

Media Release



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NPA PRESS RELEASE

Pig sector continues to make major strides in reducing antibiotic use

The NPA has welcomed the latest figures showing another significant reduction in antibiotic usage in the pig sector.

Figures collected using the electronic medicine book (eMB) show antibiotic use dropped by a further 16% in 2018 to reach 110 mg/PCU, edging closer to the 2020 industry target of 99 mg/PCU and in line with annual targets.

The figures show a continued reduction from 131mg/PCU in 2017, 183mg/PCU in 2016 and 238mg/PCU in 2015.

Equally, if not more significantly, there has also been a further decrease in the use of critically important antibiotics (CIAs), recorded at just 0.06mg/PCU in 2018, of which Colistin represented a negligible 0.004mg/PCU. The CIA figure is down from 0.1mg/PCU in 2017. Adding extra weight to the figures, the data taken from eMB represents 89% of pigs slaughtered in the UK.

NPA senior policy advisor Rebecca Veale said: “We are really pleased with these results, which show the industry remains well on track to meet the challenging antibiotic targets set by the pig industry via the RUMA targets task force in 2017.

“This continuing progress demonstrates the pig industry’s responsible approach to antibiotics and the ongoing hard work of producers, with their vets and others involved in pig production.

“Engagement and support from vets will continue to be very important as the industry works to deliver further reductions in the coming years, with an industry-wide focus on pig health.”

However, she warned that there will be challenges ahead, notably the loss of zinc oxide and the potential impact this could have on disease in post-weaned piglets.

“We must also continue to bear in mind that antibiotics are a necessary tool to treat sick animals on pig farms. As we strive to deliver further reductions, the aim must always be responsible use, rather than zero use, to ensure the welfare of pigs is maintained.”

More information

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