

February 2018

eMB – Completing the on-line electronic medicines book has been a requirement for Red Tractor assurance since the beginning of October. By now you will (hopefully) have your information for 2017 uploaded. The deadline for inputting information from Oct-Dec 2017 has now passed - if you have not yet done this, please do so as a matter of urgency.

Red Tractor have advised us that if this information is not uploaded and available for your vet to review, we must raise a non-conformance at your next QVVR. If you are having difficulty with this, then please let us know.

Another Red Tractor standard currently causing some confusion is the correct provision of drinkers. Red Tractor have recently clarified what they consider to be bowl drinkers which may mean some producers are now unwittingly not meeting the standards. The position around whether drinkers associated with or integral to wet-dry feeders has also been addressed – see the Red Tractor Standards for more details. (<https://assurance.redtractor.org.uk/>)

Welfare Codes

The Welfare Codes for pigs are currently in the process of being updated – the consultation closes on March 9th, with the hope that the Codes will be published before the summer. It is many years since the last set of Codes were published (the green books...) and this was a badly needed update.

The emphasis is very much on welfare and it is clear to see where the current drivers are from the political angle. Despite Brexit, we have come under a lot of pressure from the European Commission to reduce the number of pigs that have their tails docked and ‘improve’ the pig’s environment with enrichment and manipulable materials. None of this is new news, but it seems that this is the one topic that has hung around for long enough and I believe that there will be a need for more inventive methods of enriching pig environments, regardless of the system being run. Considering how to enhance the environment in your rearing and finishing accommodation now could be a sensible move.

Spring Cleaning

The cold snap, unusual as it was, highlighted in a dramatic fashion how variable the temperatures at this time of year can be. As I write this, coats are off and the sun is shining with the temperature creeping up into double figures; a far cry from the end of last week. Where buildings are naturally ventilated the variations in temperature seen between the mornings and the nights can create problems; it’s easy to be lulled into a sense that spring is here, putting smaller pigs at risk of getting chilled. Now is also a good time to start thinking about the various maintenance jobs that need doing after the winter, possibly building some ‘spring cleaning’ in – when was the last time your water system had a good clean?

In the meantime, let’s hope that Spring isn’t too far away, with some drier and more settled weather. Snow is all very well and good, but like legislation changes, it doesn’t take much before we’ve had enough!

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