



ANTIMICROBIAL PRESCRIBING GUIDELINES FOR PIGS

Project Participants

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Problem

Historic practices of raising pigs in conditions of poor hygiene resulted in a culture of controlling diseases with antimicrobials, rather than addressing underlying management, housing, or hygiene deficiencies. Increased use of antimicrobials can result in resistance issues, which reduce the effectiveness of antimicrobials in animal production, but also increases the risk of resistance to particular antimicrobials developing in human pathogens.

Project

Antimicrobial prescribing guidelines for pigs provides guidance to veterinarians on prevention and treatment options for bacterial diseases including the selection and use of antimicrobial products registered in Australia for use in pigs. These guidelines focus on antimicrobial stewardship practices that ensure these treatments are used in an appropriate way to secure their use and efficacy for the future.

Value for Producers

Good antimicrobial stewardship has value for producers because it ensures veterinarians continue to have access to effective treatments, thereby reducing consultation costs for producers, and ensuring the health and welfare of the pigs.

Additionally, antimicrobial stewardship programs are a way in which the pork industry can demonstrate its commitment to producing food in a way that does not place environmental or human health at risk.



Background

Many farms worldwide with a conventional health status successfully produce pigs with little use of specifically targeted medication by using commercially available vaccines, housing systems that meet best practice, and batch systems or all-in all-out pig flows. The strategies outlined in Antimicrobial prescribing guidelines for pigs are supported by global technical literature and have already been applied in Australia.

Recommendations

The recommendations within Antimicrobial prescribing guidelines for pigs focus on ways to manage and prevent the most common diseases that veterinarians would combat with antimicrobials. These include:

- Lameness in neonatal pigs in the first week of life
- Diseases where the main clinical sign is diarrhoea in newborn pigs up to four days of age
- Diseases where the main clinical sign is diarrhoea from five days of age until weaning
- Diseases where the main clinical sign is diarrhoea after weaning
- Diseases where the main clinical sign is coughing
- Diseases where the main clinical sign is sudden death in pigs between weaning and 10 weeks of age
- Diseases where the main clinical signs are skin lesions

There is a strong focus on removing medications from feed because this is currently how most of the medications are administered. This method generally requires a longer and less controllable duration of antimicrobial use and greater potential for environmental contamination.

Going forward, the aim is to optimise herd management, nutrition, environment, air quality, hygiene and early disease detection and hence reduce the overall amounts of antimicrobials used.

More Information

- For the full guidelines:

<https://www.ava.com.au/siteassets/resources/fighting-antimicrobial-resistance/antimicrobial-prescribing-guidelines-for-pigs.pdf>

- For technical information, contact Lechelle van Breda at lechelle.vanbreda@australianpork.com.au