

## GUIDELINES

# Responsible use of vaccines and vaccination in farm animal 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.

*RUMA guidelines for the responsible use of vaccines and vaccination by farm animal producers have been designed to give easy-to-read guiding principles that can be used by all producers in the management of their herds or flocks.*

Produced for the **RUMA Alliance**

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. Partly its remit has been 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 livestock industry.

Vaccines have, from the 1930s, made a major contribution to improving farm animal 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 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 very valuable products. **This booklet summarises the responsibilities that livestock farmers have as they use vaccines to safeguard the health, welfare and productivity of their herd or flock.**

A farm health planning initiative in partnership with Defra

Supported by the National Office of Animal Health (NOAH)

## 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 is 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 utilise 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 discharge of correct and appropriate 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 and for the individual species. Similar guidelines form part of all farm assurance schemes.

When animals are exposed to infections and survive, then usually they will develop immunity and so they are usually completely, or partially, immune or resistance to other attacks by the same infection. 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. 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 to some diseases and so there is no risk from consuming food from healthy animals which have previously been vaccinated.

- All livestock farmers must be totally committed to producing safe food.
- Livestock keepers have a duty and responsibility to safeguard the health and welfare of animals on their farm.
- An appropriate herd/flock health plan should be drawn up, observed and regularly reviewed in association with the attending veterinary surgeon or other adviser. This plan should outline routine preventive treatments and management including vaccination.
- Vaccine usage should be based on a risk assessment but some should be used as a routine. Vaccines are complimentary to good management.

### Basic

- **ALWAYS READ THE SUMMARY OF PRODUCT CHARACTERISTICS (SPC) [DATA SHEET] - This includes vaccines regularly used in the flock/herd as SPCs change.**

### Storage

- Ensure all vaccines are stored correctly in suitable, clean storage at the correct temperature.
- Store vaccines in date order and use in sequence.
- Only use vaccines in date.
- Order only sufficient vaccine to meet requirements.
- Keep out of the reach of children.

### **Safety of Those Vaccinating**

- All vaccinating should be adequately trained and suitable to use the vaccine.
- Ensure sufficient people present to vaccinate safely.
- If self injection occurs seek immediate medical advice and **take the package insert with you.**

### **Animals to be Vaccinated**

- Only vaccinate normal, healthy, rested, non-stressed, clean, dry, immunocompetent animals of suitable age, stage of pregnancy, nutritional status.
- When vaccinating do not administer other vaccines, medicines or undertake other procedures without taking advice.

### **Vaccine Courses and Booster Vaccination**

- The full course of vaccination at the recommended dosages and correct time intervals between doses 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 how it is to be given.
- If the time interval is longer than authorised before “boostering”, advice should be sought.
- All involved with vaccination programmes should make themselves aware of the information relating to any withdrawal periods relating to slaughter or for producing milk for human consumption.

### **Preparing the Vaccine**

- **FOLLOW THE ADVICE ON THE SPC (DATA SHEET)**
- Check the dose, dilution rate, route of administration and all precautions.
- Ensure all equipment is clean and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure all vaccines for injection remain sterile.
- Ensure if injecting, that needles remain clean, sharp and are regularly changed.
- Ensure during vaccination that the vaccine does not come into contact with anything that might inactivate it.
- If vaccines are to be given by routes other than by injection, ensure that the animals have been prepared appropriately to receive the vaccine.

### **Vaccinating an Animal**

- Ensure the animal is competently and adequately restrained before any vaccine is administered. Otherwise especially if injecting, do not administer.
- Ensure the correct administration route is used.

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**RUMA is made up of the following organisations:**

*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)*

- Ensure any site of any injection is clean and dry.
- Ensure if injecting only the sites recommended are used.

### Recording Vaccination

- 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 livestock vaccinated. Records should also include the date of administration, batch number, amount and expiry date information for each animal vaccinated and the withdrawal period that must be observed. Medicine records required by legislation should be maintained for at least five years (even if the animals in question have been slaughtered).
- Information on all vaccines in use should be readily available to stock-keepers and kept on file e.g. SPCs (formerly data sheets), package inserts and safety data sheets.
- Any suspected adverse reaction in livestock to any medicine should be reported immediately to the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) and the supplier. 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. Suspect adverse reaction forms can be found on its website <http://www.vmd.gov.uk>.
- Cooperate with and observe the rules of farm assurance schemes that monitor medication and withdrawal compliance. However all livestock keepers should never feel constrained from safeguarding the health and welfare of their animals.

### Disposal of Vaccines and Containers

- Read the SPC (data sheet) and dispose accordingly.
- Always safely dispose of all used and unused vaccines, containers and application equipment.
- Some vaccines may need to be inactivated by use of agents such as disinfectants before disposal.

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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 all medicines in food producing animals.

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.

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