

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL FEEDINGSTUFFS

45th Meeting of ACAF on 4 March 2009

Discussion paper

**DISTRIBUTION OF AN E-LEAFLET TO THE POULTRY
INDUSTRY ON RECOMMENDATIONS TO REDUCE RESIDUE
LEVELS OF NICARBAZIN IN BRITISH CHICKEN**

Action : The Committee is asked to discuss effective ways to communicate an e-leaflet throughout the UK poultry industry to maximise uptake of the recommendations of the initiative aimed at reducing nicarbazin residues in British chicken.

Secretariat: February 2009

Distribution of an e-leaflet to the poultry industry on recommendations to reduce residue levels of nicarbazin in British chicken

Purpose

1. The Food Standards Agency (FSA), the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) and the poultry industry have produced an e-leaflet to communicate key recommendations to the poultry industry on reducing levels of detectable nicarbazin. The purpose of the paper is to seek the Committee's advice (and help if appropriate) on the best ways to communicate the e-leaflet to key stakeholders.

Background

2. At its December 2008 meeting the Committee received an information paper on reducing the incidence and levels of detectable nicarbazin residues in British chicken. This paper is attached at **Annex 1**.
3. The paper refers to the development of a nicarbazin e-leaflet (that will be available on websites, sent by email and printed out as a poster) that communicates key on-farm feed management and distribution recommendations to the poultry industry, particularly to farmers and their managers. This is to help further increase awareness regarding nicarbazin and encourage UK industry to follow good practice so that the incidence and levels of nicarbazin currently found can be further reduced. The FSA is in the final stages of publishing the e-leaflet; the text has been finalised and is attached at **Annex 2**.
4. Industry contacts from the joint initiative have already suggested ways to communicate the e-leaflet. This includes writing to senior management amongst major poultry integrators, writing to farmers with a positive nicarbazin result under the VMD's National Surveillance Scheme; distribution to the Universal Feed Assurance Scheme to cover feed mills and the Trade Assurance Scheme for Combinable Crops to cover feed hauliers; by Elanco during discussion groups, at conferences such as this year's Pig and Poultry Fair and the European Feed Conference in Edinburgh; and articles to be published in poultry magazines.

Action

5. The Committee is asked to discuss effective ways to communicate an e-leaflet throughout the UK poultry industry to maximise uptake of the

ACAF/09/05

recommendations of the initiative aimed at reducing nicarbazin residues in British chicken.

ACAF Secretariat
February 2009

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL FEEDINGSTUFFS

44th Meeting of ACAF on 3 December 2008

Information Paper

**REDUCING THE INCIDENCE AND LEVEL OF NICARBAZIN
RESIDUES IN BRITISH CHICKEN**

December 2008

REDUCING THE INCIDENCE AND LEVEL OF NICARBAZIN RESIDUES IN BRITISH CHICKEN

Issue

1. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) facilitated an initiative in partnership with a number of industry representatives during 2007 to help reduce the levels of nicarbazin residues in British poultry. The initiative also aimed to raise awareness of the issue throughout industry.

Background

2. Nicarbazin is a specified feed additive used for the treatment of coccidiosis, a potentially fatal and debilitating disease of chickens. Nicarbazin is available in the form of the feed additive *Maxiban*.

3. The FSA routinely evaluates the results of the Veterinary Medicines Directorate's (VMD's) surveillance of coccidiostats including nicarbazin in foodstuffs, and considers that levels currently found in British chicken are not a significant food safety risk. However, consumers expect these residue levels to be kept to a minimum and they are avoidable with good farm practice. Industry also recognises that consumers require assurances that the poultry meat they eat contains the lowest possible residues of feed additives.

4. Levels of detectable nicarbazin in British chicken have been falling in recent years. One significant factor in the reduction of residues is a training programme organised by Elanco Animal Health (the manufacturers of *Maxiban*).

