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## **DEFRA APPROVED DISINFECTANTS what they are and what they are not**

The term DEFRA APPROVED DISINFECTANTS is sometimes misunderstood by users of disinfectant products in the veterinary and animal health sectors. This failing is of course exploited by some marketers of disinfectant products. After weeks of communication with authorities we set out below the following clarification:

- 1. DEFRA disinfectant approval is not a general product endorsement but it is specific to a named product, its declared formulation and only for the approved use concentration. <sup>1</sup> Disinfectant users are free to use a product of their choice which meets their everyday animal biosecurity needs. It is not compulsory to use DEFRA approved disinfectants in everyday situations.**

DEFRA approved disinfectants are to be used in a declared outbreak of a notifiable disease <sup>2</sup> and in addition at the dilution rate shown on the General Orders list when doing routine cleaning and disinfecting of livestock transport vehicles, animal gathering areas (markets and fairs) (animals" means cattle (excluding bison and yak), deer, goats, sheep and pigs), abattoir vehicles and animal holding areas as part of the regular cleaning routine <sup>3</sup>. Apart from these circumstances it is not

compulsory to use DEFRA approved disinfectants in everyday situations. It is of course incumbent upon end users to use a cleaning and disinfection regime most suited to control the onset of animal diseases.

It is an offense to use an alternate or similar product that has not been approved. It is an offense to use an approved product at any other concentration/dilution rate in situations/applications laid down in the legislation. For example a product approved for use under General Orders applications at say 1:2 (one part product concentrate plus one part water) or under Diseases of Poultry Order and the Avian Influenza and Influenza of Avian Origin in Mammals Order at 1:10 (one part product concentrate plus 9 parts water) **must only be used at these dilutions rates** even where a manufacturer's guidelines recommend higher dilution rates.

2. DEFRA disinfectant approval is limited to the efficacy of a product tested to the DEFRA test protocol, i.e. the highest concentration at which a product passes the DEFRA test; therefore using the above example a product with an approved dilution rate of 1:2 will have failed the test at any greater dilution. The DEFRA test protocol is the exception in the EU because it calls for the laboratory tests to be carried out at 4°C (and “dirty conditions”).
3. **DEFRA disinfectant approval takes no account of a product's safety or toxicity at the approved dilution rates** therefore before use animals should be removed from their housing together with all feed and drinking water containers and only return after all traces of the

disinfectant has been washed away. Staff must be trained in the safe handling and use of products at DEFRA approved concentrations which could also mean wearing full body protection clothing in the absence of credible toxicity studies covering oral and dermal toxicity, eye and skin irritation and sensitisation, and inhalation toxicity.

It was this point of safety which has led us to the decision to withdraw from the DEFRA Approved Disinfectants listing. Safety is the cornerstone of our product development policy and therefore agreeing to the use of F10 disinfectant at high concentrations, well beyond the scope of our toxicity studies, was unacceptable. F10 disinfectants are the product of choice for use in notifiable animal disease outbreaks in other regions.

4. Economic use of approved disinfectants if at exceptionally high concentrations will require the user to consider more appropriate alternate products listed in the Schedules.<sup>4</sup>
5. DEFRA disinfectant approval takes no account of the environmental consequences of a product's use at the approved concentrations.
6. Unlike most other countries there is no legislation in the UK covering the assessment and subsequent registration of a disinfectant end product in terms of its efficacy and safety for everyday use in

veterinary/animal environments. This legislation is always separate from that dealing with the outbreak of notifiable diseases. The consequence is that marketers of disinfectant products can and do make unsubstantiated product claims for their everyday use.<sup>4</sup>

## Notes

1. [http://disinfectants.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Module=ApprovalsList\\_SI](http://disinfectants.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Module=ApprovalsList_SI)
2. [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2007/448/pdfs/uksi\\_20070448\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2007/448/pdfs/uksi_20070448_en.pdf)
3. <https://www.gov.uk/defra-approved-disinfectant-when-and-how-to-use-it>
4. F10 products have been assessed and registered in terms of efficacy and safety for use in veterinary and animal environments in a number of countries around the world, such as EPA and FDA in the USA (without question the most demanding approval regimes in the world), APVMA in Australia, NRCS and DAFF in South Africa.