

Injection Sites in Slaughter Stock

Often downgraded or even condemned carcasses are encountered at abattoirs due to “injection sites”. This can lead to huge losses in the monetary return value of a farming enterprise after slaughter animal carcasses are downgraded due to classification damage codes applied following the trimming applied to a carcass to remove the injection site for purposes of food safety.

It is a requirement under the red meat regulations promulgated under the Meat Safety Act (40 of 2000) that any lesion considered to be a hazard to consumer food safety, is adequately removed in order to render the edible product intended for human consumption safe, sound and wholesome.

Hazards to consumer food safety are often grouped together, if classic HACCP methodology is applied, into Microbiological-, Chemical- and Physical Hazards (Allergens are often regarded as the “fourth hazard”).

Injection sites may contribute to all three (four) of these Hazards, i.e. Microbiological, if cross-contamination occurs when non-sterilized injection needles are re-used; Chemical, if any veterinary therapeutic drug is administered with disregard to meat withdrawal times as published under law by the pharmaceutical manufacturer; Physical, if needles are snapped off during the application of injections; (and Allergenic, if the injectable drug that is used, is a drug that has been identified previously in any case of a hyper-sensitivity reaction in humans leading to a medical case of anaphylactic shock or collapse, e.g. Penicillin, etc.).

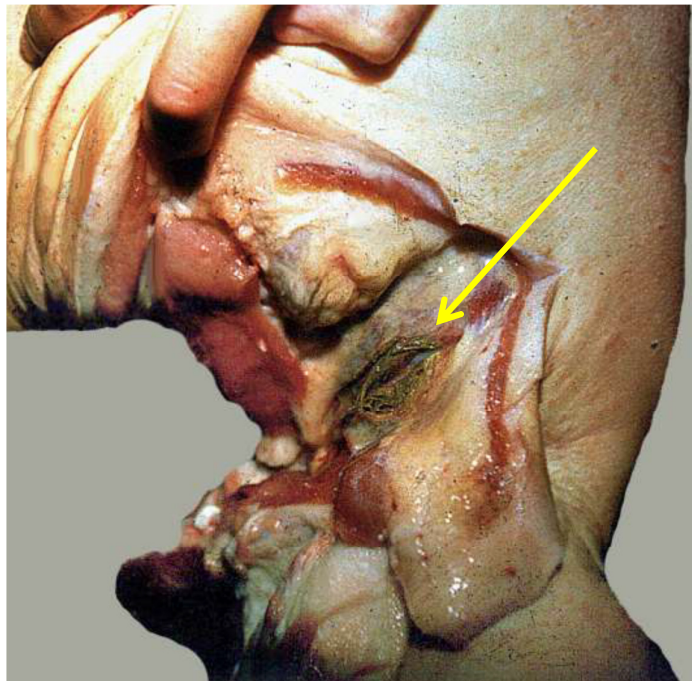
Now there are a couple of practical factors to take into consideration before applying pharmaceutical treatment to any animal intended for slaughter production:

1. Are you sure that your treatment is applied for the correct reason, i.e. do you have a proper veterinary diagnosis of a disease/condition that actually requires the therapy? Often it is encountered that farmers or producers of livestock will simply “inject” when slaughter animals are generally “sick” or show non-specific clinical signs of disease, or if animals are not “picking up enough weight”, or even “just not looking well enough”. The misuse of remedies such as antibiotics is one of humankind’s greatest mistakes ever! Please make sure that an effective remedy is applied as treatment to a proper veterinary diagnosis.
2. Use the correct injection site. If you use the most valuable and expensive muscle to administer your remedy into, e.g. the gluteal muscles (hind quarter), then there is bound to be a greater economic loss after meat inspector trimming of the lesion is completed, rather than just opting for the muscle groups of lower economic value, e.g. the neck muscles.
3. Do not ignore published meat withdrawal times. If you do, not only will you stand to lose the damage associated with injection site or lesion trimming by the meat inspector, but you may be liable to total condemnation of the carcass. How does this happen? A carcass with a fresh

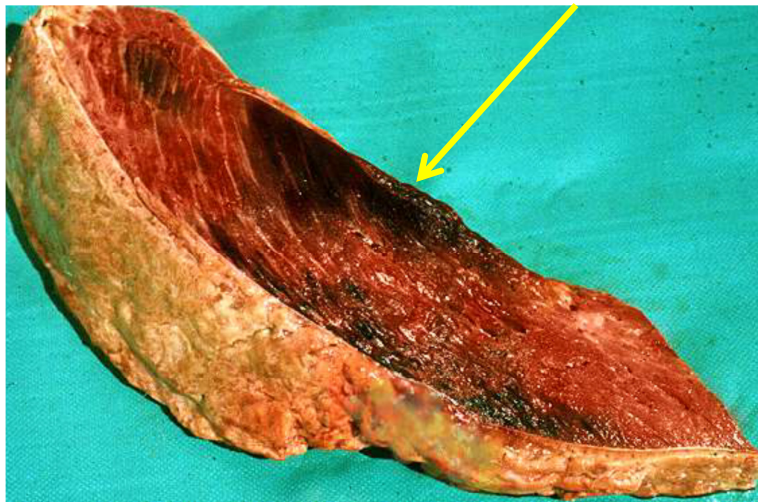


injection site may be detained (after lesion trimming) by the meat inspector to await the outcomes of antibiotic residue testing that may be performed following the identification of an injection site. If the residues test shows a positive result, then the whole carcass may be condemned due to the presence of antibiotic residues that is considered under law as a food safety hazard to the consumer.

Attached below are some images of injection sites, as well as retail consumer customer complaint photos that illustrate the practical problems that are encountered with injection sites.



Above: image of an antibiotic injection site (pork neck) causing severe localized muscle (chemical) necrosis. This type of lesion will result in neck trimming and possible detention of the carcass for further antibiotic residue testing, as neither the treatments nor the withdrawal periods of any treatments for this slaughter batch were stated on the accompanying animal health attestation as completed by the farmer.



Above: image of an antibiotic injection site (beef rump) causing severe localized muscle (chemical) necrosis. This type of lesion will result in buttock trimming and possible detention of the carcass for further antibiotic residue testing, as neither the treatments nor the withdrawal periods of any treatments for this slaughter batch were stated on the accompanying animal health attestation as completed by the farmer.



Above: image of an antibiotic injection site (retail pork neck steak cuts) causing severe localized muscle (chemical) necrosis (commonly available antibiotics like Tetracycline are often associated with this type of necrotic lesion formation). This is the typical “please explain” product return type of customer complaint that abattoirs receive from their retail clients (in this case the meat inspector missed the lesion before retail dispatch).