

Animal Health and Welfare Pathway

2022 will see the launch of a new government funded pathway, the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway. This has come about as part of the reforms instigated by the Agricultural Transition Plan set out by government in 2020.

The main priorities of the pathway in pigs are highlighted below but can be found in more detail on the website (see link at bottom of article).

- Improving Biosecurity (with respect to exotic diseases i.e. ASF)
- PRRS testing
- Free farrowing
- Tail biting – reduction in stressors

The pathway will involve an annual vet visit to review health and welfare, medicines usage and some diagnostic testing. Those who sign up to the pathway will then have access to grants later in 2022 to help co fund capital investment. The pathway will initially be available to those receiving BPS and applicants must have over 50 pigs. Farmers will also be able to apply for financial help with disease eradication and will be paid by results.

We would encourage those who fit the criteria to apply, and we would be happy to provide more detail on the review we intend to deliver. The pathway does not specify exactly what the health and welfare review should entail which gives you and us substantial latitude to tailor the review to what may be most useful to you and your pigs. We are certainly hoping to use the Pathway to really expand the environmental monitoring project some of you heard about at this year's Pig Fair. Access to grant funding under the Pathway will be dependent on having carried out a review but, the area covered by the review does not necessarily have to be the same as the grant funding target. More detailed information is available below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/animal-health-and-welfare-pathway/animal-health-and-welfare-pathway>

What's keeping us busy?

There's no need to remind you it's nearly winter as I think the persistent fog and rain seems to have highlighted that. So please the usual reminder that temperature changes day to night are a big stressor for smaller pigs post weaning and we must be careful with housing at this time of year to avoid nasties such as Strep suis or Glasser's disease. We have also seen an increase in the number of tail bites in the last few months so please be pro-active with respect to enrichment.

Red Tractor Medicines Training

Red Tractor standards were revised at the end of 2021, and it became a required standard for at least one individual on each RT assured farm to have attended a training course on responsible medicines usage. This course must be a Red Tractor Approved course and therefore previous training that did not use an approved course does not count. We have been running our own course most of the year and would encourage those who have not completed it yet to book on. These will be run over Zoom, and we are still running them if needed. Please give us advanced notice as the more people who can attend the same session the more efficient this will be for all. So far, the rate has been discounted but this is likely to change. Please remember this is a non-conformance at your yearly audit with Red Tractor if it has not been completed.

Pig Fair

Thank you to all of those who attended our Pig Fair, we hope you found the day informative and enjoyable!

Finally, from all at The George we wish you a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year (now wouldn't that be good)!

Tom Hill BVSc MRCVS

