



## Maintaining a Vet/Client/Patient Relationship

### Beneficial Categories



### Background

Maintaining a veterinary-client-patient-relationship (VCPR) is an integral part of ensuring cattle health needs are met and maintaining proper drug use on cattle operations. A VCPR is established between a veterinarian or veterinary practice and a client with cattle to develop an understanding of the operation and its needs. In Canada, a VCPR is required for a veterinarian to prescribe antibiotics. Over time, drug classifications, usage limits and related regulations can change. Maintaining a VCPR with your local veterinarian ensures will have the most appropriate care for your cattle. Treatment recommendations vary depending on each situation, and consulting with your veterinarian before treating your cattle is the best option to ensure proper and timely treatment is administered. Accurate treatment is important to maintain cattle health and welfare, ensure cattle are not suffering, and in the case of antimicrobials, to reduce the spread of antimicrobial resistance.

### Requirements for Maintaining a VCPR

In order for a VCPR to exist and be maintained, your local veterinary medical association will require that certain conditions be met. As an example, these are the conditions of the [Alberta Veterinary Medical Association](#):

- The veterinarian has assumed responsibility for making clinical assessments and recommendations for the health of your cattle AND you have agreed to them assuming this responsibility
- The veterinarian has sufficient knowledge of the cattle on which to base the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of the medical condition of the cattle. This means that the veterinarian:
  - o Is professionally acquainted with care of the cattle
  - o Has documented relevant and timely interaction between the veterinarian, cattle owner/caretaker, and respective cattle herd
  - o Has documented medically appropriate information and knowledge about the animals
- The client has agreed to follow the veterinarian's recommendations and prescription

- The veterinarian is available or has arranged for a follow-up evaluation, especially in the event of adverse reactions or failure of the treatment regime

Ensuring good records are kept on your operation will help maintain your VCPR. A herd health follow-up should be done yearly to ensure both you and the veterinarian share expectations for cattle treatment.

### **Potential Economic Costs/Benefits**

The cost associated with maintaining a VCPR will vary. Maintaining a VCPR is beneficial to your herd's cattle health and can help improve productivity when proper treatment is administered in a timely fashion. If your veterinarian has prior knowledge of your management and herd health status, it will be easier for them to diagnose and treat your cattle. Maintaining a VCPR and consulting your veterinarian for treatment recommendations could reduce the risk of productivity loss or death in the herd from incorrect treatment.

### **Financial Incentives**

Not applicable

**For more information on maintaining a vet-client-patient relationship, contact your local veterinarian or visit the following sites:**

[Alberta Veterinary Medical Association – Establish your VCPR](#)

[American Association of Bovine Practitioners – Establishing and Maintaining the Veterinary-Client-Patient Relationship in Bovine Practice](#)