

AABP POSITION STATEMENT

RAISED-WITHOUT-ANTIBIOTICS PROGRAMS



Regardless of the intended marketing channel, the first priority of the client and veterinarian must always lie with the health and welfare of the cattle in our care. Programs that seek to market cattle as “raised-without-antibiotics” (RWA) must not compromise or sacrifice cattle health and well-being in order to maintain animals in an RWA status.

- Because of the treatment limitations of RWA programs, the role of the veterinarian in guiding medical decision-making from maintaining optimal herd health to making timely and accurate diagnostics and selecting appropriate treatments, is even more critical.
- Within the context of an established, Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR), there must be documented strategies in place that allow for responsible use of antibiotics, in addition to, or in place of, non-antibiotic treatments as a rescue therapy available in a timely fashion. This should include training and oversight by the veterinarian on how to assess prognosis, when to intervene with antibiotics, and how to segregate animals for an established withdrawal period, or if treatment is not feasible, how to determine when humane euthanasia is necessary.
- Although the primary goal should always be to develop strategies to prevent disease or injury in the cattle in our care, responsible RWA programs should recognize that some cattle will still develop diseases or sustain injuries that require antibiotic treatment.
- Responsible RWA programs must also include alternative marketing plans for those animals that do require antibiotic treatment.

For guidelines on establishing and maintaining a VCPR, visit: https://aabp.org/resources/aabp_guidelines/VCPRGuideline_032020.pdf.

(Revised by the AABP Board of Directors March 2022)