

Prescribing Principles for Antimicrobials Updated

The Pig Veterinary Society (PVS) have recently updated the PVS prescribing principles for antimicrobials. The aims of these principles are to ensure the appropriate use of antimicrobials and that, where they are used, prescribing is carried out in a responsible manner.

The updated guidance includes the following points:

- The basis for responsible prescribing is a diagnosis, and the prescribing vet should confirm a clinical diagnosis with diagnostic investigations including antimicrobial sensitivity testing where appropriate
- The use of antimicrobials should be minimised by:
 - Encouraging good on farm management
 - Optimising the animal's environment
 - Implementing appropriate vaccine regimes
 - Considering routes of administration to administer the course most effectively, to the minimum number of pigs requiring treatment, and with due regard to possible environmental contamination
- Wherever possible the prescribing vet should adhere to the product's SPC (summary of product characteristics) and to the prescribing cascade.
- Antimicrobial use should be reviewed on the farm at least annually and this review should be recorded in the farm's Veterinary Health Plan (VHP)
- Antimicrobial selection should be considered in accordance with the European Medicine Agency's (EMA) antimicrobial classification guidelines

Pig Photography Competition

clipart-library.com



Our new medicine book is almost ready to print and be made available. The only thing missing is a cover photograph! If you have images of pigs and pig farming that you would be happy to share, we'd love to see them. The winning images will be used on the medicine book and/or for our freshly updated website.

Please send images to pigs@bishoptonvets.co.uk. We will contact you for your permission before using them.

Welfare Codes: Environmental Enrichment

Continuing our focus on the new welfare codes, it had been our intention this month to concentrate on environmental enrichment. Unfortunately we are still awaiting further clarification on this from Defra and APHA. As soon as we have some information we will ensure that this information is shared to all those who would benefit.

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Water Acidification

A number of our clients provide acidified water to at least their weaners, if not growers/finishers as well. This can help control bacteria such as *Salmonella* spp or *E. coli* in the gut as the acidic environment inhibits the multiplication of these pathogens, and so decreases post-weaning diarrhoea. An additional benefit is that the palatability of acidified water appears to be increased, so increasing water intakes and subsequently feed intakes, which is of great importance at weaning.

It is important that the pH of the water is lowered enough to prevent the replication of the pathogens, so it should aim to be between pH 3.8 – 4.2.

Prior to using acid, the water lines should be sanitised to remove any biofilm present – this is a slime containing bacteria and debris that is found along the inside wall of the water pipes. Once using acidified water the water lines should have unacidified water run through them one day per week to prevent acid-tolerant biofilm building up in the pipes. Depending on your farm, a specific water sanitiser may be used instead of unacidified water for this task.

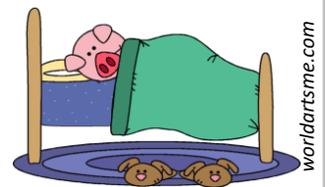
It is important to do this regularly, ideally before the pigs enter, so that once they have entered the building the water has a consistent taste. It is also important to do this regularly if water medication is administered, as these products can contain sugars that help the bacteria in the water multiply.

Also a kindly reminder that, as the acid is corrosive, it is useful to have spare water trough/bowls/ nipple parts and the tools on farm to mend them to avoid any issues sourcing these pieces of kit if there is a leak.

If you have any questions regarding water acidification please contact your vet.

Current Clinical Trends – What are we seeing out there?...

At the moment we are seeing an increase in cases of meningitis and swollen joints due to suspected *Streptococcus suis* infections. This bacterium is transmitted pig to pig by direct contact and can travel short distances by aerosol. It can also be transmitted by mice and flies. It can survive for long times in water, faeces and dust.



Clinical signs progress quickly so rapid treatment is required once signs are identified in order for the treatment to be effective. As the pigs become recumbent they no longer drink. Most clinical cases of streptococcal meningitis die from dehydration so it is advised to administer water little and often throughout the day. Please remember that pigs normally drink a lot of water (around 1 litre of water per 10kg of body weight for growing pigs).

Please [click here](#) to read our article on *Streptococcus suis*.

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