What should you expect from a health screening solution?

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Hardware requirements

Touch screens are ideal for abattoirs as they have easy-to-use intuitive interfaces for operators to capture information seamlessly. Ideally, hardware needs to have a high enough IP rating to withstand the often harsh conditions found in abattoirs. Having hardware that can endure cold, damp environments means that your screening solution will be reliable.

What information is needed?

Any health data you receive should be 'live' rather than retrospective. This allows management to address any issues that occur immediately. If payments to farmers are made after the kill, having live information will allow an abattoir to measure liver fluke levels so they can pay and notify farmers accordingly. For every transaction, full details of the carcase being screened should be logged on the system, making it fully auditable.

Full traceability is also essential. Having traceability back to supplier or region is important in understanding where liver fluke is most prevalent. Having traceability and analysis tools with your screening solution will enable you to identify the farmers or regions which experience frequent, high levels of liver fluke.

This will help you to make purchasing decisions and will ultimately benefit the industry. Increased awareness and availability of information will encourage positive action to be taken.

Finally, cost analysis should be a key part of your screening solution. If a liver is rejected, this lowers the overall yield of the carcase. The ideal system will let you see the financial impact of liver fluke on your bottom line. From this, cost recovery measures or farmer payment decisions can then be made.

Reporting on information which is captured in the abattoir is essential for manage-

Questions to consider when investing in a new health screening solution:

- Does it feature IP rated technology?
- Can you identify which animals have health problems?
- Can you trace which farm or site they have come from?
- Can you compare farmer performance?
- Is it easy for everyone to use?
- Will it automatically email reports to abattoir management?
- Will it automate feedback to farms?
- Will it automatically send health data to the FSA?
- Can you view information off site?
- How will it fit with the rest of the abattoir?

ment teams. Microsoft SQL and Crystal Reporting seem to be the most common platforms used by solution providers.

Ideally, a screening solution needs to allow management to generate reports quickly and easily, providing an overview of health related data.

By using 'drill downs', management should then be able to view specific cases within the report. This is preferred over exporting data into Excel spreadsheets, or viewing multiple reports at once. Reports should be completely configurable, allowing abattoirs to access information on species screened, results, regions, farmers, trends etc. All this information should be available with a click of a button and should include details of your last transaction.

Automated data sharing

You should expect your health screening solution to automatically share data amongst your management team, as well as being able to send selected information to farms and the FSA.

Management from different departments will want specific reports. Having a solution that can automate and distribute reports on a given day or at a specific time is useful. This is normally achieved through an email service. You will need to tell your solution provider what information you need, who wants to receive it, when and how often.

Management should then be able to receive reports, even when they are off site. This can be achieved via a VPN connection

on a PC or laptop. You should also be able to view data on the move via a web browser from your mobile phone or tablet PC.

Reputable solution providers should also be working with the FSA on the automated distribution of veterinary data. At present, vets have to manually record each case of liver fluke, gather test results together and send this data to the FSA. Electronic data transfer is much faster and will significantly reduce the amount of time that vets spend on this administration. This could save even a small abattoir thousands of pounds a month.

Integrated screening solution

It is important that your solution provider offers a system which will fit with your working practices. Whether you capture information manually or your abattoir is automated, the screening solution needs to be fully integrated.

If you capture information manually but want more automation around vetting and health screening, the ideal supplier should be able to provide a system which will work 'stand alone'. This may be useful if you have a tight budget.

Alternatively, potential suppliers may recommend a more extensive abattoir solution which includes health screening functionality.

Whatever your requirements, the screening system should be configurable and have the ability to fit with your existing processes, not the other way round. ∎