



## Ractopamine (Paylean®) Free Swine Markets

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### Introduction:

Past, recent, and some planned announcements by US pork packers indicating that they will no longer purchase pigs fed ractopamine (Paylean®) have changed the ability to market show/exhibition pigs to major packers. Coupled with known challenges prior to ractopamine feeding restrictions, standard markets for exhibition swine are fewer or nearly non-existent. With nearly year-around shows, including the traditional county, local and state fair exhibitions, the market challenges are constant. Of note, the Ohio State Fair will be a ractopamine free show beginning in 2020, with guidelines soon available. Exhibitors and fair boards are reaching out for information to help establish or maintain markets in response to current challenges; therefore, the following information may serve to help decision making processes.

### Key Points:

- 1) Paylean® is a **Legal, Safe** product approved by the FDA for use in swine only with a 0 day withdrawal. Pork from Paylean® fed pigs is safe for consumption. The label for Paylean® states: 'Paylean® is a feed ingredient for increased rate of weight gain, improved feed efficiency and increased carcass leanness in finishing swine weighing not less than 150 pounds, fed a complete ration containing at least 16% crude protein for the last 45 to 90 pounds of gain prior to slaughter.' Additional information on the product can be found at: <https://www.elanco.us/products-services/swine/paylean> – Accessed 01/09/2020.
- 2) Packer positions on acceptance of pigs fed ractopamine from any source (Paylean® or Optaflexx® are currently the only legal products sold containing ractopamine) reflect the markets they serve and the consumer feedback they receive. Export markets, representing greater than 25% of US annual market hog value at the farm level, are now commonly placing restrictions on the importation of US pork from pigs fed ractopamine. In addition, there is voiced concern from some consumers and consumer groups, even in the presence of FDA clearance, regarding ractopamine. In each case, the packer decisions reflect individual and collective financial realities faced if markets for US pork are lost due to identification of ractopamine in exported products.
- 3) Packer's positions reflect a 'Never Ever' approach to ractopamine feeding/dosing. No exposure, auditable trace back of feed, feed mills, and or signed affidavits from suppliers indicating compliance are common requirements.
- 4) Detection of ractopamine in either the original form or in conjugates/metabolites following feeding/dosing varies depending on species, level of dose, length of use, and source of test material (urine, blood, or tissue). For information on scientific studies related to body removal rates and comparisons please consider the following web-site: <https://pubchem.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/source/hsdb/7441> – accessed 01/09/2020. The information available is complex and situational, thus testing approaches will also be complex and highly dependent on timing, type of test, level of test quantification, and least detectable quantity. Regardless of a fair or exhibition testing process, the test used on the carcass at the packing plant or in the export market will determine the pass or failure status of the pork or pork product. The need/desire to test at the local

level should be very seriously discussed from a legal and rule-making authority perspective prior to implementation.

#### **Considerations for Ractopamine Free Swine Exhibitions:**

- 1) A guardian/parent signed affidavit stating pigs exhibited have never been exposed to **ractopamine** (Paylean® or Optaflexx®) containing products. Example affidavits may be available from packers that are currently using them in their systems. Sale yards, marketing agents, or other livestock buyers may also have example affidavits that can be used locally.
- 2) Please remember, any pig destined for a market that restricts ractopamine feeding, whether sold from home, a fair/exposition, sale barn, collection yard, etc. will require some form of verification/validation/affidavit. Non-terminal shows and exhibitions to avoid ractopamine concerns at the local level will not preclude or excuse the responsibility of a guardian/parent from their obligation of meeting a market specification identified and enforceable by the packer.
- 3) Local communication encouraging exhibitors and families to purchase ractopamine free feed from a reputable supplier is strongly encouraged. Include information on cleaning previous year's pens, feeders, housing and feed storage areas/bins to avoid potential unintentional cross-contamination if ractopamine was fed to any species in the past.
- 4) Encourage pig purchasers to ask pig suppliers about ractopamine use in purchased stock. The exhibitor's integrity is tied to supplier integrity and assurances may be an important consideration in purchase decisions.
- 5) Strict identification of individual pigs at the local level during an exhibition to include a unique tattoo matching or collated with an ear-tag used at the exhibition for market swine. Do not use the same tattoo for an entire group. Unique tattoo numbers allow individual carcass traceability at the packer level, whereas tags alone can't identify the carcass after the head is removed.
- 6) Local butchers or meat processors may be a viable alternative to larger scale packer markets, but timing, harvest capacity, and distance may be a challenge.
- 7) Access to 'cull pig markets' may be an alternative for the sale of market swine. The value obtained in 'cull pig markets' will be considerably less than a commercial market pig. This is clearly not an option that would indicate a favorable image of the swine industry today nor into the future. All efforts in competitive exhibitions should be geared toward enhancing industry image.

The Pork Industry recognizes the importance and value of swine youth exhibitions to the exhibitor, producer, feed supplier, fair, and the local community among many others. The educational value of exposing youth to swine and agriculture is very important to the future of agriculture and the future of pork consumption. While the changes in market structure are present, meeting the market specifications is not difficult. Simply make an informed decision to consciously NOT feed/dose ractopamine and your pigs are eligible to enter existing markets. Please do not hesitate to inquire if there are questions.

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