

Benefits for all pig herds in moving to early *M. hyopneumonia* vaccination

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Early vaccination of pig herds against [enzootic pneumonia](#) - as young as seven days of age - is recommended by veterinary surgeon John Hayden, who is seeing the benefits of this among his clients in East Anglia.

"There's no doubt that providing early protection leads to better post-weaning health, with the pigs more able to cope with other challenges resulting in fewer faders," he said. "Importantly, too, the need for medication is often reduced and the pigs perform better overall through to slaughter.

Vaccinating piglets early against *M. hyo*, which causes enzootic pneumonia, is most common among producers with indoor herds, with 20 percent of his indoor clients choosing to vaccinate at seven days and another 60 percent at 14 to 21 days.

"It tends to depend on what other vaccines they're using," he said. "Many will opt to use both the *M. hyo* vaccine with another for porcine circovirus at 14 days. Those using the *M. hyo* vaccine at seven days tend to follow this at 14 days with vaccines against porcine circovirus and PRRS.

Although vaccination at seven or 14 days is much less common among outdoor herds that make up the majority of his clients on the light Breckland soil, Hayden feels this would be worth considering despite some practical difficulties.

"Although handling piglets is inevitably less easy on free-range units, there would certainly be benefits in bringing forward protection from three weeks when most are vaccinated as they are being weaned.

"This early vaccination is being done successfully where there are two people handling the piglets and using a fender system to separate the piglets as they are injected to make sure none is missed."

Hayden added that there had been more cases of enzootic pneumonia last winter, coinciding with the four months of harsh weather.

His comments come after producers were given a new option for early protection. A revised licence for the vaccine Suvaxyn MH-One enables pig producers to vaccinate from seven days of age with a two-week onset of immunity. This means that the vaccine can protect piglets prior to the high-risk period for *M. hyo* infection around weaning. Duration of immunity extends well beyond the average UK pig slaughter age of 176 days.

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