

Producer Advisory

UNREPORTED BROKEN NEEDLES

Over the past few months, there have been reports of needle fragments in hogs from Alberta and Saskatchewan. Some of these fragments were found in the plant, unfortunately others were found by the customer. Unreported broken needles are a serious issue for the meat industry. They are a concern for food safety and consumer confidence in our product.

The CQA® program requires producers to follow procedures to limit the possibility of

needle breakage. If breakage does occur, producers must employ actions to prevent fragments from ending up on the consumer's plate or worse. Section D4, pages 1 to 4, of the CQA® Producer Manual, outlines practices and procedures that will assist in minimizing injection issues. On pages 7-1 to 7-5 in the On-Farm Quality Assessment Form, producers must outline the policies and procedures used on their farm to ensure the safe and effective use of injectable medications.

Important Aspects of the Proper Use of Injectable Equipment

- Use only detectable needles (new for 2007)
- Adequately restrain animals to be treated
- Intramuscular injections should be given in the neck muscles of the pig, or, for breeding stock only, in the neck or hip injection site (see page D4-14 in the manual)
- Injections in the neck muscle should occur ahead of the shoulder bone and close to the ear to prevent needle breakage or bending on the bone.
- Use sharp needles. Change needles frequently, preferably after 10 to 15 injections or after each litter
- Administer the injection at right angles (90°) to the skin
- Inspect needles after each injection and always discard bent or damaged needles
- Record needle damage and review techniques if more than minimal damage occurs

CORRECT NEEDLE SIZES FOR PIG BEING TREATED

Animal	Gauge	Length
Sows	16	1 1/2"
Grower/finisher	16 or 18	1"
Weaners	18	3/4" or 5/8"
Baby pigs	20	5/8" or 1/2"

If a needle does break, it is very important to make every effort to prevent any fragments from reaching the customer. Proper procedures include:

- Immediately mark the affected animal, even temporarily if necessary
- Retrieve the fragment if possible
- If the fragment can not be retrieved, permanently mark the animal. "BROKEN NEEDLE" tags are available from Sask Pork
- Record the broken needle incident and notify the packer/marketer prior to shipment. Always use a separate tattoo when marketing a pig with a broken needle to avoid any confusion at the plant with other unaffected pigs on the load

Be aware of your packer's requirements for identification of pigs with suspect broken needles. ALWAYS report pigs being shipped with suspect broken needles. Detectable needles make it easier to find needle fragments, but small fragments may still get through the system. Packing plants must be notified so that suspect pigs can be handled appropriately.

