

Responsible use of vaccines and vaccination in pig production

In order for medicines to be used responsibly they must be lawfully obtained and used in accordance with the label directions or veterinary advice.

Produced for the **RUMA Alliance**.

RUMA guidelines for the responsible use of vaccines by pig farmers have been designed to give easy-to-read guiding principles that can be used by pig producers in the management of their herds.

The responsible use of medicines has always been a fundamental principle of good livestock keeping and is given further impetus by the encouragement of farm health planning under the Great Britain Animal Health and Welfare Strategy (AHWS). Farm health planning represents one of the direct ways in which the livestock sector, specifically individual producers, can be persuaded of the cost benefits of adopting on-farm health strategies. Best practice in the use of veterinary medicines must be an integral part of effective health planning, and these RUMA guidelines aim to define that best practice.

The Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture Alliance (RUMA) is a growing coalition of organisations representing every stage of the "farm to fork" process. It has been set up to review and provide guidance on the use of medicines in all livestock. As part of this work RUMA has established practical strategies to promote the correct use of vaccines in the pig industry.

Vaccines have, from the 1960s, made a major contribution to improving pig health, welfare and productivity. They are vital components in preventing a wide variety of diseases.

To communicate these strategies effectively to the industry RUMA has produced a comprehensive set of guidelines for the responsible use of vaccines in pig and other livestock production. These give advice on all aspects from the initial risk assessment to best practice for their use. It also provides clear strategies for the implementation of effective vaccination programmes for farmers and veterinary surgeons to make best use of these valuable relatively inexpensive products.

A farm health planning initiative in partnership with Defra.

Supported by the National Office of Animal Health (NOAH)

When animals are exposed to infections and survive then they will develop an immunity and so they are usually completely, or partially, immune or resistant to other attacks by the same organism. The animal when first infected may become ill and need treatment. Vaccination mimics infection and so it provides immunity without the animals succumbing to the disease. Thus the animal becomes resistant to the disease before it becomes infected and so, if later on the animal is exposed to the infection, it will usually not show any signs, or only minor signs, of illness. This will result in animals being healthier and also requiring less treatments. This is beneficial to the animal, the farmer and the consumer. All animals will be immune naturally from exposure to some diseases and there is no risk from consuming food from healthy animals which have been previously vaccinated to produce similar immunity.

This booklet summarises the responsibilities that pig farmers have as they use vaccines to safeguard the health, welfare and productivity of their herd.

For Farmers

The use of animal medicines carries with it responsibilities. Under UK legislation, all vaccines are licensed for specific species and uses.

A product will not be authorised unless very stringent requirements are met. The use of some vaccines are under the direct responsibility of veterinary surgeons.

Farmers, however, have a very considerable role to play in ensuring that the directions of the veterinary surgeon and manufacturer are properly carried out and also in developing and applying disease control measures which utilize vaccines to best practice.

THE GUIDELINES

All farmers have a responsibility to safeguard the health and welfare of the animals under their control. There are occasions where this is a joint responsibility with their veterinary surgeon, such as in the implementation of vaccination programmes. Farmers and stock-keepers can play a major role in ensuring that these responsibilities are properly discharged and that medicines are responsibly used by observing the guidelines published here. Similar guidelines form part of all farm assurance schemes.

- All pig farmers must be totally committed to producing safe food.
- Pig keepers have a duty and responsibility to safeguard the health and welfare of animals on their farm.
- An appropriate herd health plan should be drawn up, observed and reviewed at every quarterly farm audit undertaken by the attending veterinary surgeon. This plan should outline routine preventive treatments and management practices to cover issues such as routine medication and vaccination programmes. Both stockman and veterinary surgeon should monitor herd performance for signs of disease and the herd health plan updated and implemented to take account of such signs.
- Vaccine usage should be based on a risk assessment but some should be used as a routine. Vaccines are complimentary to good hygiene, nutrition and environmental management.
- Vaccination programmes that use vaccines requiring a veterinary prescription should only be initiated with formal veterinary approval.

