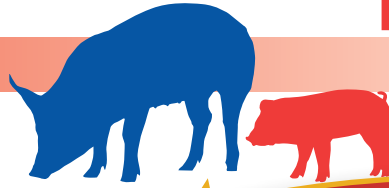


Abattoir Update

December 2014 – Issue No. 5



BPEX would like to wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Changes to Trichinella testing in pigs

An update from the Meat Hygiene Policy Team, Food Standards Agency.

Prior to June 2014, the EU legal requirement for Trichinella testing was to test all pigs regardless of risk. However, a new, risk-based approach was introduced EU-wide on the 1 June 2014, representing a significant improvement to the routine of full testing. For breeding sows and boars the testing requirement continues and additional testing is now only required for pigs from holdings not officially recognised as applying 'Controlled Housing Conditions' (CHC).

The criteria for CHC are set in EU legislation and include the requirement that all practical precautions must be taken to prevent rodents, mammals and carnivorous birds from accessing buildings where pigs are kept and pest control programmes employed. Where pigs have outdoor access, the producer must show by risk assessment that this doesn't pose a danger of Trichinella being introduced to the holding.

The Food Chain Information (FCI) declaration has been updated to allow producers to inform the Food Standards Agency (FSA) whether or not they are applying CHC. For those not applying CHC, pigs

must be tested and the FSA has put a number of options in place to aid the operator. These are:

- **Sending samples to be tested under the FSA testing contract**
- **Using a privately accredited laboratory**
- **Setting up an in-house laboratory**
- **Using the testing laboratory of another Food Business Operator (FBO)**

Testing options could lead to increased production time and demand on chiller storage space due to the wait for results. Subject to approval and traceability, the new rules allow carcasses to be sent to approved cutting plants for further processing before the Trichinella test results are received at the slaughterhouse.



For more information on these changes please visit the web page: <http://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/meat/trichinella-pigs/trichinella-pigs-testing>

Or contact the FSA's SLA and Contract Team on sla.contracts@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk Phone 01 904 232093.

Guidance on controlled housing conditions for Trichinella

The table (right) aims to provide some guidance on Controlled Housing Conditions (CHC) while BPEX waits for the publication of the FSA guidance. It by no means replaces the FSA's risk assessment.

Please note that the definitions of the production systems aim to help the farmer identify if they could consider applying Controlled Housing Conditions.

[Please click on table to view pdf in full ▶](#)

Production system*	Subject to meeting the requirement and pending FSA's risk assessment tool the view is that the following production systems are very likely to fall under controlled housing	Risks to be managed (controlled housing)
Fully housed These pigs are born, reared and finished indoors	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All practical precautions with regard to building construction and maintenance in order to prevent rodents, any other kind of mammals and carnivorous birds from having access to buildings where animals are kept Pest-control programme in place, in particular for rodents, effectively to prevent infestation of pigs. Records of the programme must be kept
Outdoor bred These pigs are born outside, in fields where they are kept until weaning.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All feed has been obtained from a legitimate facility. Feed must be stored in closed silos or other containers that are impervious to rodents
Outdoor reared These pigs are born outside in fields, where they are reared for approximately half their life (defined as at least 30kg)	Likely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feed supplies must be heat-treated or produced and stored adequately Dead animals are collected, identified and transported without undue delay If a rubbish dump is located in the neighbourhood of the holding, the operator must inform the competent authority. Subsequently, the competent authority must assess the risks involved and decide whether the holding is to be recognised as applying controlled housing conditions
Free range and organic pigs These pigs are born outside, in fields and they remain outside until they are sent for processing	Unlikely (this does not rule out that free range could not come under controlled housing conditions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Piglets coming onto the holding from outside and pigs purchased are born and bred under controlled housing conditions Traceability of pigs at all times New animals may be introduced onto the holding only if they come from holdings also officially recognised as applying controlled housing conditions

*Definitions from: http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/280000/production_systems.pdf

*For differences with organic pigs in that the use of pharmaceuticals is heavily restricted.



