



George Veterinary Group

High Street

Malmesbury

Wiltshire

SN16 9AU

01666 823355

E.mail –

[pigteam@georgevetgroup.co.uk](mailto:pigteam@georgevetgroup.co.uk)

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## ZINC UPDATE

Not particularly great news on this front! A quick update of the EU committee merry-go-round to date:

- In October 2016 the EU committee supervising medicine regulations (CVMP) announced that it intended to withdraw the marketing authorisation (aka license) for zinc oxide preparations used in piglet feed. The committee had reached this decision based on the fact that they thought the potential for heavy metal contamination of soils from pig slurry, and the potential for co-selection of resistant bacteria from use of zinc oxide, outweighed the benefit of zinc oxide in terms of controlling post-weaning diarrhoea.
- One of the problems here was the fact that there is actually quite a poor understanding of how, and why zinc oxide actually works, and indeed scientific evidence that it works, DESPITE all of us out in the field knowing it works. NPA, through liaison with the feed compounders, have established that ~80% of weaner rations are currently medicated with zinc oxide.
- The recent debacle was triggered by France and Netherlands asking the CVMP for a review. This was interesting in itself as neither France nor Netherlands actually used zinc at all, and the sceptics out there might be permitted to think that they are seeking to drag everyone else down to their level.
- Since last October many organisations (NPA, PVS, VMD and Pharma companies included) have requested a review of the CVMP's decision, and lobbied hard in the meantime to overturn it. Unfortunately that has now been unsuccessful with the announcement 2 weeks ago that they have upheld their original decision. Probably no big surprise!
- We are all obviously concerned as to the effect of this ban in terms of pig health and welfare. Timing is also very unfortunate as the whole pig sector seeks actively to reduce its use of antibiotics. This ban will result in increased use of antibiotics to treat E coli post weaning diarrhoea, with all its attendant issues, and the CVMP just don't seem to have really appreciated that.
- What has not yet been clarified is the timescale over which this ban will be implemented. Obviously we are all hoping and lobbying for an extended period (up to 10 years?) for implementation of the ban. In the meantime, Theresa May has just triggered Article 50 to start UK exit negotiations from the EU and so who really knows where we'll be in 10 years?

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## eMB – THE NEED FOR 2015 DATA

Plenty enough has already been said about eMB. At time of writing AHDB Pork reckon they have about 60% of 2015 data on the system.

Why is this important? Well, the pig sector needs these figures as a guide for setting the targets which we are expected to have in place by later this year. Should we not have sufficient data, or the data looks unrealistic, then there is an expectation that VMD will actually impose targets themselves. These may well be far more onerous and make life very difficult in terms of maintaining health and production. If in any doubt, contact Kate Mellor 07973701202 / [Kate.Mellor@ahdb.org.uk](mailto:Kate.Mellor@ahdb.org.uk) our regional KE manager for help with getting this data on. Both your feed/premix supplier and ourselves can help provide antibiotic reports – please try to get it on the system as soon as you can.

### 'JAKE THE PEG'

I am recovering well after my hip op and hoping to get back to driving, and farm visits, in the coming weeks.

All the best

Richard

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