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Pick and Mix on Medicines

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The Sheep Farmer's Perspective

'It is in the interests of all sheep farmers to do all they can to look after their sheep in a manner that ensures the health and welfare of the animals is a key consideration. This should be achieved in a way that is not only for the benefit of the animal but also for the benefit of the balance sheet as well'



How can this be achieved?

- By ensuring that the health status of the flock and where appropriate individual animals is known and understood
- By taking the risk based and management decisions that are associated with that knowledge
- By then implementing the most cost effective means of achieving the required health and welfare related outcome



What role should there be for the
vet in this process?

***The vet should be involved in all three
parts of that process***

How often is this the case?

Do sheep farmers value veterinary advice?

Are there many vets who can deliver in all
three parts of the process?

If not how can this be turned around?



Are the current classifications a
help or hindrance in that process?

- Some sheep farmers say that the current regulations and veterinary business drivers do not encourage vets to enhance their advisory skills
- Some sheep farmers say that sheep health and welfare improvements are being held back by over protective and outdated regulatory restrictions on some products and practices



Are the current classifications a help or hindrance in that process?

- Some sheep farmers say that until there is change the level of meaningful engagement between vets and sheep farmers will continue to decrease
- Some sheep farmers say that neither vets, sheep farmers or indeed the sheep are best served by some of the decisions taken through the current system



This is about evolution not revolution

- Obviously there are many medicines and vaccines which should be under the control of vets only as they currently are.
- However there are examples where the current system simply gets it wrong in the eyes of many sheep farmers
- In these cases the products in question are not necessarily competitively priced and therefore their uptake might be restricted.



A couple of examples.....

- Sheep abortion vaccines. Given their long existence and the dependence of the industry on them they should be given wider market access
- Vet only administration of Mycotil. Why should so many sheep suffer through not receiving the best treatments because the regulator has, in the eyes of many sheep farmers, over reacted and over regulated



How could we move forward?

- A fresh look at elements within the current system would be welcomed by farmers
- A greater recognition of farmer skills by vets and the regulators would be welcomed
- Finding ways to develop the advisory role of vets in improving the overall well being of the flock would be welcomed



Vets adding value not costing money

- Moving the vet out of the negative side of the farm balance sheet would be most welcome of all
- Might tweaking the current 'pick and mix' stimulate some of these progressive objectives?
- Would this not be for the benefit of all people and animals involved?



DISCUSS!!!

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