



ASSURING THE SAFETY, QUALITY AND EFFICACY
OF VETERINARY MEDICINES

GUIDELINES FOR THE APPROPRIATE USE OF POULTRY FEEDS CONTAINING NICARBAZIN

This guidance has been produced with the support of :

MAFF – Joint Food Safety and Standards Group,
the State Veterinary Service, the British Poultry Meat Federation,
the National Farmers' Union, National Office of Animal Health,
United Kingdom Agricultural Supply Trade Association,
the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain.

The VMD is an executive agency of
the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.



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WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

Poultry producers recognise that today's consumers require assurances that the poultrymeat they eat is free from residues of veterinary medicines and feed additives and take steps to ensure that such assurances can be given. Particular care must be taken when using zootechnical or medicated feedingstuffs. Although the following advice focuses on nicarbazin it also applies to other zootechnical additives and authorised medicated pre-mixes. It should be implemented in conjunction with the United Kingdom Agricultural Supply Trade Association's Code of Practice for the Manufacture of Safe Compound Animal Feedingstuffs.

WHAT IS NICARBAZIN?

Nicarbazin is authorised as an anticoccidial under the additives Directive 70/524/EEC. There are two Annex entries. The first entry is for nicarbazin alone at levels in feed of 100-125 mg/kg for broilers up to 4 weeks of age with a 9 day withdrawal period. The second entry is for a 50% combination with narasin at levels of 80-100 mg/kg (i.e. 40-50 mg nicarbazin/kg) for broilers up to any age with a 5 day withdrawal period.

WHY THE FOCUS ON NICARBAZIN?

Under the Veterinary Medicines Directorate's (VMD) statutory residues surveillance programme in 1998, 58 poultry liver samples out of 249 (23%) tested were found to contain residues of nicarbazin.

ARE THESE RESIDUES A THREAT TO HUMAN HEALTH?

No! In the opinion of toxicologists from Department of Health/Joint Food Safety and Standards Group and VMD a consumer eating a sample of nicarbazin contaminated liver at the highest concentration found in the VMD's residues surveillance programme in 1998, would not suffer any adverse health effect.

WHY SHOULD THESE RESIDUES BE PREVENTED?

Provided nicarbazin is used in accordance with its provisions in the Annexes to Directive 70/524/EEC, concentrations should not be found in chicken livers. Consumers do not expect to find avoidable residues in food and the poultry industry wishes to take all measures to prevent such residues.

WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF THESE RESIDUES?

The State Veterinary Service investigated the VMD's findings and suggested that the possible causes were:

- Slaughter of birds during medication withdrawal period
- Inadequate changeover to withdrawal feeds
- Inadequate cleaning of bulk bins, lines and feeding hoppers between batches of feed on farm
- Discharge of delivery of feed to wrong bin
- Contamination of feed during transport
- Contamination during manufacture of feed or mineral/vitamin supplement

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP PREVENT THESE RESIDUES?

By adopting these simple rules you will reduce the potential for a nicarbazin residue problem, thereby helping to maintain consumer confidence that poultrymeat produced in the UK is a high quality product.

- 1** Deliveries of feed containing nicarbazin and feed not containing nicarbazin should be made in accordance with the United Kingdom Agricultural Supply Trade Association's Code of Practice for the Manufacture of Safe Compound Animal Feedingstuffs.
- 2** Ensure that bulk bins holding feed containing nicarbazin are completely emptied out before refilling with feed not containing nicarbazin. Remember:
 - the movement of feed out of a bin occurs directly above the discharge opening. The remaining feed then cascades down the slope of the crater that is formed. Failure to completely empty bins before refilling may result in residual feed, which may contain nicarbazin, being left in the bin.
 - If possible there should be two feed bins. However, to prevent cross- contamination in units without two bins, clean out holding bins and delivery wagons before putting feed not containing nicarbazin into them.
 - Where two feed bins are used it is still important to remove all feed containing nicarbazin from a bin before feed not containing nicarbazin is added to the bin.

- 3** Keep feed containing nicarbazin separate from feed not containing nicarbazin and clearly identified. If feed is removed from a bin, then full traceability must be maintained. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD THIS BE FED TO BIRDS WITHIN 9 DAYS OF SLAUGHTER IF THERE IS ANY POSSIBILITY OF THIS FEED CONTAINING NICARBAZIN (OR 5 DAYS IF 50% COMBINATION WITH NARASIN).**
- 4** Always follow the instructions and observe the Withdrawal Period specified on the feed label or that given to you by your veterinary surgeon by removing feed containing nicarbazin for the appropriate number of days before slaughter.
- 5** It is the responsibility of the farm manager to record all deliveries of feed and movement of feed between houses and maintain full traceability. They must be fully aware of the appropriate Withdrawal Period for each of their feed deliveries. Farm managers must ensure that the last possible exposure to diets containing nicarbazin at 100 ppm and 125 ppm is at least 9 days before slaughter (or 5 days if 50% combination with narasin is being used).

6 Farm managers should be trained on all aspects of the use of feed containing nicarbazin with an emphasis on the correct procedures for withdrawals prior to slaughter. Other relevant staff should have appropriate training to ensure they can assist the farm manager in their responsibilities.

7 Any feed (starter crumbs etc) containing nicarbazin that is spilled into the litter must be cleared up immediately. This is necessary because chicks might not eat it straightaway, while they have other feed available, but may eat it when feed is withdrawn immediately prior to catching.

8 Where growers are using a grower feed containing nicarbazin, it is important to remember when they change to a finisher feed which is likely to have a withdrawal period of 3 to 5 days, that the withdrawal period from the grower feed still applies.

9 **Do not remove birds for early slaughter when they are consuming feed containing nicarbazin. No birds must be allowed to go to slaughter until all withdrawal requirements have been met.**

10 We recommend that a 250g sample of withdrawal diet should be obtained from the feeding system and kept in a rodent proof box for at least two crops.

If in doubt consult with your Feed Supplier and Veterinary Surgeon.