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Expansion of UK AMR Surveillance

Abattoirs are being alerted to a new surveillance programme for antimicrobials resistance in pigs, starting in January 2015.

The UK's statutory antimicrobial resistance (AMR) surveillance programme in animals, for which the Veterinary Medicine Directorate (VMD) is responsible, has recently undergone significant expansion.

This expansion is in response to EU Commission Implementing Decision 2013/652/EU, 'on the monitoring and reporting of antimicrobial resistance in zoonotic and commensal bacteria', which came into force on 1 January 2014. This piece of legislation outlines increased mandatory AMR surveillance requirements for all EU member states.

As detailed in the Decision, the years 2015, 2017 and 2019 are dedicated to the monitoring of AMR in *E. coli* and *Salmonella* spp. isolated from fattening pigs at slaughter. There is a specific requirement to monitor AMR in *Salmonella* on pig carcasses at slaughter and in *E. coli* isolated from pig faecal samples. The VMD is currently identifying possible sources of these bacterial isolates to meet EU requirements, with a view to implementing the first fattening pig sampling programme in January 2015.

What's happening on the ground?

- The VMD has identified six slaughterhouses where samples could be collected from
- A 'letter of consent' was sent to these abattoirs to gain consent for participation in next year's AMR surveillance programme
- The data collected will be reported to the European Foods Safety Authority (EFSA) at the end of the reporting year for inclusion in the annually published EFSA report on Zoonoses
- The reporting of antimicrobial resistance data to EFSA is done in an aggregated anonymised format, disclosing no information regarding the farms or plants involved in the programme



For more information contact:
VMD-Antimicrobial Resistance Team
Callum Harris: c.harris@vmd.defra.gsi.gov.uk

Slap marking



Traceability remains a key tool in minimising the risk of disease spread and good slap marking is a pre-requisite of this.

The latest BPEX Pig Health Scheme (BPHS) feedback suggests that the quality of slap marketing is still very mixed, with some pigs going down the line without any readable markings or, in some cases, pigs turning up with up to seven slap marks. Obviously, there is a welfare issue associated with multiple or poorly placed slap marks.

To try and improve this situation, BPEX has been working with some breeder-finisher producers on the effectiveness of applying the slap to piglets. Initial results have shown good readability at finishing and improved welfare for the workers trying to apply the slap to heavy pigs. Abattoirs have also shown an interest, with some working directly with their suppliers to develop a 'slap strategy'.



If slap consistency is a problem at your plant, please encourage your suppliers to view the BPEX video at: <http://practicalpig.bpex.org.uk/wean-to-finish/selecting-pigs-for-sale/slap-marking>

NEW field studies on *Toxoplasma gondii* in the UK

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has identified *Toxoplasma* as one of the priority targets for official controls in pig meat.

The EFSA and The Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food (ACMSF) of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) have both highlighted that more data is needed on *Toxoplasma* and, in particular, the incidence, severity and main sources of infection in the human population. It also wants to confirm its prevalence in carcasses and the extent to which meat consumption contributes to human infection.

The frequency and infectivity of *T. gondii* cysts in meat and how this relates to seroprevalence in animals has been identified as an important data gap across European countries (including the UK).

To improve knowledge of *Toxoplasma*, a consortium of seven EU countries has been organised by the EFSA to investigate the presence of *T. gondii* in the meat of the main meat producing animals (cattle, pigs, sheep, horses and poultry) and to identify possible farm-level risk factors.

The research in the UK has been funded by FSA and carried out by the Royal Veterinary College and Moredun Research Institute. The researchers are conducting laboratory investigations and field studies focusing on cattle and pigs.

