

Selling cows – check withholding periods

Cows culled from our dairy herds must not have any treatment residue above its Minimum Residue Limit (MRL) when they are sold for slaughter. Errors have the potential to jeopardise Australia's cattle meat export trade, which is worth \$2.6 billion a year.

Technote 3.1 gives recommended withholding periods for Dry Cow Treatments.

Technote 4.10 gives recommended withholding periods for Lactating Cow Treatments.

20.1 Check withholding periods.

To avoid errors all cows treated with antibiotic (by injection or intramammary infusion, etc) must be identified. Dairy farmers tend to use markings that are easily seen during the withholding period for milk but not for the full length of the withholding period for meat. Identification of animals for the duration of the meat withholding period requires permanent identification and written records that can be referred to when determining whether withholding periods for meat have expired.

Cattle are unsuitable for processing for some export markets for a specified period after treatment. The length of time is referred to as the Export Slaughter Interval and more detailed information is available from the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service.

The Export Slaughter Interval is not stated on the label of antibiotics as it varies between countries and alters regularly with changes in the requirements of importing countries.

