

Handling of Modified Live Vaccines

A vaccine is only as good as it is handled. Proper mixing, storage, transport, and administration are essential components of an effective vaccination program.

MIXING: Modified live vaccines need to be alive at the time of administration to be efficacious so mix only enough vaccine that you can use in 30 minutes. Increased temperature and sunlight cause the vaccine to lose efficacy. Use sterile needles to mix and transfer diluents. Contaminated vaccine vials lead to contaminated animals and a less effective product. Leave a sterile needle in the vial to prevent contamination from a dirty needle. Check the expiration date, do not administer if the vaccine is expired.

STORAGE: Keep the vaccine in a well regulated functional refrigerator until intending to use. Keep a thermometer in the fridge to monitor the temperature, remember if your water or drink of choice is not cold, neither are your vaccines! Likewise, freezing of vaccines decreases efficacy as well. Check vaccines and fridge function on a regular basis. Most vaccines are labeled for 35-45 degrees Fahrenheit.

TRANSPORT: Transport vaccines and syringes long distances in a cooler with an ice pack out of sunlight to prevent heat exposure. Do not place vaccine vials on a window sill or in direct sunlight while vaccinating. Label coolers or containers to avoid overdosing or inappropriate dosages.

ADMINISTRATION: Use sterile syringes and needles and change needles frequently. With multi dose syringes you should change needles frequently for example every 5 animals. Dull needles and repeat needles can transmit disease like bovine leukosis or induce abscesses or worse infections. Choose the appropriate syringe size for the appropriate dosage. Smaller dosages require smaller syringes to ensure accuracy when giving vaccines.

Please dispose of syringes and needles in the proper manner to prevent injuries.

Beef quality assurance reminds producers and veterinarians to administer injections in the neck, either under the skin or in the muscle and to stay away from the hind quarters. Keep good records of what was given and in what general vicinity.

Remember do not vaccinate stressed or sick animals, nor in extreme temperatures, for example the hottest or coldest day of the season. Immunity is the function of the animal. A sick or stressed animal is less likely to mount an adequate immune response to the vaccine and can cause an increased chance of a negative vaccine reaction. Save a small bottle of unmixed vaccine for those animals.