

Calf Talk Newsletter

November 2001

Volume Seven Number Eleven

Be Careful When Using "BUTE"

by Russell Schnepfer, D.V.M

The grand champion steer at the Wisconsin State Fair was condemned for an illegal drug residue of Phenylbutazone, commonly known as "Bute". The tolerance level for "bute" is 0%. The steer had sold for \$56,400.00 at the Governor's Blue Ribbon Auction. The sale price was refunded to the purchaser.

It is not illegal for a Veterinarian to prescribe "bute" extra label in food animals. However, an extended withdrawal time must be observed. 60 days has been used as a slaughter withdrawal time by some Veterinarians. We do not really know what the time actually is. It might be longer in veal, or under certain circumstances.

"Bute" has become a problem because they now have a test to detect it. "Bute", rather given orally or injected, has always created a residue. A "bute" residue had not been detected in past years, as there was not a test. Now there is.

"Bute" has been known to cause fatal side effects in some people. People associated with the horse racing industry have taken "bute" for their own problems for years. Physicians have been aware of the aplastic anemia side effect, for which there is no cure, that occurs in some people. "Bute" has been used for arthritis in humans in years past.

Personally, I am not going to prescribe "bute" for use in a veal barn. The penalty is too severe. We all know how drugs get

used unintentionally by some hired help that may not be aware of the dangers of use. This is especially true of older calf feeders that have used "bute" over the years with no consequences. It is much safer to not have "bute" in the veal barn. That way costly accidents will not occur.

There are alternatives to "bute". Banamine is a safe and effective Non Steroidal Anti Inflammatory Agent. We use 10 days as the slaughter withdrawal time on Banamine in veal calves. The generic name is Flunixin Meglumine. Aspirin may also be used.

Use drugs responsibility. Each residue problem hurts our meat industry. Consumers are very fickle and often do not notice that drug residues are extremely low and the food supply is safe. Facts mean little to the general public - it is all perception. So let's be sure to create the right perception in the minds of our consumers.

Another problem drug is gentamycin, as well as Amiglyde. We are not sure how long these drugs persist in the animal body. Some Veterinarians are using 500 days as a withdrawal time. The practical side is - there is no real place to use gentamycin or amiglyde safely in food animals. Oral use does not eliminate the problem.

BE RESPONSIBLE - PROTECT OUR MARKETS.