To ensure a safe food supply, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) oversees the use of animal medications. Some medications have been approved for use without a veterinarian's involvement, while others require authorization by a licensed veterinarian. Recently, the FDA changed how some antibiotic medications, which are important to human medicine, are used for animal feed. After January 1, 2017, these medications will require a Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) order to be used in a medicated feed.

Many over-the-counter feed-grade antibiotics will be moved to VFD status by January 1, 2017.

What is a medicated feed and why is it used?
Medicated feed is feed with a specific drug added to it. Medicated feed is fed to animals to prevent illness or treat animals when they are sick. Medicated feeds are just one of the good animal care and well-being practices farmers and animal owners use to keep their animals healthy.

Is all feed medicated?
No, when you purchase feed, you have the option to buy feed without medications mixed into it. Always read and follow the label.

Who is impacted by these changes?
Livestock owners, including youth with animal projects, who have decided to feed their animals medicated feeds.

For more information on the Veterinary Feed Directive, contact your local NDSU Extension agent or veterinarian, or visit: www.ag.ndsu.edu/stewardship/veterinary-feed-directive
What does VFD stand for?
Veterinary Feed Directive

What is a VFD drug and why did the FDA change their process?
A VFD drug is an antibiotic used for both human and animal medicine. It’s important these drugs are used correctly. The FDA’s job is to ensure these drugs are used properly which is why they are requiring a VFD order for some medicated feed beginning January 1, 2017.

Are all antibiotics affected?
No, not all antibiotics will be considered VFD drugs. The use of injectable antibiotics will not be affected; and some drugs used in water will now require a prescription from a veterinarian. Ionophores and coccidiostats are not affected unless they are fed in combination with a drug that requires a VFD.

How does a VFD order work?
A VFD order is similar to a prescription you would get from your human doctor, however a veterinarian will be giving you a VFD order for a medicated feed.

How do you get a VFD order?
To obtain a VFD order, you must have an established veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR) with a veterinarian. A VCPR is a working relationship between a veterinarian and a person who raises livestock (client). The veterinarian’s primary role is to help and advise the client in determining which medications are appropriate for their animals (the patients).

How do you know if you need a VFD order?
As seen in the example, feed labels of VFD drugs have the following statement: “Caution: Federal law restricts medicated feed containing this VFD drug to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian.”

What are examples of medications that will require a VFD order?
Examples of feed-grade medications moving to VFD drug status are chlortetracycline, tylosin and lincomycin. The detailed list can be found at www.ag.ndsu.edu/stewardship/veterinary-feed-directive.

Where can I buy feed with my VFD order?
You can buy VFD feeds at any mill, retailer or other establishment listed as a distributor or manufacturer with the FDA. The list can be found at www.ag.ndsu.edu/stewardship/veterinary-feed-directive. If you are purchasing feed that requires a VFD order, you will need to present the VFD order before purchase.

How do feed stores check for VFD orders?
Previously, medicated feeds were purchased without documentation at your feed store or mill. However, starting January 1, 2017, you must first present a VFD order, written by a veterinarian, to purchase VFD feeds.

What records will I need to keep?
In North Dakota, records will need to be kept by the livestock owner, veterinarian and feed distributor for two years. The original VFD order will be kept by the veterinarian.