

VFD and veterinarians' bottom line

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Thank you

- ◆ Veterinarians who participated
- ◆ USDA/ERS



Background

- ❖ FDA Revised Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD)
 - ◆ Effective Oct. 2016
- ❖ Guidances for Industry #209 and #213
 - ◆ Effective January 2017
- ❖ Qualitative evaluation of the economic implications for veterinarians

Some questions

- ❖ What are the knowledge, attitudes and beliefs related to Guidances and revised VFD?
- ❖ What are some economic challenges and barriers?
 - ◆ Any changes to the veterinary-patient-client relationship (VCPR)?
 - ◆ Need to obtain further licenses?
- ❖ Will veterinarians adjust business practices?
- ❖ How did the FDA actions economically affect veterinarians?

Methods

- ❖ 2 Qualitative, directed interviews
 - ◆ Average interview length 20-30 minutes
- ❖ Veterinary opinions on the regulations/guidelines
- ❖ Case studies in each major livestock sectors
 - ◆ Expected and short-term economic effects for veterinarians

Methods



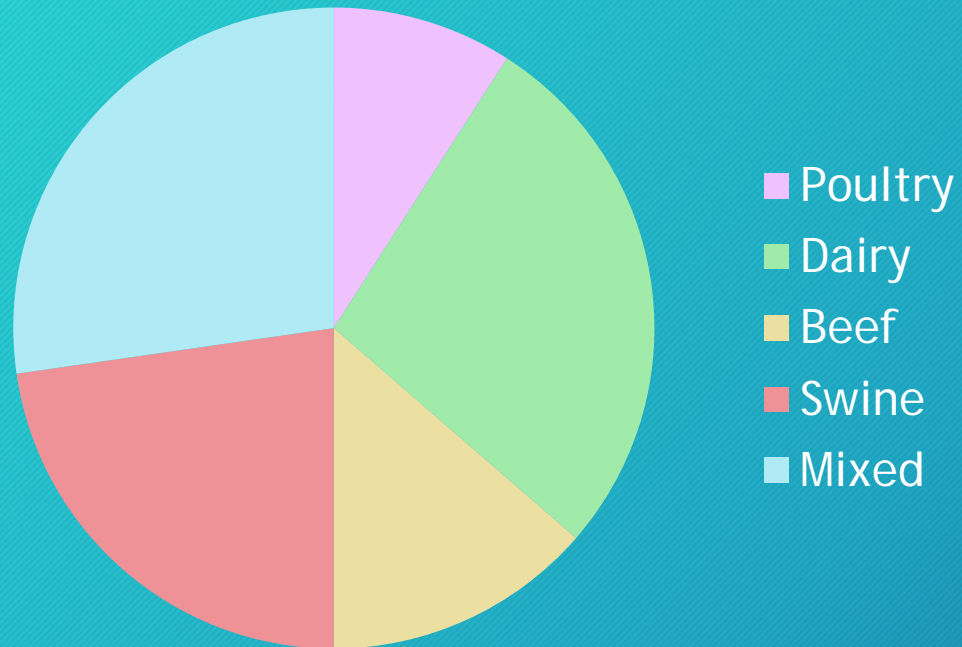
- ❖ Veterinarians randomly chosen from the AVMA directory database
 - ◆ Graduated between 1977 and 2015
 - ◆ Work with food producing animals >50% of the time
- ❖ Initial contact by email, phone interviews
 - ◆ Second telephone interview with the same veterinarians
- ❖ Confidential interviews

