

'Milk Spot' Parasite – *Ascaris suum*

Clinically and economically, the most important parasite of the pig in the UK is the large roundworm, *Ascaris suum*. The disease seldom has a high mortality, only in the most extreme cases will it cause death, but it will affect daily gain (worsening it by up to 10% across an animals lifetime) and feed efficiency (up to a 13% decrease).

One of the main reasons that these worms can be challenging is the persistence of the egg stage in the environment. Once excreted from an infected host, the egg can persist for years in the environment – it has a shell that is both thick, hard and sticky. Simple washing has no effect at removing these eggs, and even using a disinfectant will give little response at reducing the infection pressure on the next batch of pigs. They can also be moved around or between farms easily by sticking to animals, people or machinery.

Please [click here](#) to be read our full article on *Ascaris suum*.

Ascarid Infection – effect on EP vaccination

As with other concurrent infections at the point of vaccination, it has also been recognised that an infection with ascarid worms at the timepoint of administering a vaccine can interfere with the proper mode of action in the pig and lead to reduced immunity to the disease being vaccinated against.

Aside from the reduced growth and feed efficiency that the large roundworm, *Ascaris suum*, can cause in pigs, a study highlights impacts that an infection can have on the effectiveness of vaccinations. This particular study looked at how effective an enzootic pneumonia (EP) vaccination programme was in the face of an ascarid roundworm infection.

The study looked at two groups of pigs, one of which had been infected with the ascarid roundworm while the other group was not – both groups were vaccinated against EP. Every pig in the group uninfected with the roundworm developed good immunity within 3 weeks of vaccination, whereas those in the roundworm infected group had only a third with fully developed immunity. By the end of the study time period, only 78% of the infected pigs developed any signs of immunity to EP. The study also looked at lung pathology, where those individuals in the roundworm infected and EP vaccinated group had equivalent levels of damage to those that hadn't been vaccinated at all.

In short, this study suggests that a concurrent ascarid infection can negatively impact the effectiveness of an EP vaccine. Ascarid eggs can be found in any production system, whether indoor or outdoor, so this highlights the importance of addressing parasite control as part of your farm veterinary health plan and assess any potential impact they might have on your farm.

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Water Dosing

On occasion, a group of clinically unwell pigs will require treatment and to do this, medication can be given via the water. This could be a variety of medicines or additives, including antimicrobials, anti-inflammatories (such as paracetamol) or organic acids. Many of these supportive non-antimicrobial treatments can be used to good effect with viral challenges on farm.

Many of our clients are already using water dosing equipment of some form, allowing them to ensure that their pigs are receiving the correct dose of water treatments. The daily dose of any treatment is mixed into a stock solution of water that is based on the projected daily water intake of the group of pigs. The equipment then delivers this stock solution into the water line at regular volume intervals. Pigs that are unwell tend to drink less water than expected, so stock solutions sometimes need to be altered accordingly to ensure that they get the correct amount of treatment over the right number of days.

We have a new 2% fixed rate mechanical water doser, with a suction hose included, for sale from dispensary. Although the box has been opened, the kit has never been used. Please contact dispensary if you are interested for further information.

Current Clinical Trends – What are we seeing out there?...

Several of our clients are still seeing active viral issues, especially involving Swine Influenza, also known as 'pig flu'. These issues are being seen in both sows and finishers. 'Flu is caused by infection with the Influenza A virus resulting in respiratory signs, weight loss, inappetence and can also lead to reproductive issues.



The virus is spread between pigs through the air and nose-to-nose contact. A pig can be infected for 1-2 days before showing clinical signs but, as it can still shed the virus during this time, disease can spread rapidly. Dependent on the stage of the disease on farm, the process of diagnosis differs. In the very early acute stages of the infection, nasal swabs can be taken from individual pigs showing clinical signs and these swabs would be tested for the actual virus. Recent developments in saliva testing from ropes can also detect virus from groups of animals. If the disease has been present for longer on farm, blood samples can also be analysed to see if there are antibodies present. Please [click here](#) to read our full article on 'Flu.

Please discuss any issues that you may be having with your vet.

Feedback

Please let us know if there is anything that you would like including, or more information on, in a future newsletter.

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