



Hormonal growth promotants

What are Hormonal Growth Promotants?

Hormonal Growth Promotants (HGP) are a group of veterinary drugs that mimic the hormones that influence cattle growth.

Hormonal Growth Promotants:

- improve the rate of food conversion in cattle,
- may be natural or synthetic,
- are implanted by means of a pellet under the skin of the ear,
- contain an inert marker to make them easier to find,
- can be detected by palpating (examining by touch) the ear.

Hormonal Growth Promotants and the European Union market

Although HGPs are widely used throughout Australia and the rest of the world, the European Union (EU), driven by consumer demands, imposed a ban on the use of HGPs in 1988. Since then, all beef and beef products exported to the EU and other HGP sensitive markets must come from cattle that have not been treated with HGPs at any stage of their lives. The ban is strictly enforced and as a result of this, Australia has had to implement a system of identification that guarantees the beef products exported to the EU and other HGP sensitive markets are HGP free, while at the same time allowing cattle producers to use HGPs on animals destined for other markets.

The Hormonal Growth Promotant Control System

The National Hormonal Growth Promotant Control System is a legislated system to enable producers to declare cattle eligible for HGP sensitive markets, and to monitor sale and use of HGPs. As the system for supplying HGP free cattle to the EU changed on 1 December 1999, there are now three parts to the system: the European Union Cattle Accreditation Scheme (EUCAS) for the EU market; the HGP free system for non-EU markets and the HGP user system. PIRSA has a State HGP Coordinator to manage South Australia's responsibilities in the system.

Audits are conducted annually of HGP suppliers, producers who use HGPs, producers who are accredited to sell EU eligible cattle and manufacturers of tags used for the EU accreditation scheme to ensure compliance with the system. Failure to observe requirements of the system can result in fines of up to \$10,000 or 12 months imprisonment.

Requirements under the Hormonal Growth Promotant Control System

Hormonal Growth Promotant Suppliers

All suppliers (sellers) of HGPs must be registered by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority and have a notification number allocated to them.



HGP suppliers must maintain accurate records of all doses they purchase and sell, including gifts, bonuses, losses and transfers. These records must be forwarded to the State Coordinator within 14 days of the end of each month. Nil purchase and supply records must also be sent in.

HGPs must not be supplied without the purchaser signing a *Declaration by Purchaser at Point of Retail Sale of HGPs*, and suppliers must keep original copies of these declarations.

Suppliers must be able to provide an approved triangular ear punch to producers and provide information to purchasers on the use of HGPs.

Hormonal Growth Promotant Users

Each time HGPs are purchased, the producer must complete a *Declaration by Purchaser at Point of Retail Sale of HGPs* and keep a duplicate copy. The declaration must state all property numbers and the number of doses to be used on each property.

HGPs must only be implanted under the skin of the ear, and all animals *must be marked with a 20mm equilateral triangular ear punch at the time of treatment*.

Users must maintain complete records of the:

- place of purchase of all HGPs,
- date of purchase of HGPs,
- number of doses purchased,
- number of doses used, including doses that were lost, destroyed or given away.

Records must also be kept of the animals that have been treated including the:

- number and description of animals treated,
- date they were implanted,
- place and date the treated animals were sold.

All records must be kept for at least two years after the sale of the treated animals.

HGP users must be able to distinguish between HGP treated cattle and HGP free stock if both are kept on the same property.

Pink 'HGP Free' tags must NEVER be attached to HGP treated cattle or when the HGP history of the cattle is unknown.

Producers of Hormonal Growth Promotant Free cattle for EU markets

Only properties accredited under EUCAS can supply cattle for the EU market. EUCAS is administered nationwide by AQIS (Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service). For information on EUCAS for supplying cattle to the EU market, see the AQIS website: www.affa.gov.au

Producers of Hormonal Growth Promotant Free cattle for non-EU markets

Producers of HGP Free cattle must be absolutely certain of the HGP free status of their cattle. Cattle can only be declared to be HGP Free if they have been bred on the property and have never been treated, or if they were purchased as HGP free and have declarations from the previous owner stating they have never been treated in their lives.

When buying HGP Free cattle:

- From another property – they must be accompanied by a Vendor Declaration from the producer. This may be a copy of a National Vendor Declaration (NVD) form with the HGP declaration completed, or any other declaration with a description of the cattle and a statement that the cattle have not been treated with HGPs.
- Through a stock agent – the Purchaser Invoice must indicate that the cattle were HGP free, or a copy of the NVD with the HGP declaration completed must be supplied.

When selling HGP Free cattle:

- Producers may declare cattle to be HGP free by completing the HGP question on a National Vendor Declaration (Cattle) form.
- A HGP free declaration must be able to be substantiated by either having bred the cattle and never treated them with HGPs, or keeping copies of HGP free declarations from previous owners of the cattle.

All cattle declared as HGP free have their ears palpated at export abattoirs. Any owner of cattle declared as HGP Free that are found with evidence of a HGP implant faces prosecution with a fine of up to \$10,000.

Stock agents

Stock agents provide the link in the 'paper trail' from the original owner of the cattle to the next owner. Stock agents are legally required to provide the purchaser of HGP free cattle with either of the following:

1. An invoice endorsed by the agent stating that the cattle listed were HGP free. The invoice must also contain the following information:
 - Property Identification Code stated on the declaration made by the previous owner to the agent,
 - Number and description of cattle declared as HGP Free; or
2. A copy of a National Vendor Declaration form signed by the previous owner with the section on HGP status completed, or any other HGP declaration made by the previous owner.

It is vital that stock agents provide an endorsed invoice or copy of NVD as it is proof of the HGP status of new stock and is important when reselling these cattle.

Parallel systems

The HGP Control System represents a belt and suspenders approach to HGP management in that there are two systems at work. One controls the HGP users and ensures that HGP treated cattle can be identified by the triangular ear punch. This is supported by a very closely monitored program that keeps track of the purchase and use of the actual HGP doses through the retail chain and end use. All HGP treated cattle are permanently marked, and all HGP doses are accounted for. This system is compulsory for all producers who use HGPs.

At the same time the HGP Free producers are monitored through the use of 'HGP Free' declarations providing evidence that the cattle have never been treated with HGPs.

Both systems are vigorously monitored through a program of audits, property visits, market checks and abattoir inspections. Producers who do not observe the system will be subject to on-the-spot fines or prosecution for more serious offences.

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