

~Dairy Details~

Produced by Northern Valley Dairy Production Medicine Center

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Needles: One size does NOT fit all

Needle shopping at the vet clinic can sometimes be confusing with so many options. Needles range in diameter from 25 gauge (smallest) to 14 gauge (largest). They range from ½" to 2" long. Why do we offer so many different sizes of needles? The needle you use for an injection depends on many factors including:

- size of the animal
- the product
- the administration route

Whether you are in the dairy or beef business, we are all BEEF producers. Our animals eventually are sold for beef. We are then all obligated to adhere to the Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) guidelines. Attention to needle selection is very important in the production of a quality beef product.



The "gauge" of a needle is a measure of diameter. The larger the gauge number, the smaller the diameter. Larger gauge needles are very thin. We want to select the smallest needle that will efficiently administer a product. Reproductive hormones, like GONAbreed or EstroPLAN, and many vaccines, like BoviShield, are thin like water. 18 or 20 gauge needles are appropriate for those products. Thicker injectables, such as Excenel or Alpha 7, require larger 16 gauge needles. BQA guidelines recommend using 16 gauge or smaller needles for SQ injections. Using any larger needle than a 16 gauge can result in significant product leakage out of the injection site. This could lead to the product being ineffective, since not enough product got into the animal's system.

Use longer needles when giving injections in the muscle (IM), and shorter needles to give subcutaneous (under the skin, SQ) injections. If a product can be given either IM or SQ, always choose the SQ route. SQ injections are much less likely to leave injection site lesions in the muscle that will someday be edible meat. Always read the product label and use the recommended route of administration.

It is often not practical to change needles after every injection. However, strive to at least change needles:

- After every five injections
- After a needle has been bent
- When a needle is blunt
- Before reloading a dose gun
- If you suspect the needle was contaminated (i.e. the needle has touched manure!!)



Use the table on the back for guidelines on needle selection for commonly used products. Post this table in the parlor and treatment room to remind everyone that administers injectable products what needles they should be using.

Commonly used products with suggested route of administration and needle size:

Product	Route	Cows	Heifers	Calves
Antibiotics				
Draxxin	SQ	NA	16 g X ¾ in	18 g X ¾ in
Nuflor	SQ	NA	16 g x ¾ in	18 g X ¾ in
Polyflex	IM	18 g X 1.5 in	18 g X 1.5 in	18 g X 1 in
Excenel	SQ	16 g X ¾ in	16 g X ¾ in	18 g X ¾ in
Naxcel	SQ	16 g X ¾ in	16 g X ¾ in	18 g X ¾ in
Excede	BOE	16 g X ¾ in	16 g X ¾ in	18 g X ¾ in
Fluids				
Hypertonic Saline	IV	14 g X 2 in	14 g X 2 in	14 g X 2 in
Lactated Ringers	IV/SQ	14 g X 2 in	14 g X 2 in	14 g X 2 in
Calcium gluconate	IV	14 g X 2 in	NA	NA
Reproductive Hormones				
Lutalyse/Estrumate/Estoplan	IM	20 g X 1.5 in	20 g X 1.5 in	NA
Factrel/Fertagyl/Gonabreed	IM	20 g X 1.5 in	20 g X 1.5 in	NA
Lutalyse HiCon	SQ	18 g X ¾ in	18 g X ¾ in	NA
Vaccines				
Bovishield Gold FP 5 L5	IM	20 g X 1.5 in	20 g X 1.5 in	20 g X 1 in
Enviracor J5	SQ	16 g X ¾ in	16 g X ¾ in	NA
ScourGurad 4KC	IM	20 g X 1.5 in	20 g X 1.5 in	NA
Ultrabac 7	SQ	16 g X ¾ in	16 g X ¾ in	16 g X ¾ in
Alpha 7	SQ	16 g X ¾ in	16 g X ¾ in	16 g X ¾ in



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