

New Red Tractor antimicrobial usage monitoring

The European Commission's 2011 action plan against the rising threats from antimicrobial resistance included the desire to "strengthen surveillance systems on antimicrobial resistance monitoring and antimicrobial consumption in animal medicine". However, in many member states, the UK included, the amount of antibiotic used by species of animal is currently unknown.

Most countries monitor sales of antibiotics and the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) report the figure each year, but it can't accurately break it down by species use. It's expected when the new European parliament's commission is formed, a series of guidelines will be produced later this year requiring member states to quantify antimicrobial use on a species basis.

The Red Tractor Assurance Pig Scheme has decided that it's going to require farms to record antibiotic usage on an annual basis from October 1 this year as part of its Veterinary Health Plan (VHP). The collated data is to be reviewed annually with the farm's vet, and if new EU or UK legislation requires this total to be presented in a different format, this will also be possible.

In anticipation of the EU and possible national requirements, BPEX carried out a survey last year to try to estimate the amount of antibiotics that was being used in the UK pig industry. Collecting reliable data was quite difficult, and different approaches were required for different products and production systems.

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Vet practices could supply good data regarding injectable and soluble products directly supplied to their clients, but feed compounders were more reliable regarding actual medicated-feed supplied on to the farm rather than the vet prescription data, which was not necessarily filled. Home mixers also have their own records for medicated concentrates and premixes, but estimating how much went into this category of producer was also quite difficult to assess. The use of zinc oxide wasn't

Vet David Burch of Octagon Services discusses the new Red Tractor assurance scheme requirement to measure antimicrobial use at farm level



David Burch

included, as it wasn't considered an antibiotic.

BPEX produced an early spreadsheet tool, that can be downloaded from the link below, to help farmers start monitoring their usage. It is based on premix, soluble and injectable data, and the weight of the pigs produced.

Here at Octagon Services, we have extended this simple spreadsheet so that smaller farmers can more easily collect their annual usage data together, based on medicated feed information plus soluble products and injectable products and come out with an overall usage figure at the end. This will work for all categories of farms from breeder/finishers to contract finisher to assist with compliance with the Red Tractor requirements.

Additional information can also be collated, such as the amount of critical human drug use (fluoroquinolones and third- and fourth-generation cephalosporins). For finisher producers, additional analysis can be carried out based on

the number of pigs produced, liveweight or deadweight sold and compared with the estimated UK average pig antibiotic consumption data.

This can be helpful to establish whether the farm is an average, higher-than-average or very-high user (double average), where the farmer should consult his vet to see if he can reduce his use. This calculation is based on mg of antibiotic/kg liveweight or deadweight. It's not meant to be a target, but twice the national average usage seems to be a good point to start, which is what the Danes have used.

It's hoped that the new Red Tractor requirements will better prepare UK pig farmers for what might come out of Europe in due course, but it's also an opportunity to review their medication programmes and their costs. 📄

📄 The BPEX spreadsheet can be found at: <http://goo.gl/14Oq0V>, while the Octagon Services spreadsheet can be downloaded at: <http://goo.gl/v9o7jQ>

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