



PIG TALES



ALL ABOUT VACCINES

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*In veterinary medicine, like human medicine, disease prevention has become a priority
One of the best and most cost effective ways of doing this is by vaccination.*

How do vaccines work?

Vaccines stimulate the body to produce its own defence against infection. Mimicking what happens when an animal has been exposed to disease, the body and its defensive system will "remember" the identity of the invading organisms. So, when the animal comes into contact with a disease, its body is ready to fight it and the animal will not fall ill and suffer. This protects the individual animal and because this animal will not develop the disease and will not become infective, it will also help protect the whole herd from the disease.

What's the difference between killed or live vaccines?

Killed or inactivated vaccines are produced by chemically killing or inactivating bacteria or viruses. The now harmless bacteria or viruses, when injected, stimulate the pig to produce antibodies, without the pig having to suffer the disease. They generally provide a relatively short period of immunity.

Live vaccines are produced by weakening the ability of the virus or bacteria to produce disease while retaining its ability to produce immunity. They often provide longer-term protection.

How should vaccines be stored?

Vaccines should be stored according to the data sheet recommendations, which is usually out of the light and in a fridge at 2-8°C. Always have a max-min thermometer in your fridge to monitor its temperature and take great care when filling a fridge not to push the vaccine onto the plate at the back, because freezing will inactivate the vaccine. Temperature fluctuations should be avoided, so care should be taken if vaccines are being taken out into the field for long periods of time. Transport them in a cool box and preferably only take them out when you are ready to use them. We occasionally see vaccine bottles nicely 'cooking' in the sun – this seriously reduces their effect.



Injecting vaccines



Always use the appropriate length needle and gauge for the vaccine you are using / size of pig / site of injection. A vaccine designed for intramuscular use will not work if injected into the fat layer of a big sow! Also, change the needle at frequent intervals and avoid injecting a pig through a layer of mud – some of the dirt will be injected into the pig risking an injection site abscess.



Is it OK to combine vaccines?

If you read the vaccine data sheet it usually states that a vaccine should not be used within 14 days of another vaccine or other pharmaceutical product. This recommendation should be followed whenever possible to obtain the maximum benefit from the product. Occasionally this is not practical, but in such cases the vaccine is used 'off license' and the withdrawal period increases to the maximum of 28 days. If doing so it is best to inject the vaccines on different sides of the neck.

When and how should vaccines be disposed of?

Data sheets often state that once the vaccine vial is opened, then it should be disposed of within 10 hours. The reason for this is that when the vial is opened there is a risk of inoculating bacteria into the vial. One or two bacteria won't do any harm initially, but within 24 hours they will have multiplied to several million. You don't then want to inject this into a pig. Order the appropriate size vial for the number of pigs you need to treat and then dispose of the vial via your pharmaceutical waste container for incineration.

What if you self-inject?

For all products you use, you should have a file of COSHH sheets. These sheets inform you of the safety data of the product, including what to do if you accidentally self inject. Follow these guidelines exactly. Some vaccines e.g. Stellamune Once, is mineral based and even the injection of a small amount, if not treated promptly, could result in losing a finger. Please don't hesitate to contact the surgery for further advice on this matter if required.

What pig diseases can you vaccinate against?

Disease	Vaccine name	Notes
Parvovirus	Porcilis Ery Parvo	This is the combined parvo and erysipelas vaccine
Erysipelas	Porcilis Ery	
M. hyopneumoniae (Enzootic pneumonia)	Stellamune Once, M+ PAC, Ingelvac M hyo	
Clostridial diseases	Gletvax 6, Heptavac Covexin 8 is sometimes used but this is off license.	Gletvax 6 protects against E.coli and Cl. Perfringens Types B, C, and D. Heptavac protects against Cl. Tetani, Cl. Perfringens types B,C and D, Cl. septicum and Cl. novyi which can cause sudden death
PRRS	Porcilis PRRS, Progressis	Porcilis PRRS is used to protect fattening pigs against PRRS Progressis is used to protect sows and gilts
E. coli	Colisorb, Porcilis Porcol - 5	Colisorb is a combined vaccine which protects sows / gilts against Erysipelas and neonatal pigs against E. coli via passive colostrum immunity
Ileitis (<i>Lawsonia intracellularis</i>)	Enterisol ileitis	This is an oral vaccine
Glassers disease (<i>Haemophilus parasuis</i>)	Porcilis Glasser, Suvaxyn M. Hyo and parasuis	
Atrophic rhinitis	Porcilis AR-T	

Importing vaccines

On a number of farms we are now using vaccines against Strep suis to control meningitis, and APP. These have to be obtained from the continent on a special import license as the vaccine is unavailable at present in this country.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like to discuss this further.

