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Food for Thought

Thoughts for our Food

An Update on Antimicrobial Usage and African Swine Fever

Swine Newsletter, October 1, 2018

The old adage “we are what we eat” is more relevant today than ever when we apply it to what we feed and put into our pigs.

Antimicrobial Usage

Due to political pressure from home and abroad the public opinion about antibiotic use in food producing animals is changing. With this change, law changes eventually follow. New antimicrobial usage laws come into effect December 1, 2018 and are impacted by numerous regulatory bodies including Agriculture Canada, CFIA, Health Canada, College of Veterinarians of Ontario and producer group quality assurance programs. Where did the pressure come from? Using licensed, label rate antibiotics and proper withdrawal times we are putting a great, safe product onto the market. The key buzzword is antimicrobial resistance (AMR) to medically important antibiotics (MIA).

What is Antimicrobial Resistance?

In recent years we have seen the emergence of new strains of bacteria in human health that are resistant to the antibiotics that are currently available. Resistance to antibiotics occurs naturally when antibiotic drugs are used heavily in human and veterinary medicine. AMR is a complex global problem. In an effort to reduce the effects of AMR on public health, and help impact a global change, rules are changing the way antimicrobial drugs may be used in agriculture.

How does this affect me and my day to day operations?

1. We will no longer be able to feed antibiotics at a growth promotant level. This would include low rate usage of Tylan, Lincomix, BMD and ASP.
2. All in feed medication will require a script regardless of current MIB labelling. You will still be able to have medication added to your premix at the feed mill.
3. Preventative antimicrobial use will still be allowed but not with class 1 antibiotics. This will mean the use of Exceed, Excenel, Ceftiocil and Baytril at processing will need to be replaced with an alternative product. All of these products will still be available for treatment of sick pigs.
4. All antibiotics and veterinary prescription drugs will require a written prescription from a veterinarian.
5. In order to obtain a script your veterinarian must have working knowledge of the disease pressures on your farm; a valid client, patient relationship (VPCR).

6. Water soluble medications, bagged feed medication and all injectable medications will no longer be available from the OTC market or your feed mill. All products will still be available through a Veterinarian or a Pharmacist.

In order to insure uninterrupted supply of products required for animal health and welfare please contact the clinic regarding your current use of bagged feed medications and water soluble medications.

What is our responsibility in the role of animal stewardship? Give thought to and have discussions around your current antibiotic use. Why am I currently doing what I am doing? Do I need that antibiotic? Am I using the right antibiotic at the right dose at the right time?

African Swine Fever (ASF)

What is it? How can I reduce my farms risk and the Canadian herds risk? ASF is a highly infectious viral disease of swine only that causes very high death loss. There is currently no vaccine or treatment available. The virus is spreading in Eastern Europe and in China and is endemic in Africa. Drying, freezing or meat curing does not kill the virus. It is spread through direct contact with infected animals, contact with contaminated objects or through the ingestion of the virus in contaminated meat products or feed ingredients. This is all scary stuff. What can I do?

We know from our previous experience with PEDV that foreign viruses can survive international shipping and further processing and still be infectious to our herd. Storing feed ingredients at room temperature for periods of time after arrival will help mitigate disease viability but the only way to assure that our feed stuffs are not contaminated is to source products that are from negative countries. Due to our global economy and supply chain this may not be possible. It is all of our rolls to have discussions about feed ingredients and biosecurity. Ask your feed supplier about their supplier approval program, do they source ingredients outside of North America and if so what is their biosecurity and traceability program.

We also need to go back to biosecurity basics and re-evaluate our programs. Some of you may be old enough (I am) to remember the initial CQA program from 20 years ago. There were questions that asked: Do you allow cured meats from foreign countries into the barn? Do you allow people to eat around pigs? Are pigs fed food scraps from lunches? Silly questions right? Maybe not. Many foreign diseases including ASF can survive the curing process. Make sure you team is aware of this risk and is following protocols. Restrict entry of visitors from affected countries into you farm. Do not feed any food waste to pigs.

It is important to control what we can control and ask questions

We are all potentially what we eat.

Glenn