Results

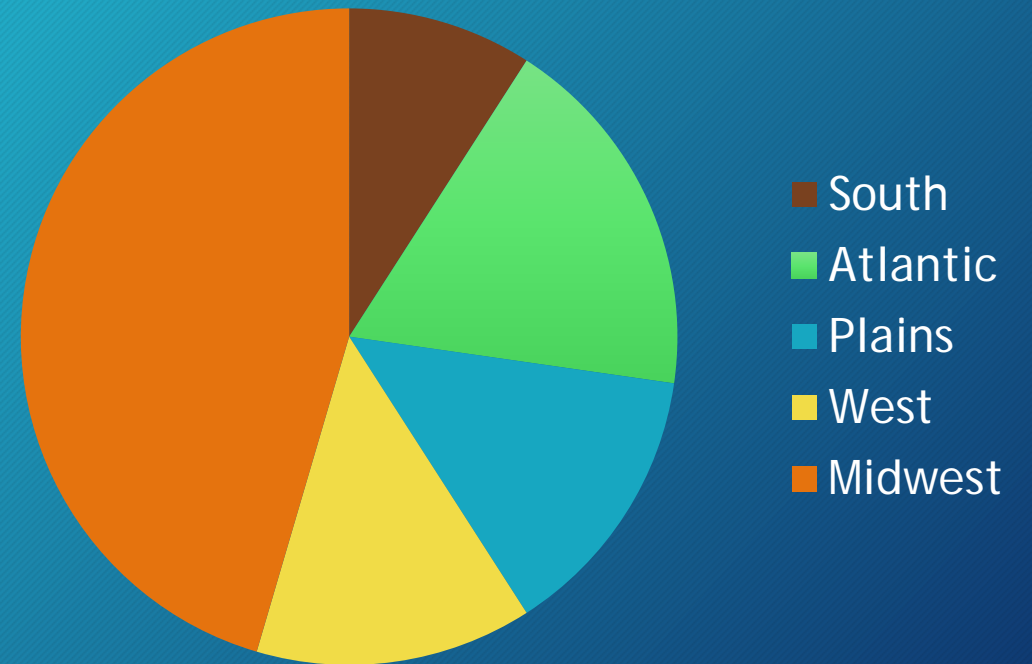
- ❖ 414 attempted contacts
- ❖ 379 valid email addresses
- ❖ 22 participants

Results

Type of practice



Where are they from?



N=22

Results-1st interview

“I’ve been able to answer my clients’ questions (at least so far)”

- ❖ Most felt adequately prepared to deal with the new regulations and guidances
 - ◆ Enough information available from multiple sources
 - ◆ Some unresolved questions
 - Primarily from dairy veterinarians- some felt dairy has been ignored or abandoned by the changes

Results-1st interview

“I will have to see how much time is really spent writing VFDs”

- ❖ None needed to obtain a license from another state as a result of the expanding VFD
- ❖ Many planned to charge for the increased time needed to write a VFD
 - ◆ Most veterinarians' clients would pay extra for the extra time needed to write a VFD
 - ◆ None of the veterinarians considered writing VFDs as a potential income source

Results-1st interview concerns

“Will veterinarians be considered the culprits?”

- ❖ Smaller producers and hobby farmers will be most impacted
- ❖ Time needed to comply with the new regulations and labels
- ❖ Who will enforce the changes?
 - ◆ What will be the veterinarian's role?
 - ◆ State board of pharmacy may want to get involved with VFDs

Results-2nd interview

“Clients and veterinarians are talking to each other about alternatives and husbandry practices more now”

- ❖ FDA regulations and guidelines had little effect on day-to-day practice
 - ◆ No net economic effect on practice
 - ◆ Increase in paperwork cited
 - ◆ Some client resistance to veterinarian oversight
- ❖ Increased communication between veterinarians and their clients about antibiotic use
 - ◆ Starting point for further discussions
 - Uncovered management practices that clients could change
 - Antibiotic use may have been masking underlying management issues

Results-2nd interview

“Not seen a lot more clients, but I’m seeing my clients more often”

- ❖ No veterinarian dropped or refused a client solely because of the VFD guidances
 - ◆ A few contacted by potential clients asking for a VFD to be written without a VCPR
- ❖ Nearly all veterinarians charged to write a VFD
 - ◆ Costs ranging from \$15 per VFD to \$150 for a yearly charge
 - Some bundled the cost of a VFD in their visit charges
 - ◆ Costs mostly came close to compensating for the added time and expense of writing a VFD

Results-2nd interview

“It will be interesting to see what happens with CTC in the next year”

- ❖ Veterinarians who had not written VFDs in the past noted the increased time taken to properly write a VFD
 - ◆ But wrote fewer VFDs than they had anticipated
 - ◆ Swine veterinarians did not increase time to write VFDs
- ❖ Some of their clients made a decision not to add antibiotics because of the real or perceived hassle in obtaining a VFD
 - ◆ Some antibiotics in feed using a VFD exceeded the amounts or duration that had been used by their clients prior to 2017

Results- 2nd interview

“Some clients have been surprised at how restrictive the options are if antibiotics are given only according to labeled uses”

- ❖ The number of clients who had previously used OTC antibiotics surprised some veterinarians, as well as the quantities of OTC that had been used by their clients.

