VPH-PP-03

TITLE

TOWARDS ANTIBIOTIC-FREE PRODUCTION IN BELGIAN PIG HERDS THROUGH COACHING AND BIOSECURITY MEASURES

Elise Bernaerdt[1,2], Tommy Van Limbergen[2], Merel Postma[1], Dominiek Maes[2], Jeroen Dewulf[1]

[1] *Ghent University, Faculty of Veterinary medicine, Veterinary Epidemiology Unit*
[2] *Ghent University, Faculty of Veterinary medicine, Porcine Health Management Unit*

CONTENT

Background & Objectives: Antimicrobial usage is the main driver for selection of antimicrobial resistance. This causes a health risk for animals and humans. The aim of this study was to decrease the use of antimicrobials in Belgian pig herds. Farms that already used few antibiotics were coached towards antibiotic free production.
Material & Methods: Sixteen Belgian farrow-to-finish pig herds were selected for this trial. Each farm was visited 3 times: the first time to collect information on antimicrobial usage and to complete a biosecurity audit by means of the Biocheck.UGent survey. In the second visit farm specific advice was given based upon the herd situation. In the third visit an evaluation of the trend in antimicrobial usage was determined. The antimicrobial usage metric is the BD100 (amount of treatment days with antibiotics on 100 days).
Results: Preliminary results based on 12 farms are very promising. The average BD100 for the initial visit was 6.02, 18.14, 1.74 and 0.76 for respectively suckling piglets, weaned piglets, fatteners and sows. After a period of 6 months the BD100 was reduced to 1.05, 11.24, 0.85 and 0.57 respectively.
Discussion & Conclusion: At some farms there was a reduction in 3 out of 4 animal categories, combined with a slight increase of antimicrobial usage in 1 other animal group. At 1 farm, where antimicrobial usage was initially very low, a reduction of antimicrobial usage was not possible due to an outbreak of swine dysentery. Overall this study showed a reduction in antimicrobial usage of 83%, 38%, 51% and 25% for suckling piglets, weaned piglets, fatteners and sows respectively in 12 Belgian pig herds, without jeopardizing health or performance. Eight farms were able to produce a large percentage of antibiotic-free pigs (i.e. pigs that didn't receive a treatment with antibiotics from birth to age of slaughtering).