

GVG Pig Health Scheme

AHDB's recent bonfire of most significant health initiatives, latterly including Real Welfare and AHDB's Pig Health Scheme, was not welcomed by many pig farmers – or at least the demise of PHS wasn't!

Many other farmers have quite understandably pretty much forgotten about the scheme, following on from the rather chaotic interruptions of the last few years associated with Covid and contractor staffing problems.

The vet team here at the GVG were just aghast at the AHDB decision to let the axe fall on such an important health initiative. However, economies had to be made, and we are where we are!

As vets we fundamentally believe that health is one of the key pillars of efficient production and indeed linked closely to pig welfare and antibiotic use – important elements in differentiating and enhancing the reputation of British pig meat.

We are therefore very pleased to announce that we will shortly be launching a bespoke GVG Health Scheme to monitor key health parameters in our clients' pigs. The range of conditions monitored will be broadly similar to those you are used to, but we already know we can offer more by applying our field expertise to capture key enteric health markers, as well as the more traditional respiratory health indicators. We are working hard to get our scheme off the ground as soon as possible, hopefully later this Spring. This has only been possible with support and logistical backing from Zoetis Animal Health, to whom we are very grateful. GVG Health Scheme (GHS) will be a subscription service available to all our clients selling pigs into the larger regional plants. With Zoetis support we are really hoping to keep client costs to an absolute minimum, but this will in part be dependent on broad engagement with this project. We really hope you will be able to join us in what we feel is an exciting and worthwhile health initiative for SW pigs. Watch this space!!

Weaner Management Webinars

We ran the first of 2 Weaner Management Webinars with support from Elanco Animal Health on the 16th March. Alex and I were really pleased with attendance and grateful for the questions and feedback we received. Hopefully we now have a clear run into better summer weather and better summer pig prices, but that does also mean that current supplies of zinc oxide in your feed mills will soon be exhausted. Rather than concentrating on the problem "zinc out!", with a full understanding of the journey each pig experiences at weaning, we can make a positive difference to pig health and welfare. We are repeating the webinar at 4 pm on the 19th April. Please let our brilliant admin team know if you are at all interested and we can sort the rest. If you have any suggestions for future webinar topics that you would like us to cover, likewise just let us know.

Animal Health and Welfare Pathway

I appreciate this all sound a bit like some sort of "self-help" group but, to focus on the positive, there is actual cash support for pig farmers to support health and welfare projects on farm, via a specific vet visit. Our environmental monitoring initiative led up by Tom is already yielding great results in terms of better understanding how the pigs,

the pathogens and the piggery are all interacting together. The starting point to accessing this funding to support such a vet review is to register online. <https://apply-for-an-annual-health-and-welfare-view.defra.gov.uk/apply/register-your-interest>.

Engagement with the Pathway will also hopefully open up further grant funding opportunities as plans develop.

Swine Dysentery Alert

Over the last couple of months there have been several report cases of Swine Dysentery, particularly from Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. We have seen these report cases with increasing concern. Unfortunately, there has now also been a report case in our region. Basically, we all just need to be 'on our game' in terms of biosecurity at the moment. Don't overlook the small details like lines of demarcation on loading ramps, occasional visitors like electricians or other tradespeople, etc.

All the best

Richard B Pearson BVSc MRCVS