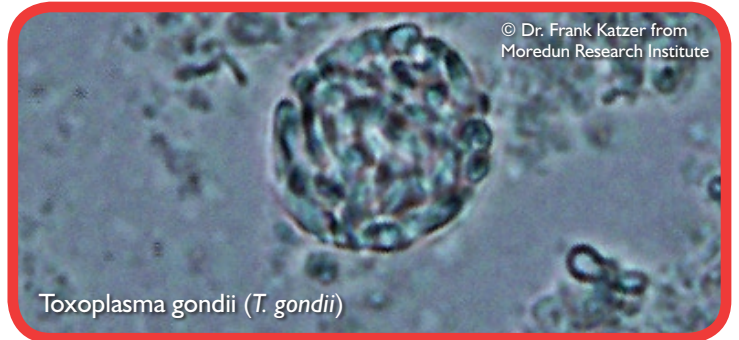
The field study in pigs involves a survey using a questionnaire and testing blood samples taken at slaughter for *T. gondii* on a subset of pigs. Pig farmers and slaughterhouses are going to be contacted shortly asking for their participation.

The results from this study will fill some of the key knowledge gaps that currently preclude a formal assessment of potential control options to mitigate the risk of foodborne exposure to *T. gondii* to make UK pork even safer for UK consumers.

We welcome your participation as the results will ensure that up to date evidence is available for the UK to negotiate possible EU interventions in the future.



If you are interested in taking part or you want further information please contact Georgina Limon at glimon@rvc.ac.uk



Toxoplasma gondii (*T. gondii*)

Background to *Toxoplasma gondii*

Toxoplasmosis is a zoonosis caused by a parasite called *Toxoplasma gondii* (*T. gondii*). The life cycle of *T. gondii* includes cats as the definitive host and mammals and birds as intermediate hosts. Humans can get infected via different routes but the major source of *T. gondii* infections in Europe and North America is from eating raw or undercooked meat or meat products containing infective cysts.

According to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), human infections do not usually result in any symptoms or in some cases they can show as mild flu-like symptoms. The ACMSF estimates that 350,000 people become infected with toxoplasma each year in the UK, of which 10-20% are symptomatic. Scientists in the Netherlands suggest that *Toxoplasma* could cause the highest disease burden amongst well known foodborne pathogens. However, the true burden of toxoplasma could be largely underestimated because of under-reporting.

Farm animals get infected via ingestion of soil, water and grass contaminated with faeces from infected cats.

BPEX contact For any queries please contact:

Ouafa Doxon, Health Information and Food Safety Coordinator,
BPEX, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 2TL

Tel: 024 7647 8802 Mobile: 07816 938542

Email: Ouafa.Doxon@bpex.ahdb.org.uk

Website: www.bpex.org.uk

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Fully Housed <i>These pigs are born, reared and finished indoors</i>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All practical precautions with regard to building construction and maintenance in order to prevent rodents, any other kind of mammals and carnivorous birds from having access to buildings where animals are kept
Outdoor bred <i>These pigs are born outside, in fields where they are kept until weaning.</i>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pest-control programme in place, in particular for rodents, effectively to prevent infestation of pigs. Records of the programme must be kept
Outdoor reared <i>These pigs are born outside in fields, where they are reared for approximately half their life (defined as at least 30kg)</i>	Likely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All feed has been obtained from a legitimate facility. Feed must be stored in closed silos or other containers that are impenetrable to rodents • Feed supplies must be heat-treated or produced and stored adequately • Dead animals are collected, identified and transported without undue delay • If a rubbish dump is located in the neighbourhood of the holding, the operator must inform the competent authority. Subsequently, the competent authority must assess the risks involved and decide whether the holding is to be recognised as applying controlled housing conditions
Free range and organic pigs³ <i>These pigs are born outside, in fields and they remain outside until they are sent for processing</i>	Unlikely (this does not rule out that free range could not come under controlled housing conditions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piglets coming onto the holding from outside and pigs purchased are born and bred under controlled housing conditions • Traceability of pigs at all times • New animals may be introduced onto the holding only if they come from holdings also officially recognised as applying controlled housing conditions

²Definitions from: <http://www.porkprovenance.co.uk/productionmethods.asp#>

³ Key difference with organic pigs is that the use of pharmaceuticals is heavily restricted.



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