



## Real Welfare update for Vets – 13<sup>th</sup> November 2013

No. 5

### Headlines

- From 14<sup>th</sup> November the requirement to record mild body marks and mild tail lesions is suspended.
- The requirement to record enrichment use continues to be suspended.
- The requirement to record severe body and tail lesions remains.
- The requirement to record types of enrichment present remains.

### Real Welfare Review

A major review of Real Welfare started in September and, after the second meeting, some more changes have been proposed.

The open meeting was attended by people from across the industry covering producers, vets, processors and retailers.

The recommendations were to suspend the requirement to measure mild marks on both the body and tails, on the grounds that the information return was too small for the effort required and the difficulty in detecting mild marks among dirty or coloured pigs made the quality of data questionable.

Though the requirement to measure these has been suspended, producers and vets who see value in continuing to do so can continue to submit data, in the same way that some are continuing to submit environmental enrichment data.

The environmental enrichment measure has already been suspended and a number of alternative ways of assessing it will be drawn up and presented in December. Depending on what emerges from that work, any promising design will then go out for field trials to determine its effectiveness.

The recommendations from the meeting were submitted for consideration by the BPEX Board of Directors, as the owners of the protocol.

The Red Tractor Pigs Technical Advisory Committee also considered the recommendations, to make sure that they considered the changed Real Welfare protocol to still be robust and valuable. Both the BPEX Board and Red Tractor Pigs

TAC accepted the recommendations and the changes to the protocol will come into effect on November 14<sup>th</sup> 2013.

Red Tractor Pigs Chairman Mike Sheldon, who chaired the review meeting, said: “There will be another meeting in December where we will push on with making any necessary changes to Real Welfare.

“New to the agenda will be a review of the sampling process for each of the measures, to see if we can make things simpler and more practicable. We will also be making progress on redesigning the way in which we assess environmental enrichment.”

Chairman of the BPEX Board, Stewart Houston said: “We are trying to do something difficult that has never been done before. We have always said, and will continue to say, that we will keep whatever works well in the protocol and change the things that don’t work so well in order that they do.”

NPA Chairman Richard Longthorp said: “NPA Producer Group members voted unanimously this week, in favour of continuing with Real Welfare audits. They acknowledged there were significant problems which must be rectified, but were clear that the overall concept was correct.”

### **What does this mean for you?**

- You are no longer required to record mild body marks or mild tail lesions (but the option to do so remains).
- The requirement to measure severe body and tail lesions remains.
- You must continue to follow current sampling information (i.e. based on the number of pens and pigs you would be sampling if you were continuing to record mild tail and body marks).
- Please continue to record the type(s) of enrichment present.

The i-pig web-portal (for submission of results) is in the process of being updated to accommodate these changes. The change in protocol triggers changes in data entry, calculation and display, as well as requiring a different pathway depending on whether you are measuring only severe or also non-severe marks/lesions (which is optional). **The portal will therefore be ready to accept assessments without minor body marks and tail lesions from the 25<sup>th</sup> of November.**

If you send your data sheets to the bureau service please note:

- Assessments carried out from 14<sup>th</sup> November will not be transcribed until the 25<sup>th</sup> November. Please allow a few days after this to clear the backlog before results are visible.

If you transcribe the data onto the i-pig web-portal yourself:

- Please delay transcription of assessments carried out after 14<sup>th</sup> November assessments until the 25<sup>th</sup> of November.

Submission of historical samples is not affected and can continue to be done at any time.

### **Next steps**

These changes were recommended following the second Real Welfare review group meeting; a third review meeting is proposed in early December where key agenda points will be the sampling requirements (numbers), additional data requirements, and consideration of proposed enrichment usage measures.

- Sampling strategy will be reviewed following suspension of the mild measures; a higher sample number may be proposed to take into account the low prevalence of severe lesions.
- The group will also look at further streamlining the sampling strategy.

The Roadshows in early 2014 will give BPEX and Red Tractor the opportunity to update the wider industry about progress with Real Welfare and the current review process, to increase understanding of the recent changes in response to feedback, and for attendees to provide additional feedback on the scheme for consideration.

### **Real Welfare at PVS**

The current state of Real Welfare will be presented following the Autumn PVS meeting on November 14<sup>th</sup>, with opportunity for discussion.