

Choosing and caring for the right applicator for pigs

Using the right tools, no matter what the task at hand, makes the job more efficient, effective and easy. Having the right applicator, whether injecting or drenching, is critical to overall good results.

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For routine treatments, the majority of veterinarians and producers prefer automatic applicators that are self-filling, either via a tube connection or bottle mount for speed and efficiency versus individual dosing devices.

Within this category of products, there are many choices to consider. The risks of using the wrong applicators are many and following a few small guidelines can eliminate things such as:

- Overdosing – wasting money.
- Underdosing – risk of resistance and effectiveness of the product.

The Henke Sass Wolf Eco-Matic range including their bottle mount basket, bottle mount universal and draw-off syringe.



- Incorrect administration – ineffectiveness of the product, animal injury.
- Less than ideal cleanliness – spreading disease.
- Inaccurate dosing – less than optimal results.

Drenching piglets and sows

Oral administration, especially viscous product, is a challenging job requiring proper handling, technique and equipment. Always refer to the manufacturer's recommended dosage, applicator compatibility and application technique.

Recent introductions in the market of plastic, semi-disposable drenchers offer an ergonomic and accurate alternative to the plastic hand pumps commonly provided with the drench product.

Some tips to keep in mind:

- Size matters – choose a drencher that is as close as possible to the maximum dose

that you will need; this ensures the highest accuracy and comfortable handling.

- Drench nozzles – check the length based on the animal size for proper administration to avoid damage to the animals' throat.
 - Priming – setting the barrel on maximum dosage allows easier elimination of any air in the system during setup, which you want to evacuate, prime, then adjust downward if needed.
 - Accuracy test – set the required dose and test the accuracy of the applicator with a scaled measuring cup before going to work.
 - Maintenance – after working, clean and disinfect according to the manufacturer's instructions and always oil the o-rings with food-grade oil, to keep the piston running smoothly. Dry and store in a clean location.
- Emphasis needs to be placed on care. A few extra moments after use will ensure the drencher is working the next time it is needed avoiding costly delays later.

Injecting

Keeping animals healthy is a priority; we spend a lot of money on vaccines and herd health programs, and part of this should be choosing a quality vaccinator that does the job correctly. A compromise on the syringe to save money may end up costing a lot more. Consideration should be given to the following factors.

Bottle sizes

- Bottle mount or draw off – a general rule of thumb is for 100ml and smaller use a bottle mount; for 200ml and larger use a draw off connection.
- Draw off syringes – using a bottle holder on the arm or waist eliminates the bottles from getting in the way of work, or tubing getting caught up with the animals and loss of product.
- Protecting the bottle – when using glass bottles, consider a syringe with a basket that connects and protects the bottle at the same time.
- Bottle neck sizes – there are a variety of shapes and sizes of bottles on the market,

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most of which tend to have either 20mm, 30mm or 33mm necks. Before you go out to vaccinate, verify you have a syringe that fits your bottles.

Many syringes are packaged with only one connection size. Henke Sass Wolf offers a universal pack with all sizes included, never leaving users unconnected.

Dose size

Choose a syringe that is as close to the maximum dose you will be giving for accuracy.

The further the dose setting is away from maximum dose, the less accurate the syringe will be.

Refer to manufacturer's instructions on adjustment settings; some syringes are to the end of the plunger (upper picture) and others to the o-ring (lower picture).

Getting connected

- Bottle setup – to avoid small pieces of bottle bung getting stuck in the vaccinator, prior to connection, it is recommended to pre-puncture the bottle bung with a clean needle. Use this 'pilot' hole as a base to insert the draw off spike or bottle mount spike.



- Priming – always prime on maximum position and dose test into a scaled measuring cup to verify accuracy. A good benchmark to look for in your syringe is a design with $\pm 3\%$ dose tolerance

Needles

- Fit the needle to the job.
- Keep track of needles before and after working. Count the number of needles to be used for treatment. Count the needles again when the job is done to ensure all needles are accounted for.
- Change needles, as needed, to ensure sharpness and cleanliness.
- If you drop a needle, find it and dispose

of it properly. Do not straighten and reuse bent needles.

- Dispose of used needles and other 'sharps' properly and according to regulations to prevent environmental contamination and potential injury to animal caretakers, waste handlers, other livestock and pets.

Cleaning

Always refer to the manufacturer's guidelines for care. Look for syringes where the entire syringe can be boiled for disinfection for added biosecurity. Good general practice includes:

- Rinse thoroughly with a hot water and soap mix.
- Rinse thoroughly with clean, warm water.
- Pump dry.
- Lubricate the O-ring with a food-grade oil like corn or olive. Do not use mineral oil, silicone, WD-40, glycerine or alcohol. Petroleum-based products harden the piston.
- Store in a clean, dry place.

In summary, fit the applicator for the purpose, and take time to care and clean. Following these basic steps will ensure that treatments are effective and efficient. Reusable applicators with care will last for many thousand treatment cycles. ■