

The 2024 GVG Pig Fair was another successful event with a great turnout from both producers and allied industry. Thank you to all of you that attended and helped to make another great event.

For those that were not able to attend here is a summary of the talks, which covered a range of subjects from European pig production, abattoir monitoring, pleurisy, medicines use, new project work and the usual summary of what has been common on farms in the Southwest.

First up was **Jordi Mora**, Global technical services director for Eco Animal Health. He delivered a comprehensive update on the European pig industry. The EU currently has the world's most restrictive environmental and welfare legislation and there are more proposed enhancements to these legislation on the horizon. The EU removed Zinc Oxide from pig diets in 2022, 2 years before the UK, and has an aim to reduce by 50%, total antimicrobial sales by 2020. Spain is the only EU country to have significantly increased its pig production in the 10 years between 2013 and 2023, but it has been hard hit the Rosalia strain of PRRSv. African Swine Fever remains a major disease challenge in the EU.

Tom introduced us to some exciting new opportunities for more detailed input on-farm. Tom walked us through colostrum quality evaluation and the benefits with respect to piglet development from birth to weaning; iron deficiency assessment and using this to evaluate intervention with respect to iron treatment; vaccination management and compliance assessments, how these can bring added value to your vaccination programs through improved storage and compliance with administration. Tom couldn't miss an opportunity to mention environmental monitoring past – this year it was digital temperature monitoring using Thermpro. Like Tiny Talks, that you may be more familiar with, they track temperature over time but, as with most things, there is an app that goes with Thermpro to track in real-time. Finally, Tom covered the details of the Animal Health Welfare Pathway, how to engage with it and what you get out of taking part. If you would like to get involved with any of the projects that Tom covered, please don't hesitate to get in touch with the practice or Tom direct.

The first half concluded with **Alex** summarising the recent changes to medicines legislation that came into force in May of this year. The key points are the tightening of rules around prescribing antibiotics, particularly with respect to prescribing prophylactically i.e. giving antibiotics where a problem is anticipated rather than once it has been seen clinically. Prophylactic prescribing is not allowed unless exceptional circumstances with severe consequences can be identified. Ultimately, as vets, a key role is to preserve the health and welfare of the animals that we look after and so we will prescribe when needed but we will need to be able to evidence the reasoning behind that prescribing. If you would like to know more about the changes and how they will affect you please get in touch. There is also a recent article in Pig World that covers the key points:

<https://www.pig-world.co.uk/comment/opinion-what-producers-need-to-know-about-new-vet-medicines-rules.html>

After a well-earned break and time to chatter to our exhibitors we dived straight back into a double act of **Richard**, with an update on outputs from our abattoir monitoring scheme and **Professor Dan Tucker** who gave an overview of pleurisy, its causes, impact on pig productivity and some options on how to tackle it on farm.



Pleurisy has been an important pathological finding for a number of Pig Health Scheme members and was highlighted as a problem that producers wanted to better understand and know how to address. Pleurisy is complex and has multiple pathogens as causative agents, including *Mycoplasma hyopneumoniae*, PRRSv, *Glaesserella parasuis*, *Actinobacillus pleuropneumoniae*, most of which do not operate

individually but team up with each other making finding a solution much more difficult. Dan highlighted the importance of comprehensive diagnostics to fully characterise the causative agents at play so that interventions such as vaccinations, environmental improvements or treatment programmes can be tailored to the specific pathogen profile of the herd.

If you are not yet a member of the GVG Pig Health Scheme and are interested in gaining further insight into the health of your herd, please contact the office to sign up.

Last, but not least, **Fran** and **Hannah** gave an update on *E coli* and *Salmonella* diagnoses from across the pig practice and how we process the samples taken on farm through our practice laboratory and through external laboratories. Please be on the look out for post weaning diarrhoea, particularly now that zinc oxide is no longer in the creep diets. PWD can be enormously impactful on wean pigs and their future performance and there are numerous options available for both treatment and prevention.

THANK YOU!

A big thank you to everyone that completed the recent survey. We really appreciate your feedback.

PHS assessment dates

The remaining PHS assessment dates for 2024 are: Friday 29th November, Tuesday 3rd, Monday 9th and Wednesday 18th December.

Alex Thomsett BVetMed (Hons) DPM MRCVS