

Reprocine and Oxytocin S/Oxytobel

Both are injectable oxytocin hormones we use on pig farms, mostly in the farrowing field or farrowing house. Since they are used for similar purposes, there is a risk they are used interchangeably, but they are actually very different. We prescribe them for cases of prolonged farrowing, to be given after inducing with prostaglandins, to aid with cleansing after farrowing, to assist with milk letdown for sows or gilts with post-partum dysgalactia or in cases of mastitis in lactation.

Oxytocin is a short acting natural hormone that induces fast uterine contractions, acting within a few minutes, whilst carbetocin (Reprocine) is a long-acting synthetic analogue designed for prolonged action. Half of the oxytocin injected is eliminated in around 12 minutes, whilst the same process takes 85-100 minutes for the Reprocine.

Be aware of which one you are using, as both have advantages but also risks.

We can use oxytocin for helping a sow that is struggling at farrowing, but it is important to have checked first that there are no piglets stuck. It works very fast but also wears off quickly, so treatment can be repeated hourly up to 3 times, checking in between whether new piglets have been born or if a stuck piglet may have moved a bit further down.

Reprocine works for longer so is handy with loose sows where it may be harder to inject them more than once, but if there is a stuck piglet the contractions will keep coming, pushing the piglets behind it. If given too soon in the farrowing process, we risk colostrum leakage because it will stimulate milk to be released even if piglets are not working at the teats.

When we are intervening in the farrowing process, it is important to consider that if contractions are very strong and prolonged and the piglets not born quickly, there is risk of the foetuses not getting enough oxygen. During uterine contractions, the blood vessels supplying the placenta are momentarily compressed, reducing blood flow and oxygen delivery to the foetuses. Even if these piglets are born alive, they may be weaker and at higher risk of being crushed.

For immediate milk letdown, oxytocin works quicker, but if trying to stimulate milk production and release whilst treating a sow with mastitis or Post Partum Dysgalactia Syndrome, Reprocine gives a more prolonged effect.

Speak to your vet about what will work best for your situation and be aware of which product you are using and for what purpose. Never use both at the same time or one after the other and women must be especially cautious when handling these hormones. **Pregnant or breast feeding women should avoid handling these products**.

