

Neogen Launches Rapid Tests for Ractopamine

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US - As international debate continues on the use of the feed additive ractopamine, Neogen Corporation has launched easy 10 minute tests to detect ractopamine in animal and animal feed samples.

Ractopamine is a beta-agonist drug added to feed to promote lean muscle in animals raised for meat. While many countries allow the use of ractopamine within specified limits, including the United States, regulatory agencies in other countries have banned residues of the drug, including those in the European Union, Russia, and China.

"China recently followed Russia by imposing import restrictions on certain US meat products, which require documentation that the products are free of ractopamine," said Ed Bradley, Neogen's vice president of Food Safety. "While top trade officials in the US view the new restrictions as unnecessary trade barriers, markets in which ractopamine residues are banned are worth hundreds of millions of dollars annually to US meat producers. Until these trade issues can be resolved, companies seeking access to these markets may have no choice but to comply with the new regulations."

To ensure compliance with the new regulations, animal samples can be easily screened for the presence of ractopamine. In addition, feed manufacturers can use simple screening tests to verify the effectiveness of their cleanup procedures when switching production from ractopamine-medicated feed to feed intended to be ractopamine-free.

Neogen's Ractopamine Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests are intended to screen cattle and swine samples, and swine and turkey feed samples for the presence of ractopamine. The tests are one-step screening tests that easily detect the presence of ractopamine at set levels. The ractopamine screening test for swine screens at 2.5 parts per billion (ppb); the test for cattle screens at 1 ppb; and the test for swine and turkey feed screens at 0.5 or 4 parts per million.

The US has set a maximum residue limit for ractopamine at 30 ppb for beef and 50 ppb for pork. The Codex Alimentarius, which creates international food guidelines, has a limit of 10 ppb for pork and beef.

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