



Target

Farm

Action

A monthly digest of practical advice for pig farmers from BPEX

Helping the medicine go down on the farm

We all need to be responsible for animal medicines on farm so, to keep it straightforward, here is a quick summary of what you need to know.

It is ultimately the farmer's responsibility to ensure that animal medicines are used in a safe and effective way.

By law, you need to keep a full record of all medicines you buy and use to treat food-producing animals for a minimum of five years - regardless of the medicines' distribution category and including those administered by your veterinary surgeon or in feed.

At the time you acquire the medicine your record must show:

- ♦ name of the product
- ♦ the batch number
- ♦ date of acquisition
- ♦ quantity acquired
- ♦ name and address of the supplier

At the time you administer the medicine, you must update your record with:

- ♦ name of the product
- ♦ the date of administration
- ♦ quantity administered
- ♦ withdrawal period
- ♦ identification of the animals treated

Remember to follow the manufacturer's advice on storage, and if you have unused or out-of-date medicines and containers when you finish the treatment, dispose of them safely.

If in doubt, ask your veterinary surgeon or whoever supplied the product.

Finally, think about ways to minimise medicine use in the first place. Adequate training and good recording systems provide a framework for identifying disease problems and taking the necessary action on farm.

Staff working directly with animals should be trained to identify health problems early and in the use of veterinary medicines.

Prescription only Medicines Veterinarian (POM-V)

A veterinary medicinal product classified as a POM-V may only be supplied once it has been prescribed by a veterinary surgeon following a clinical assessment of the animal(s). POM-V products may only be supplied by veterinary surgeons and pharmacists.



Prescription Only Medicines (POM)

A product classified as POM may be prescribed by a registered veterinary surgeon, pharmacist or suitably qualified person (SQP). An SQP is trained and registered to sell veterinary products and often works from an agricultural merchant. For more information go to <http://www.vmd.gov.uk/General/VMR/RUCOP.pdf>.

Paying twice for your feed?

It is a well-known fact that the cost of feed accounts for roughly 60% of production costs, but are you aware that you could be wasting far more food than you think?

If you don't withdraw access to food prior to dispatch, pigs will go to the abattoir with full, or partially full, stomachs, and that costs you money.

Cost 1: Purchase cost for the food

Cost 2: Charges incurred eg for waste disposal

Cost 3: Reduction in carcase payment

Food in the stomach at slaughter can reduce the killing-out percentage of your pigs, as well as potentially contaminating the carcase if the stomach splits during processing.

For a farm selling 200 pigs a week, with an average of just half a kilo of food in their stomachs, the amount of food wasted is over five tonnes - which is worth £850 in cash! Plus, there is the loss of carcase weight and a risk of charges due to contamination and waste disposal.

Withdrawing food 8 - 12 hours prior to slaughter is optimal; a withdrawal period any longer than this will have a detrimental effect on the killing-out percentage. An *Action for Productivity (No.7)* looking at the factors affecting killing-out percentage is available from BPEX.

Photo left: Comparison of a full stomach vs a non full one



Virtual world of pigs

Have you ever fancied a good look at how things are done on other farms?

Producers at the Exeter Training Group were the first to be treated to exactly that, when virtual tours of their farrowing units were shown.

The video footage fuelled a lively and successful discussion, as no unit's crates, housing or husbandry were the same. The group examined details of each unit's set up and learned how things had been monitored and changed.

The different practices in farrowing crate preparation, litter work, routine vet tasks and environment were all noted and questions such as 'why had some practices been adopted on one unit and not another', and 'what can be improved on', addressed.

It is always worthwhile to evaluate farrowing management on your own unit, and even better to compare it with what others are doing.

Contact the BPEX KT team to find out about producer meetings in your region.

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