

UK pig industry tackles antibiotic use

The use of antibiotics in UK pig production came under the spotlight at a workshop attended by representatives from across the industry.



The aim was to come up with an action plan aimed at reducing the amount of antimicrobials used, without jeopardising national herd health.

All agreed the key was to find out exactly how much was being used as current measures can only give an approximation.

The workshop incorporated a series of breakout sessions when specific questions were tackled looking at the collection and usage of data, optimising antimicrobial use, alternative approaches and sharing information more effectively.

The meeting, held in London, was chaired by John Fitzgerald, General Secretary of the Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture alliance (RUMA) and also chairman of the Pig Health and Welfare Committee antimicrobials subgroup.

He said: "Antimicrobial resistance has become a very dramatic and high profile issue in the media. We are going to see changes because there's a possible link between resistance in animals and humans.

"The results from the workshop will be tangible, practical and achievable. A draft plan from the event will be sent out to the industry for consultation and progress will be monitored on a monthly basis."

Some of the key results were:

- Make sure data collection can all be done online
- Data collection at farm level would be best
- Consider both usage and health and welfare – what does success look like
- Set up benchmarking to identify high users
- Improve health, hygiene and biosecurity
- Understand both the customer and consumer better
- Look at genetic selection for disease resistance

BPEX veterinary team manager Martin Smith, who is drawing up the plan, said: "The discussions at the meeting were very open. The issue was seen, not as one for farmers and vets, but one for the whole industry which was extremely positive."

"We are going to need incentives for the industry as they will need to know what benefits will accrue. I think the most important are in the area of benchmarking and early indications of problems on farm."

The draft plan is in preparation and is due to go out to the industry for consultation shortly.

For a summary of the meeting, [click here](#).

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