Changes in group treatment procedures of Danish finishers and its influence on the amount of administered antimicrobials - DTU Orbit (22/12/2018)

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When treating groups of pigs orally, antimicrobials can be administered through either feed or water. During the last decade, the group treatment procedure for finishers has shifted from feed to water administration. We hypothesized that farms implementing this change in treatment procedure would increase their total amount of administered antimicrobials. Based on Danish national register data, we performed a retrospective cohort study with three groups. The cohort of primary interest (Cohort Change) consisted of 50 finisher farms which changed their group treatment procedure from feed administration to water administration between 2008 and 2009. In addition, we identified 221 farms where treatment was administered through feed (Cohort Feed), and another 553 farms where treatment was administered through water (Cohort Water). Both of these groups retained their original treatment procedure throughout the study period. Cohort Change experienced a significant increase in the total amount of prescribed antimicrobials between the years. This increase might be caused by the treatment of more pigs, since antimicrobials administered through the feed are mainly administered at the pen level, while antimicrobials administered in water are mainly administered at the section level. However, we cannot exclude that a change in clinical disease has influenced the amount of prescribed antimicrobials. No change was observed in the other two cohorts. Furthermore, the difference in the amount of prescribed antimicrobials between the years was significantly different in Cohort Change when compared to both Cohort Water and Cohort Feed. Results from this study demonstrate that farms changing their procedure of group treatment from feed administration to water administration may increase their overall use of antimicrobials.

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