

H.R. 1266/S. 545 Combating Illicit Xylazine Act



Veterinary access to xylazine must be preserved while combating the emerging public health threat of illicit xylazine. Xylazine is an essential sedative used across veterinary medicine for the safe handling of many species.



AVMA Supports

Key points



Any legislative or regulatory interventions to combat illicit xylazine need to safeguard the availability of veterinary prescription xylazine and its responsible use by veterinarians and our clients.



Scheduling of xylazine without statutory changes by Congress for its unique needs in veterinary medicine will severely disrupt or eliminate the legitimate supply and prohibit critical uses of the drug.



The AVMA supports public health efforts and policy intended to combat illicit xylazine.

What is the issue?

- Illicit xylazine is being unlawfully mixed with fentanyl. This potent drug combination poses grave health and safety risks for humans.
- The DEA is in the process of making xylazine a controlled drug. Scheduling of xylazine by the DEA, without statutory changes, will limit how veterinarians use the drug and increase the risk of supply disruption or cause veterinarians to lose it from the marketplace.
- Limiting veterinary access to xylazine will jeopardize animal welfare and human safety.
- Additionally, federal legislative and regulatory uniformity is needed to alleviate the state-by-state patchwork of rules and regulations that manufacturers, distributors, and veterinarians must currently navigate.
- Xylazine is a low-volume, low-margin generic animal drug. If the regulatory burden or facility investments are too high, the few remaining manufacturers will likely choose to discontinue production.
- Xylazine is essential for the safe handling of many species, particularly livestock, given there is **no practical alternative** for sedation in cattle.

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How is xylazine used in veterinary medicine?

- Xylazine is a prescription animal sedative used to facilitate safe medical evaluation, treatment, and surgical care of many species and is essential to keeping people and animals safe when handling livestock and zoo, laboratory, and wildlife species.
- In cattle, xylazine is the **only** safe and effective sedative drug.
- Xylazine can be reversed in veterinary patients, which prevents secondary injuries and allows them to quickly and safely re-enter the herd or the wild.

Current xylazine regulation



Xylazine is an FDA-approved prescription animal drug that can only be used by or under the order of a licensed veterinarian and can only be dispensed in the course of the veterinarian's professional practice.



Federal and state laws require all prescription drugs (for people and animals) to be distributed only to those who are legally entitled to obtain and possess them, and veterinarians are required to keep extensive records.



Manufacturers and distributors of legitimate xylazine have established internal compliance systems to ensure they are only providing products to those legally entitled to them.

What would the Combating Illicit Xylazine Act do?

- Classify xylazine as a Schedule III drug under the Controlled Substances Act (CSA).
- Ensure veterinarians, farmers and ranchers can still use xylazine for its intended purpose to treat large animals by amending the "ultimate user" as someone lawfully permitted to possess a controlled substance for legitimate use in the CSA.
- Maintain availability of the drug in the U.S. market as a controlled drug.
- Enable the DEA to track the inventory and distribution of legitimate xylazine across the U.S.

Status of the bill

- Passing the House in the 118th Congress, Reps. Jimmy Panetta (D-CA) and August Pfluger (R-TX) reintroduced the Combating Illicit Xylazine Act in the 119th Congress and it was referred to the Energy & Commerce and Judiciary Committees.
- Sens. Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV) and Chuck Grassley (R-IA) reintroduced the companion bill, which was referred to the Judiciary Committee.

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