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# Oxytocin sale to be restricted soon

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The sale of Oxytocin drug will be restricted soon to curb its rampant misuse by dairy owners who inject it into cows and buffaloes to get them produce more milk.

The Drugs Technical Advisory Board (DTAB), under the Union Health Ministry, in its latest meeting has recommended a series of steps including streamlining the sale of the drug's active ingredient to licenced manufacturers, ensuring the sale on prescriptions, besides making sure distribution takes place only through veterinary hospitals and increased surveillance and raids on "clandestine manufacturers."

The move follows concern over the frequent abuse of the drug, as was pointed out recently by MP Maneka Gandhi who in a letter to the Health Ministry said that the drug has harmful effects on the health of cows and as well as the consumers.

Ever though the drug is considered an essential in medical practice for certain conditions in human as well as veterinary field, the alleged abundant availability and use of the drug in a clandestine way is a matter of great concern for public health, she pointed out. The drug is often injected into cows and buffaloes twice a day, affecting the health of the animal and the milk subsequently consumed by humans.



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Though the bulk sale of the drug is disallowed and oxytocin injection is limited to single sealed blister-packs, the reports of manufacture and sale of the drug in clandestine way in large

quantities and its misuse by the farmers or dairy owners have been received from time to time and the matter was raised on various forums, noted the DTAB members in the meeting.

"The manufacture and sale of the drug with or without a licence for such clandestine activity is an offence under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940," the DTAB recorded.

The drug Oxytocin has medical use for induction and augmentation of labour, to control post partum bleeding and uterine hypo tonicity.

The Agriculture Ministry has opposed the complete ban on production and use of Oxytocin for veterinary use asserting that the drug has therapeutic application in case of expulsion of fetus, retention of placenta. "However, the Ministry officials agreed that the drug should be used strictly with the prescription of the veterinarian," said the official.

*Regulatory*