Recently, your CVMA-SBCV Chapter asked Dr. Jane Pritchard, BC’s Chief Veterinary Officer, to share with our members and other veterinarians what all BC veterinarians need to know about the coming changes related to antimicrobial drugs. This is her complete response. Dr. Pritchard also brings us up to date on the Ministry of Agriculture’s activities in that regard.

Effective December 1, 2018, Health Canada will be adding all medically important antimicrobial drugs to the federal veterinary Prescription Drug List (https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/drug-products/prescription-drug-list/list.html) This is part of the federal initiative to address antimicrobial resistance. More information about this change and others related to combating antimicrobial resistance is available on the CVMA website (https://www.canadianveterinarians.net/policy-advocacy/veterinary-oversight-of-antimicrobial-use-in-canada).

In BC, this change will have implications for:
1) BC Ministry of Agriculture which oversees the BC Veterinary Drugs legislation and its licensing of lay retail outlets and feed mills to sell some veterinary medications;
2) the College of Pharmacists which oversees the BC Pharmacy Operations and Drug Scheduling Act and its inclusion of veterinary prescribers and dispensers;
3) the College of Veterinarians of BC which oversees the BC Veterinary Act and its regulatory oversight of licensed veterinarians and the practice of veterinary medicine.

Health Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) have been in regular communication with the CVMA, the provincial veterinary regulatory colleges, the provincial Ministries of Agriculture and Health, veterinary pharmaceutical manufacturers and distributors, the Animal Nutrition Association of Canada, the national livestock associations, and others about the pending changes. This article focuses on the BC Ministry of Agriculture's efforts to communicate the impacts of the coming federal legislation to livestock producers and licensees under the BC Veterinary Drugs Act.

Briefly, BC farm and ranch supply stores can be licensed under the BC Veterinary Drugs legislation to sell a variety of Over the Counter (OTC) animal health products, including antimicrobials. Most of these antimicrobials will be added to the federal veterinary Prescription Drug List and therefore, effective Dec. 1, 2018 producers will require a veterinary prescription to access antimicrobials that formerly were sold through the licensed drug outlets in BC, and they can only be sold by a veterinarian or pharmacist.

The Ministry also issues licenses for the manufacture and sale of feeds medicated with prescription and OTC veterinary drugs under the BC Veterinary Drugs legislation. Effective Dec. 1, 2018 most of the OTC antimicrobials used in medicated feeds will be added to the Prescription Drug List. As a result, the number of prescriptions written by BC veterinarians for medicated feed is expected to dramatically increase. The federal government is currently
leading the development of species specific templates for feed prescriptions and a list of required items for veterinary feed prescriptions. It is expected these will be released to the CVMA, veterinarians and the feed industry, among others, within weeks.

Federal legislation allows commercial feed mills to purchase prescription pharmaceuticals and sell feeds medicated with prescription drugs subject to a veterinary prescription. Although commercial mills will sell medicated feed, they will not be able to outright sell the prescription drug that was added to the feed to result in the medicated feed. The sale of prescription drugs, including those added to feed, are limited to veterinarians and pharmacists. The CFIA oversees operation of commercial feed mills, including their use of medications.

Over the past two years, Dr. Brian Radke of the BC Ministry of Agriculture has shared information and updates from the federal government about the federal policy change to licensees under the BC Veterinary Drugs legislation several times. Information provided to the licensees included a poster listing the Dec. 1, 2018 prescription status of the various veterinary antimicrobials. Licensees are encouraged to display the poster in a prominent high traffic area of their business for the benefit of their staff and customers. It also pointed out to licensees that the majority of OTC antimicrobials are switching to prescription status as of Dec. 1, 2018. Licensees are reminded that they are not authorized to sell prescription products; veterinary prescription drugs can be dispensed only by veterinarians or pharmacists under a veterinary prescription. In BC, a veterinarian-client-patient-relationship as defined by the CVBC must be in place to obtain a prescription. It is reiterated that commercial feed mills can continue to manufacture and sell medicated feeds. Feeds medicated with a veterinary prescription product continue to require a veterinary prescription prior to sale of the product as always, however most antimicrobials will require a prescription after December 1 2018.

The CVBC and Ministry of Agriculture staff that specialize in the livestock industries have also been included in the communications to the Veterinary Drugs licensees. In addition, the Ministry has responded to information requests from BC livestock industries and Veterinary Drugs licensees. This information to BC livestock industries supplements the information shared with the national livestock associations by the federal government.