



BULLETIN

UPDATE ON THE AVAILABILITY OF ANTIBIOTIC TREATMENTS FOR BEES

October 25, 2017

Attention: Ontario Beekeepers

The Ontario Beekeepers' Association has been active in consultations concerning the proposed changes to the availability of antibiotics for beekeepers. The situation at the time is fluid and this is an update to keep you current. As the situation becomes clearer we will issue additional information.

Identifying antimicrobial resistance is one of the highest public health risks facing Canadians.

In 2014, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) developed a federal framework to address antimicrobial resistance. Health Canada is moving a number of Medically Important Antimicrobials (MIAs) approved for veterinary use before 2004 to the Prescription Drug List (PDL). This includes **Tylosin** and the **Tetracycline group** of antibiotics, under which the treatments for the honey bee colony disease, American Foulbrood, (AFB) are registered. These antibiotics are also known by their product names: **Tylan 100**, **Tylan Soluble (Tylosin)**, and **Oxytet** and **Oxysol (Oxytetracyclines)**.

As of **December 1, 2018**, all MIAs for veterinary use will be on the PDL and must be sold under **veterinary supervision by prescription only**. Beginning in early 2018, we may start to see some label changes on the market during the transition between old and new labels.

Because **Fumagillin** is not a human medicine it is not included in this legislation.

The OBA will be working with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), the College of Veterinarians of Ontario (CVO), the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association (OVMA), and the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) to work out what will be required by the beekeeper and the veterinarian to qualify for approval of antibiotic use. Specifically we will be determining:

- what steps will be involved in forming the required Veterinarian-Client- Patient-Relationship (VCPR), and
- the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for beekeepers to show their plan to manage AFB.

We believe we are moving toward a good working solution for commercial beekeepers. However, what may be more difficult is how this will be managed for smaller beekeepers to make access to antibiotics less complicated and costly. We will need to come up with a specific model to accommodate beekeepers with fewer than 50 colonies.

Dispensing is the other important and the least developed part of this issue. Because we are a small industry compared to other livestock groups and beekeepers consume many fewer antibiotics, there will have to be a plan to ensure suppliers are carrying the products we need. We may even see effects of this before the December 2018 date, because in May 2018, companies buying the antibiotics to mix the product for sale will require a 'compounding license.' We do not know whether the companies from which beekeepers buy bee antibiotics are looking to obtain this license. Probably the product **Oxysol** will be most readily available because it is used for other livestock, but the popular Medivet product **Oxytet** is specific for bees, and we have not heard yet how they plan to address this issue.

We are not sure at this time the cost for the product or the cost of dispensing it. Stay tuned.

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