

GUIDELINES

Responsible use of antimicrobials in pig production

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, retail, consumers and animal welfare interests.

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 by the Pig Working Group of the **RUMA Alliance**

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RUMA guidelines for the responsible use of antimicrobials by pig farmers have been designed to provide quick and easy-to-read guiding principles that can be used by pig producers.

Antimicrobials have made a major contribution to improving the health and welfare of pigs for several decades. They are vital medicines for the treatment and control of bacterial infections in pigs.

The emergence of antimicrobial resistance as a serious problem in human medicine has prompted concerns that resistance or resistant bacteria could be transferred from livestock to the human population (and vice versa). The effectiveness of some medical antimicrobial treatments might be compromised if this occurred.

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 reduce the need to use antimicrobials, where appropriate.

To communicate these strategies effectively to the industry RUMA has produced a comprehensive set of guidelines for the responsible use of antimicrobials in pigs and in other areas of livestock production. These give advice on aspects from application and use, to responsibilities of farmers and veterinary surgeons, and to strategies for reducing the need for usage. **This booklet summarises the responsibilities of pig farmers as they use antimicrobials to safeguard the health and welfare of their animals.**

For Farmers

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

A product will not be authorised unless very stringent requirements are met. The use of therapeutic antimicrobials 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 are properly carried out and also in developing and applying disease control measures which minimise the need for antimicrobial use.

THE GUIDELINES

All farmers have a responsibility for the health and welfare of the animals on their farm. There are occasions where this is a joint responsibility with their veterinary surgeons, such as in the discharge of correct and appropriate antimicrobial treatment and care. Farmers and stock-keepers can play a major role in ensuring the responsible use of medicines on farms by following 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 that outlines routine preventative treatments (eg biosecurity, vaccination and worming programmes etc.) and disease control policy should be drawn up, observed and regularly reviewed in association with the attending veterinary surgeon.
- Therapeutic antimicrobial products should be seen as complementing good management, vaccination, biosecurity and farm hygiene.
- Treatment with a medicine that requires a veterinary prescription should only be initiated with formal veterinary approval. In-feed medication must be covered by a Medicated Feedingstuff (MFS) Prescription.
- Accurate information must be given to the attending veterinary surgeon to ensure that the correct diagnosis, medication and dosage can be calculated. Clear instructions regarding diagnosis, medication, dosage and administration must be made available in written form to all who are involved in the care of the animals concerned.
- The prescribing veterinary surgeon must be made aware of other medicines being administered to the animals concerned so that adverse reactions can be avoided.

- The full course of treatment at the correct dosage must always be administered in a careful manner. Make sure that only target animals receive the medication.
- For in-feed or in-water medication ensure that the end of medication is accurately determined by cleaning the header tank or feed bin as appropriate.
- Make sure that the appropriate withdrawal period is complied with before the slaughter of treated animals. The withdrawal time required should be specified on the Medicated Feedingstuff Prescription in the case of in-feed antimicrobials; or on the label of the medicine; or may be set by the veterinary surgeon.
- An animal medicines record book, copies of relevant regulations and Codes of 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 treated and the nature of the condition being treated. Records should also include the batch number, amount and expiry date of the medicine used, plus treatment time and date information for each animal treated and the withdrawal period that must be observed. Medicine records required by legislation must be kept for at least five years (even if the pigs in question have been slaughtered).
- Appropriate information on all medicines used should be readily available to stock-keepers and kept on file – e.g. product data sheets, package inserts or safety data sheets.
- 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

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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)

British Poultry Council (BPC)

British Retail Consortium (BRC)

British Veterinary Association (BVA)

Linking Environment & 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 GB (RPSGB)

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

a sharps container) when you finish the treatment for which they were intended. If in any doubt seek advice from your veterinary surgeon or whoever supplied the product. Follow RPSGB guidelines on remixing or reworking of batches of medicated feed.

- Any suspected adverse reaction to a medicine in either the treated animals (including any unusual failure to respond to medication) or farm staff having contact with the medicine should be reported immediately to the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) and the supplier. The report to VMD can be done through the prescribing veterinary surgeon or the supplier. The adverse reaction can be reported direct to the VMD by the livestock keeper. Adverse reaction forms can be found on its website www.vmd.gov.uk. A record of the adverse reaction should also be kept on the farm: either a copy of the VMD adverse reaction form or a note in the medicines record book.
- Co-operate with and observe the rules of farm assurance schemes that monitor medication and withdrawal period compliance. However, stock-keepers should never feel constrained from safeguarding the health and welfare of the animals.
- Work with the farm veterinary surgeon in monitoring the effectiveness of antimicrobials used and regularly investigate the possibility of alternatives (particularly through changes to management techniques) to see if they can offer the same level of protection of health and welfare as the use of antimicrobials.
- 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 a reduction in antimicrobial use. Staff working directly with animals should be trained to identify health problems early and in the use of veterinary medicines.