The joint government/industry initiative

5. Members of the project group included representatives of the British Poultry Council, the National Farmers Union and Elanco Animal Health. From February 2007 until January 2008, broiler farms sampled in GB under the VMD's Statutory Surveillance programme were sent a questionnaire from a project coordinator seeking information about their feed management practices. The study focused in particular on what was happening when sampled birds were being raised. A similar study was conducted in NI, which also took samples of the feed last fed.

6. The results of the study identified several possible factors concerning sampled farms feed storage and distribution management systems as likely causes of detectable nicarbazin residues in chicken. Key recommendations include:

- maintain current best practice advice;
- train staff on the use of nicarbazin on farms;
- ensure farmers are aware of the precise amounts of nicarbazin feed required; and
- ensure that both single and double bins are emptied of any remaining nicarbazin-containing feed before the five days withdrawal period.

7. The initiative represents an innovative example of partnership working with industry. FSA are very grateful for the support received from the partners in this initiative. It is hoped that the recommendations from this project will be taken into account in best practice for nicarbazin use and general feed management on-farm so that the incidence and levels found are reduced further.

8. The results of the initiative were published by the FSA in mid-May 2008.

The report can be found at

<http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/nicarbazinresidues.pdf>

Current position

9. The Agency will continue to work with the poultry sector to publicise the recommendations from the initiative to poultry farmers. Early results from the VMD's statutory surveillance programme for 2008 indicate that levels of nicarbazin are still being found in chicken.

10. The Agency is working closely with industry to develop an e-leaflet (that will be available on websites, sent by email and printed out as a poster) that communicates the key recommendations directly to farmers and their managers. This will help further increase awareness regarding nicarbazin and encourage UK industry to follow good practice so that the incidence and levels of nicarbazin currently found can be further reduced.

Nicarbazin (Maxiban*):

How to reduce nicarbazin residues in chicken



FOOD
STANDARDS
AGENCY

Nicarbazin residue levels in chickens remain a problem. High residues point to poor feed bin and pan management on the farm. All farms with flocks found to have high nicarbazin residues will be investigated by the Veterinary Medicine Directorate's Animal Medicines Inspectorate. Don't let this happen to you. Take care with bin management to stay clear of residues.

Nicarbazin is an active ingredient in Maxiban. Following good practice on your farm will help keep Maxiban, one of the most effective aids in the prevention and control of coccidiosis, available for all responsible poultry farmers.

Nicarbazin residues build up because of feed management problems – whether in the bins or the feed pans, resulting in a flock eating feed containing nicarbazin too near to the time of slaughter.

What can you do to stay clear of residues?

Farm managers, owners and workers who manage feed on the farm should stick to these guidelines:

- Order and use the precise amount of feed containing nicarbazin needed.
- If practical, run the feed bin empty at the end of the grower stage.
- In the period at least five days before the birds go to slaughter, ensure feed bins are empty of feed containing nicarbazin. Completely empty the bin when switching to feed that doesn't contain nicarbazin. Failure to empty bins will result in a higher risk of residues.
- Ensure no residual feed from previous crops or another farm is given to birds five days prior to slaughter.
- Sign up for the Elanco training sessions on residue reduction and avoidance by emailing the Elanco Poultry Support team at eps@lilly.com.

Further advice

See helpful guidance on nicarbazin use in Annexe 2 of the joint industry and Government report, 'Reducing the incidence and levels of nicarbazin residues in British chicken', available on the Food Standards Agency website at [food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/nicarbazin.pdf](https://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/nicarbazin.pdf).

The British Poultry Council and the National Farmers' Union also give advice:

British Poultry Council

www.poultry.uk.com

tel: 020 7202 4760

email: bpc@poultry.uk.com



National Farmers' Union

NFU Callfirst: 0870 845 8458



* Maxiban is a coccidiostat feed additive containing equal amounts of nicarbazin and narasin. It is manufactured by Elanco and is currently the only form of nicarbazin approved for use within the European Union.