

Pig Veterinary Society statement on use of PMSG in UK Pigs

There are four products containing PMSG (pregnant mare serum gonadotrophin) licensed for use in breeding pigs supplied by three companies.

The specifics of each product vary but their licensed uses include stimulation of a fertile oestrous cycle in gilts and sows post-weaning; reduction of the weaning to oestrus interval in sows with late oestrus; and treatment of suboestrus or anoestrus in sows with fertility problems.

Information from Pig Veterinary Society members attending the majority of the breeding sow population indicates that PMSG use is minimal in the UK and most herds do not use PMSG at all. Good management, lighting and nutrition together with the presence of a boar at the correct time all promote a normal fertile reproductive cycle in sows. A small number of breeding herds where infertility issues arise, on the advice of the attending veterinarian, may use PMSG to treat a selection of sows to stimulate them to have a fertile oestrus at the normal time. It is not used to speed up the sow's normal reproductive cycle. There is certainly no standard or widespread use of these products in UK breeding pigs as suggested in recent media reports.

Any use of PMSG in pigs must be under veterinary direction and takes into account the health and welfare of the pigs in the veterinary surgeon's care.

The Pig Veterinary Society strongly supports the ethical sourcing of raw materials for pharmaceutical products and the need for companies producing plasma-derived products to ensure that all legal and regulatory requirements are followed by their suppliers and that the welfare of any animals is protected.

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The Pig Veterinary Society is a specialist division of the British Veterinary Association. The Pig Veterinary Society exists to assist its members to care for pigs, through dissemination of knowledge about health, disease, the pig's welfare and its management. PVS, as a society, is a champion for pig welfare while maintaining balance with the need to maintain viability.