

October 2016

Everything new is old?

Those of you who came to the Pig Fairs last week will understand why, at the time of writing, I am still buzzing a little. We had two afternoons of excellent presentations, on old and familiar problems, new and emerging technology, and new ways of looking at disease management in the context of potential restrictions in antimicrobial use.

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A Our guest speakers this year were Willie Thomson from Harbro and Violet Beattie from Devenish Nutrition. Willie presented some novel technology - 3D measurement systems, but also underlined the deeply practical and useful nature of accurate data recording and management. His ‘feet on the ground’ application of good data was an encouragement for us to look at what we measure, what we could measure and to make the very most out of the data sources that are already available to us.



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S Violet gave us some insight into why pigs are moved to perform undesirable vice actions. Her description of dominant pigs ‘holding’ key areas in a pen (feeder space and comfortable lying areas) have already sparked many a discussion. The back to basics approach as to why pigs act in an antisocial way was very clearly communicated – make sure they have the opportunity and space to perform ‘normal’ activities, such as drinking and eating in an environment that is comfortable.

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O The GVG team also gave us food for thought. Fran presented some alternatives to continued prophylactic medication with the alternatives depopulate, medicate or eliminate. Victoria spoke about different vaccination regimes and Alex followed on from Violet’s talk with some wellies – on practical advice about pre-empting and dealing with outbreaks of vice.



P Antimicrobial use, and the recording of quarterly or annual collation was also discussed by Richard. This is a topic that is at the point of focus for our industry at present. I would encourage you all to consider using the eMB as soon as possible, as this looks the most likely way of submitting standardised data going forward. Please speak to the AHDB team, or one of us if you’d like further information.

We were, as ever, well supported by allied industry but, if I'm honest, it was good to see so many producers there, being part of and hearing the discussions and chat that always thrive at these meetings. 'Save the date' for next year's meetings shortly – put them in the diary now!

My personal thanks go, as always to the GVG team, to Fran, Richard, Alex and Victoria for presenting, and to Angie, Andrea and Maria for their essential support and organisational skills.

For those who attended – thank you for coming. For those of you who didn't – we will be circulating a 'save the date' for next year's meetings shortly – put it in the diary now!

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