Commercially available vaccines in the UK cover the following infectious diseases:-

Atrophic rhinitis

Aujeszky's disease

Clostridial disease

E.coli

Erysipelas

Glasser's disease

Lawsonia intracellularis infection (Ileitis)

Mycoplasma hyopneumoniae/Enzootic

Pneumonia Porcine parvovirus

Porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome

Salmonella typhimurium

- It is essential that any vaccine programme is based on a correct diagnosis. In addition a full risk assessment of potential diseases should be made as and when the herd health plan is updated.
- The prescribing veterinary surgeon must be made aware of all other vaccine programmes and medications used in the herd so that adverse reactions can be avoided.
- The full course of vaccination at the recommended dosages must always be administered. Booster programmes are essential to maintain protection and must be given at the correct intervals.
- The recommended route of administration must be followed. Always check when using a new vaccine whether it should be administered under the skin (subcutaneous [sc]) or into the muscle (intra-muscular [im]). Ensure that the correct site of injection is used.
- All involved with vaccination programmes must make themselves aware of the medicine information relating to withdrawal periods needed before pigs can be slaughtered for human consumption. It generally only applies to vaccines used outside their market authorisations and as this can only occur under specific veterinary instruction, the veterinary surgeon will specify where a withdrawal period is required.
- An animal medicine record book, copies of relevant regulations and codes of good practice must be kept safely on farm (e.g. the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) Code of Practice on the Responsible Use of Animal Medicines on the Farm).
- Accurate information must be kept on the identity of the pigs being vaccinated. Records should also include the date of vaccination, the batch number, amount and expiry date information for each animal vaccinated and the withdrawal period that must be observed where applicable. Medicine records required by legislation should be maintained for at least five years (even if the pigs in question have been slaughtered).
- Information on all vaccines in use should be readily available to stock-keepers and kept on file e.g. Summary of Product Characteristics (SPC) or product data sheets, package inserts and safety data sheets. Such information is vitally important in the event of accidental self injection.
- Follow the advice of manufacturers and regulatory bodies on the storage of medicines and the disposal of unused medicines (check the label or package insert). Safely dispose of unused or out-of-date medicines and containers and application equipment (including needles to a sharps container) when you finish the

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Agricultural Industries Confederation (AIC)

Animal Health Distributors Association (AHDA)

Animal Medicines Training Regulatory Authority (AMTRA)

Assured Food Standards (AFS)

British Poultry Council (BPC)

British Retail Consortium (BRC)

British Veterinary Association (BVA)

Linking Environment And Farming (LEAF)

Meat & Livestock Commission (MLC)

National Beef Association (NBA)

National Consumer Council (NCC)

National Farmers' Union (NFU)

National Office of Animal Health (NOAH)

National Pig Association (NPA)

NPTC

National Sheep Association (NSA)

Royal Association of British Dairy Farmers (RABDF)

Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (RPSGB)

Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)

treatment for which they were intended. If in any doubt seek advice from your veterinary surgeon or whoever supplied the product.

- Any suspected adverse reaction in a pig to any medicine should be reported immediately to the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) and the supplier. The report to the VMD can be done through the prescribing veterinary surgeon or the supplier. The adverse reaction can also be reported by the livestock keeper direct to the VMD. Adverse reaction forms can be found on its website <http://www.vmd.gov.uk/>. All such suspected adverse reactions should also be accurately recorded in the on-farm medicine records. In the case of vaccines a suspected failure to prevent disease also constitutes an adverse reaction although in this case a definitive diagnosis is essential.
- Cooperate with and observe the rules of farm assurance schemes that monitor medication and withdrawal compliance. However any pig keeper should never feel constrained from safeguarding the health and welfare of the pigs.
- When contemplating vaccinating a herd or group of pigs it is essential that the pigs are clean, unstressed and not suffering clinical disease. Avoid vaccinating sows seven days either side of farrowing. Pigs in good nutritional condition generally respond better to vaccines, but there is always, to a degree, some individual variation.
- Adequate training and good recording systems are essential to provide a framework for identifying disease problems and making the necessary changes to management practices. This can lead to the implementation of suitable vaccination regimes. Staff working directly with animals should be trained to identify health problems early and in the use of veterinary medicines.

November 2006

The Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture Alliance (RUMA) was established in November 1997 to promote the highest standards of food safety, animal health and animal welfare in British livestock farming.

A unique initiative involving organisations representing every stage of the food chain RUMA aims to promote a co-ordinated and integrated approach to best practice in the use of medicines.

RUMA membership spans the food chain and includes organisations representing interests in agriculture, veterinary practice, the pharmaceutical industry, farm assurance, training, retailers, consumers and animal welfare interests.

(Published with thanks to Fort Dodge Animal Health, Intervet UK Ltd, Merial Animal Health Ltd, Novartis Animal Health, Pfizer Ltd and Schering-Plough Animal Health).

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