



Title: RCVS Practice Standards Scheme

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- So let's continue by looking at what the RCVS Practise Standards Scheme requires involving the responsible and legal use of antibiotics.

So Practise Standards Scheme, of which more than 67% of practises in the UK are a part, has three different species modules. There is a small animal module, an equine module, and a farm module. We'll consider the farm module and we'll consider the antimicrobial resistance requirements for practises at the different levels.

There is core standard, where the requirements are just legal or code of conduct. There is general practise standard, which has better practise requirements. And there is the award scheme, which is an optional extra for practises that excel in certain areas.

So looking at core standards first of all, and remember that even practises that are not in Practise Standards Scheme should practise equivalent core standards. So core standards requires that the practise has a protocol for antimicrobial use in common conditions encountered. The guidance goes on to say that this protocol should've been drawn up following consideration of the evidence base and clinical team discussions. This will encourage clinical discussion, encourage consistency, so everyone in the practise has been involved in drawing this up, knows what happened, and is using it in the same way. And should not interfere with clinical freedom. So that is the core standard requirement.

Going on to the general practise requirement of the farm module. The general practise requirement is that a practise has a written policy regarding the prescribing of high-priority, critically-important antibiotics. Which consists, as you know, of fluoroquinolones, third and fourth generation cephalosporins and colistin. It says this will include culture and sensitivity to show that no other non-critical antimicrobials could be used in the place of a high-priority, critically-important antimicrobial as a first-line treatment. That is the standard.

The guidance that goes with this standard says that the aim is to reduce the use of antibiotics which may contribute to antimicrobial resistance. And it goes on to explain that in each and every situation where high-priority, critically-important antibiotics are deemed necessary, then culture and sensitivity should be carried out. But if the farm history suggests that the critically-important antibiotics are going to be the most appropriate choice, they can be used while awaiting results of diagnostics. But after diagnostics, the appropriate antibiotic should be used. An ongoing use of high-priority, critically-important antibiotics is justified only with evidence of continued resistance to alternative treatments being demonstrated.

There is a little caveat, that in vitro results should be used in the context of clinical response on farm and in the context of the pharmacokinetic/pharmacodynamic properties of each antimicrobial. So if your practise is at general practise level in the farm module, that's what you should be doing. The

award scheme, as I say, is an optional extra. The practises can apply for awards if they're in areas where they excel or where they wish to improve. And in the farm standards, in the team and professional responsibility award there's a medicines module. It's also in... And that medicines module says that, gives points, sorry. So within the awards there's nothing you have to do. There are points for certain things and the points add up and at 60% of points the practise is good and at 80% of points the practise is outstanding.

So the parts of the medicines award module that are relevant here are, the practise regularly reviews the medicines usage on the farms under their care and works with clients to ensure the appropriate use of antimicrobials and anthelmintics. So this would obviously involve some amount of measuring and reviewing. You see it's difficult to review the medicines usage on the farms without knowing exactly how much antimicrobials are used on the farms. So there's points for that. There are also points for the practise appointing an antibiotic guardian to oversee the use of all antimicrobials, but particularly high-priority, critically-important antibiotics. And to make sure everyone is adhering to the written policy on these. And I think this is really important because this is where your Farm Vet Champion's work can demonstrate that you have an antibiotic guardian, your Farm Vet Champion will by definition be an antibiotic guardian. So that's somewhere you'll be able to get points on the Practise Standards Award Scheme. And having systems in place to monitor the appropriate use of high-priority, critically-important antibiotics. So again, it's about measuring but also about knowing that they've been used appropriately.

All this information is in the Practise Standards Scheme farm animal module if you wish to look at it further. Thank you.

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