterinary medicines “off label” is not permitted, unless under certain limited conditions known as the Cascade.

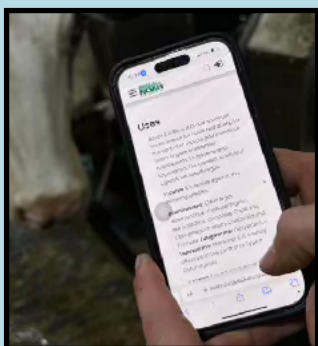


WHEN CAN THE CASCADE BE USED?

The Cascade may permit a prescribing vet to use or authorise medicines outside their Marketing Authority (commonly termed “off label”). This can be done for the benefit of animal welfare where no licensed alternative is available.

In the farm veterinary context, the Cascade exists primarily to allow the treatment of minority species such as milking sheep, goats, alpacas and the like, for which there are very few (or no) licensed medicines. There are far more licensed medicines which can be used with dairy cows, meaning resorting to the Cascade is more difficult to justify, and should be very rarely required.

If the vet hasn't specifically authorised it for that animal, it isn't Cascade, it is prohibited.



Examples where medicine use would **always** be prohibited include:

- Out of date medicines
- Medicines obtained without a prescription
- Illegally imported medicines

Examples where use is prohibited, unless authorised by the prescribing vet on a case-by-case basis and following Cascade rules include:

- Legally imported medicines using a special import certificate
- Altered dose, including prolonged treatment courses
- Altered route of administration
- Medicines not licensed for cattle (or milking cows)

Ensure you know what the label says

NEW MILK WITHDRAWAL TIMES WHEN USING THE CASCADE

- If it is a product with a milk withdrawal provided in the Marketing Authorisation (license), multiply this by a factor of 1.5; or
- Apply at least 7 days if the product is not licensed for milk-producing animals; or
- Apply at least 1 day if the product has a zero-hour milk withdrawal period for its licensed use.

Note: these are the MINIMUM times. It is the duty of the prescribing vet to set the actual withdrawal times.



THE BOTTOM LINE

- Only use veterinary medicines which have been prescribed by your vet.
- Stick to the data sheet (label) EXACTLY unless the prescribing vet provides you with written instructions otherwise.
- Only your prescribing vet can authorise “off-label” use, and they must follow strict Cascade rules to do this.

Always work in
conjunction
with your vet.

Dairy
UK