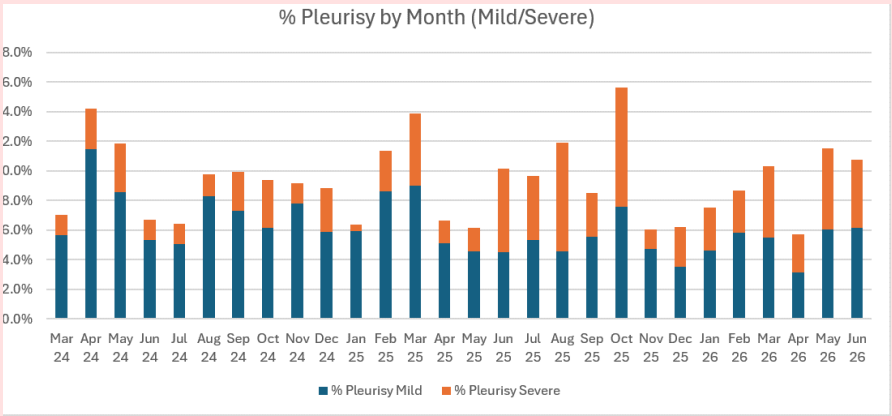
Garth Pig Health Scheme

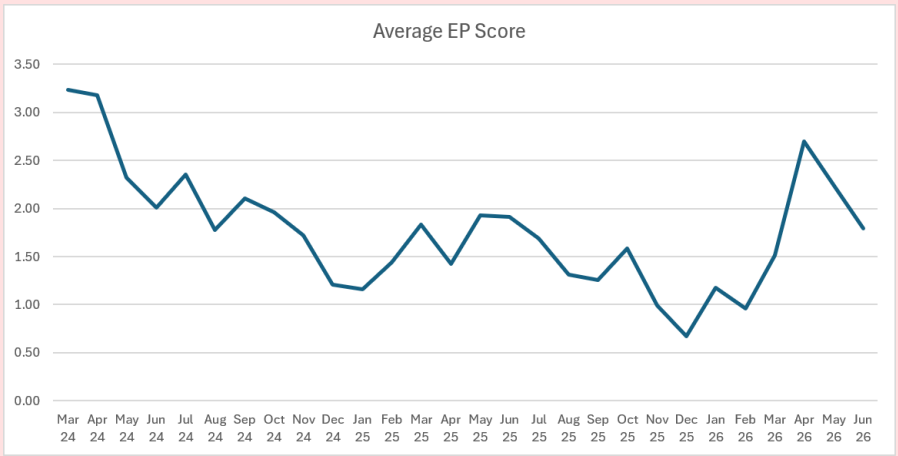
As part of our herd health and performance monitoring, we have developed an internal surveillance program based on systematic abattoir inspections. The Garth Pig Health Scheme has now assessed **569 batches** from **176 farms**, representing over **37,500 pigs**. The latest results provide valuable insight into herd health, with lesion assessment at slaughter helping to identify respiratory disease and other health issues

The overall average **EP score** was **1.89**, while **total pleurisy prevalence** (mild and severe combined) was **9.3%**. Although this is below historical English averages of 11–15% and considerably lower than reported European levels, pleurisy remains widespread, being identified in **87.4% of assessed batches**. Other conditions recorded included **milk spot (3.1%)**, **tail biting (3.4%)**, **pericarditis (3.2%)**, **papular dermatitis (2.8%)**, and **pleuropneumonia (0.2%)**. Many of these conditions have been associated with a reduction in performance traits and consequent increases in production costs, with respiratory related issues being the main group of findings among them

Quarter 2 showed a slight increase in several health indicators compared with Quarter 1, including EP score (2.22 vs 1.18), severe pleurisy (4.5% vs 3.4%) and milk spot (4.6% vs 1.3%).

	All Assessed	Q1/26	Q2/26
Number of farms (slap marks)	176	37	54
Number of reports	569	49	62
Number of assessed pigs	37554	3228	4516
EP Score	1.88	1.18	2.22
Pleurisy Mild	6.1%	5.5%	5.35%
Pleurisy Severe	3.2%	3.4%	4.5%
Milk Spot	3.1%	1.3%	4.6%
Tail Bitten (total)	3.4%	1.5%	2.4%
Pericarditis	3.2%	2.9%	3.9%
Pleuropneumonia (total)	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%
Papular dermatitis	2.8%	2.5%	3.1%





A number of agents can cause papular dermatitis including sarcoptic mange mite, harvest mite larvae and urine scald but a very common cause is hypersensitivity to the insect bites. Biting flies commonly affect pigs, resulting in rubbing, scratching, bleeding and excoriations, as well as raised wheals and oedema associated with urticaria. Skin lesions are also an open gate for the secondary bacterial infections.

The economic impact of respiratory disease should not be underestimated. Research has shown that each increase in EP lesion severity (5 points step) is associated with a 0.37 kg reduction in carcass weight. Furthermore, pigs affected by both EP-like lesions and pleurisy can lose an average of 2.5 kg in slaughter weight. Within the Garth Pig Health Scheme, 3.2% of individual lungs examined had both EP-like lesions and pleurisy, while 61% of farms had at least one pig with both lesions recorded.

Regular participation in the Garth Pig Health Scheme allows producers and veterinarians to identify health challenges early. When applied consistently, abattoir monitoring provides valuable long-term data, enabling producers and veterinarians to track trends, evaluate interventions such as vaccination programmes, establish herd-specific benchmarks.

Please contact the practice or speak to your vet if you would like to know more about the Garth Pig Health Scheme or to sign up to it.