FACT SHEET

ANTIMICROBIAL STEWARDSHIP

Antimicrobial stewardship (AMS) is a collaborative process between the farmer and those responsible for supporting the health and welfare of animals, particularly veterinarians. The 5R’s of good AMS provide a framework for ensuring high standards of animal health and welfare exist to reduce the incidence of disease, and ultimately reduce the need for antimicrobials and the potential for antimicrobial resistance (AMR) to develop. AMR is a serious threat to the treatment of disease in humans and animals. There are also impacts on the environment associated with effluent application on pastures and crops.

Responsibility
A successful AMS plan is the result of a shared responsibility between the producer, who is responsible for maintaining animals to high standards of health and welfare and the herd veterinarian, who accepts responsibility for the decision to use an antimicrobial medicine. Responsibility also involves senior managers and staff working day to day with the pigs. They must play their part in preventing disease and implementing measures to prevent and treat disease.

Review
Successful AMS requires regular review of practices that impact all aspects of animal health and welfare, including identifying why antimicrobials need to be used. Review can take several different forms, such as the continual review and acknowledgement of improvements made through APIQ® and other third-party QA accreditation programs. It also involves recording antimicrobial use, reviewing the quantity used each year and how the use compares with good practice and disease control efficacy.

Reduce
Successful AMS includes reducing the use of antimicrobials without negatively impacting on pig health and welfare. The combination of good biosecurity, hygiene, air quality, housing, nutrition and animal husbandry including all in all out pig flows will ensure infectious disease incidence (and need for antimicrobials) is minimised.

Refine
Successful AMS includes refinement of antimicrobial use. This means making the right diagnosis and ensuring that if antimicrobials are required, that the right medicines, dosing, duration and route of administration (by mouth or injection) when disease occurs is specific to each farm and requires a tailored approach.

Replace
Successful AMS includes replacing the use of antimicrobials without negatively impacting on pig health and welfare. Alternatives to antimicrobials may include vaccines and organic acids. Enzymes, pre- and pro-biotics and other feed additives have a variable record of success in controlling or treating disease.