

March 2019

RESPONSIBLE USE OF ANTIBIOTICS

T The Pig Health and Welfare Council produced their ‘Practical Guide to Responsible Use of Antibiotics on Pig Farms’ in September 2018. This is a (relatively) brief document with guidance on the administration of injectable antibiotics, those delivered via the water or feed and the storage and disposal of antibiotics.

A As of 1st April 2019, it is a Red Tractor requirement to have a copy of this guide on farm – either a printout or as a pdf on an accessible computer. As unnecessary non-conformances are to be avoided, as they could result in costly additional spot checks, I would urge you all to download and read this document.

L The link is here:

<https://pork.ahdb.org.uk/search/?q=practical+guide+to+responsible+use+of+antibiotics+on+pig+farms>

K How we use medicines on farm has been the source of much scrutiny over past years, and to date the industry has done an impressive job in recording and reducing the volume of antibiotics used on our units. Having to record and assess usage has been a useful exercise on our units, with most achieving significant reductions without an increase in disease and mortality or decrease in production.

S There has been a concurrent emphasis on training in medicines administration, this already forms part of our SOP training on many units and is detailed in Veterinary Health Plans. As you may remember from previous Talksops, it is important to have all members of staff listed on the VHP alongside the production tasks that they have been trained and deemed competent to perform. Please check your VHP’s and let us know of any changes at your next visit.

AMBP – Antibiotics in Pigs

H There is an online training course that has been developed in partnership with stakeholders from across the food supply chain, the Animal Medicines Best Practice group. While this is not suitable for all staff, the course covers a broad range of topics around responsible use and best practice, understanding disease as well as looking at the thorny topic of resistance. There are three modules to complete, and a certificate of training is awarded on completion.

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The course takes 2 – 3 hours to complete and can be done in stages. The cost is £71.94 including VAT - producers who have done this course have given some very positive feedback.

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Seasonal issues:

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After a balmy February and a relatively mild March this week has seen a return to more wintry conditions. The fluctuation in temperature, humidity and changing light patterns has seen an increase in cases of *Strep. suis* meningitis. It's easy to forget that clear, sunny days are often still followed by cold nights - ensuring younger pigs are warm enough is essential.

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We have also been seeing a lot of cases of Erysipelas over the past few weeks. Although breeding herds are routinely vaccinated, is it not usual practice to vaccinate growing pigs and there has been a significant number of units seeing not only the classic skin lesions, but also lameness and sudden deaths associated with Erysipelas. Managing these outbreaks can be achieved with medication, in some cases a longer term prevention strategy is needed.

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Welcome back!

Alex is now back at work, initially she will be with us for one day a week. It's great to see her back and she is looking forward to being back on farm.

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Annie Davis MRCVS

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