

HEXOESTROL FOR BEEF PRODUCTION

of the results described here. The optimum dose of 30 mg of hexoestrol has already been mentioned. Dangers of overdosing can be emphasised again. With excessive doses of hexoestrol growth-rate may be depressed, side effects will appear with consequent deleterious effects on carcass quality, and, in severe cases, there may be blockage of the intestinal and reproductive systems.

Present knowledge allows us to recommend this treatment for steers only; the value of the use of hexoestrol in fattening heifers is problematical and requires more research. Breeding stock of any class is definitely not suitable for hexoestrol implantation.

The age, weight, and condition at which the steers are implanted are important. Firstly, the animal should be in the final fattening stage of growth. For aberdeen Angus steers this means that they will probably be not less than two years old and that they will weigh about 8 cwt live weight or 450 to 500 lb carcass weight. Treatment of relatively young and immature cattle will cause the development of very large bones and little else.

There is only one place to implant the hormone pellets: beneath the loose skin at the back of the ear. To do this simple operation efficiently a good head-bail is essential.

Placing the drug in any other part of the animal but the ear is potentially extremely dangerous to the consumer.

Cattle must be well fed from the time of implantation to the time of slaughter; otherwise the effect may not be apparent. The treatment period should last approximately 100 days. We do not know precisely what happens if these two rules are not observed, but probably there would be little or no useful effect from the treatment; trials have been started recently to investigate these two points.

Finally, cattle treated with sex hormones must be handled much more efficiently and quietly than normal stock. The treatment makes the animal more susceptible to stress and excitement of any description. An excited animal will not make efficient weight gains and there may be detrimental effects on carcass quality.

An important question not yet adequately answered is whether the treatment has any effect on subsequent grazing stock through hormonal activity in the excrement, though recent work in Britain indicates that any residual hormone in the excreta is fairly quickly made inactive by certain soil micro-organisms. This danger, of course, is more real when animals are given hormones by mouth. Research work will continue on this problem.

At the beginning of this article it was emphasised that this treatment is a scientific attempt to restore the sex hormone balance of the castrated animal to a prescribed level, and the treatment should be considered in this light. It cannot replace, in any way, good animal husbandry.

Results have shown that intelligent use of hexoestrol can prove most valuable for increasing the efficiency of beef production. But because very little is known of the precise mode of action of the treatment and because of the long list of possible dangers the treatment is obviously open to the widest abuse.

For these reasons it is my personal, strong recommendation that this drug and others like it should not be readily available to farmers, but rather that they should have access to it through their veterinarians. This recommendation is not made lightly, but I consider that placing this restriction on the drug's commercial use will at least help to ensure that New Zealand's pre-eminent position as a meat-exporting country is guarded.

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Pedigree Pig Improvement Scheme: Qualified Litters

Contributed by the Animal Industry Division

THE following table sets out particulars of litter performance, growth-rate, and carcass quality points for those litters which have

qualified in the Pedigree Pig Improvement Scheme for publication since those appearing in the June issue of the "Journal".

Owner	Breeding of litter		Date born	Litter weight at 3 weeks	Dead weight	Growth rate (25)	Length (20)	Carcass test results (average) points							Total points (125)	
	Sire	Dam						Back fat		Loin		Bal.	Ham	Sh.		L.
				lb				(10)	(20)	(5)	(15)	(10)	(10)	(5)	(5)	
Class A Baconers																
Graham Whatmough	WS 163	WS 171	27/9/58	148	131	14½	14½	7½+	18½-	1½	8	6	7	5	5	87½
G. E. Heppenstall	LW 13947	LW 13737	12/5/58	125	125	22	17	8½+	17+	5	11½	5½	6½	4½	5	102½
Class A Porkers																
Maximum points (15)																
S. E. Milnes	LW 14663	LW 14159	10/12/58	125	95	18½	12½	9½+	11-	2	8½	6	5½	5	10	88½
G. C. Yeates	LW 15462	LW 15452	24/1/59	134	91	23	18½	8½+	12+	5	11½	7½	6½	3½	10	106
G. C. Yeates	LW 15462	LW 15250	12/12/58	133	93	20½	17	10	14-	5	9	6	6½	3	10	101
G. C. Yeates	LW 15462	LW 15773	9/12/58	108	93	19	17	10	14+	5	10½	6½	7½	4	10	103½
G. C. Yeates	LW 15462	LW 15772	3/12/58	125	107	23	16½	5½+	13-	5	11	7½	7½	4½	10	103½
G. C. Yeates	LW 15462	LW 15771	19/2/59	123	88	23½	15	9½+	10+	1½	11½	8	7½	4	10	100½
A. E. Wood	LW 15220	LW 14566	2/12/58	138	71	4	17½	9½-	13-	3	10	8	8½	5	10	88½
B. G. and W. D. Dron	B 30626	B 29538	1/12/58	139	81	23	17	8½+	10+	4½	10½	5	7½	5	10	101
B. G. Potts	B 32628	B 31371	4/1/59	107	65	15½	18½	9+	13-	5	9	6	6½	5	4	91½
Class B																
B. G. Potts	B 32628	B 31370	20/12/58	101	66	11	18	9+	12-	5	7	7	6½	3½	3½	82½
Class C																
Victor Hinton	LW 14779	LW 14792	8/12/58	88	78	11	16	9½+	15	4½	8	6½	7	5	10	92½

+ Points lost because too much fat. - Too little fat. L. Loin development. B. Belly thickness. M. Marketing points.

The boar Medway White Bonza 5th 15462 has qualified as a merit sire.