



## Uniferon Best Practice Recommendation

# The benefits of parenteral iron injection



In intensive pig farming, the only way to guarantee a precise intake, maximum efficacy, and a cost-efficient workflow, is to administer one single large dose of iron to all piglets shortly after birth.

In theory, the use of oral tablets is the only serious competition to injection when it comes to providing a sufficient initial dose. After an initial injection, some farmers make do with voluntary oral supplements (e.g. soil, turf or high-iron creep feed), however the absorption of iron from the gut is rather inefficient especially in the immature gut of the piglet or because of diseases compromising the gut. This strongly suggests that an additional iron supplement administered prior to weaning should be by injection rather than an oral administration.

The oral alternatives to injectable iron supplements for piglets include:

- Providing sterilised soil, turf or preserved silage in creep feeders
- Providing high-iron content creep feed
- Covering the sow's udder with ferrous salts
- Placing an iron rich paste in the mouth of the piglets
- Let piglets lick bare steel fittings in farrowing pens
- Using oral tablets

Most of these methods are either laborious or inefficient (or both).

### Parenteral iron is more efficient for optimized iron care

At the AASV Proceedings 2012 Gaddy et al found that injectable iron may be the most effective preventative product or treatment regimen for iron deficiency anaemia in piglets. These findings lead to the belief that a second injectable iron administration would be the most effective way of replenishing iron stores in the piglet prior to weaning.

Today's average piglet is at risk of developing iron deficiency, known as the "iron gap", which could potentially lead to iron deficiency anaemia, as well as other conditions detrimental to health. An effective way of closing this iron gap may be "optimized iron care" through the administration of a second dose of iron prior to weaning.

The optimized care approach requires extra handling of the piglet prior to weaning, but the benefits may far outweigh the extra work as the additional iron supplement will help:

- Minimize risk of iron deficiency anaemia
- Support optimal growth rates on an all-milk diet
- Increase general health of the piglets

We note that administration of more than 200 mg iron prior to weaning should be done under the supervision of a qualified veterinarian.

Sincerely  
The Uniferon Team