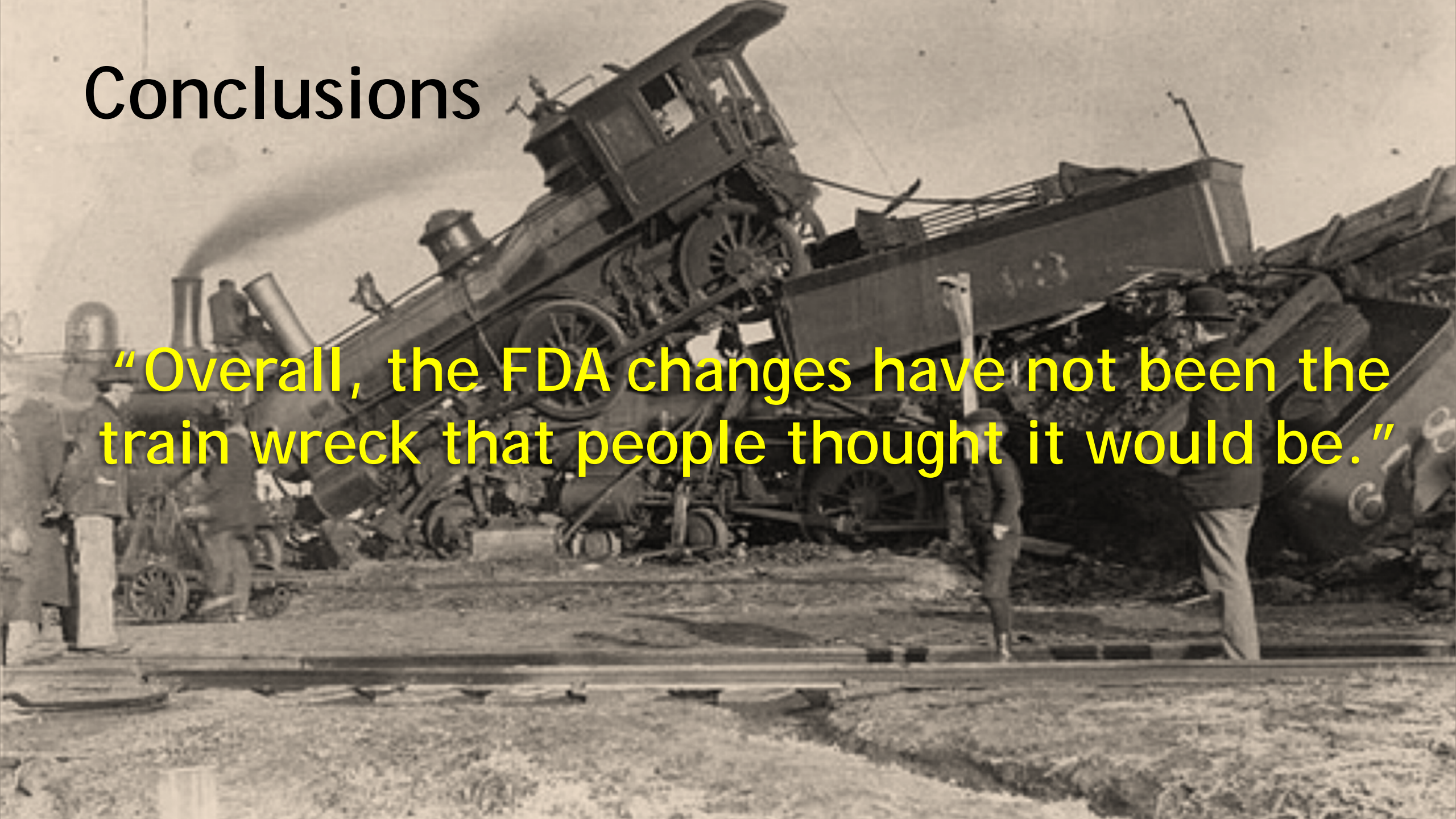
Limitations

- ❖ Self-report
- ❖ Small numbers
- ❖ Short term
- ❖ Trust



Conclusions

“Overall, the FDA changes have not been the train wreck that people thought it would be.”



Conclusions

- ❖ Sufficient information given to veterinarians
 - ◆ Government and non-government
- ❖ No or net neutral economic impact
- ❖ New regulations and guidances have not resulted in poorer health or welfare outcomes for animals short term
- ❖ Clients had not optimally used antibiotics when they were OTC drugs
- ❖ Expect overall antibiotic use to decrease in 2017

Implications and questions

- ❖ Need to monitor and evaluate animal health and economic effects longer term
- ❖ Veterinarians do not want to be FDA enforcers
- ❖ How FDA does plan to monitor or enforce the requirements?
 - ◆ Will more injectables be used?
- ❖ Some drug combinations no longer available
 - ◆ VFDs may hamper veterinarian's ability to treat animals in the best manner
 - ◆ FDA should allow more flexibility in VFDs

Questions?



“I need someone well versed in the art of torture—do you know PowerPoint?”