

Swine Dysentery – Case Confirmed

As you may already be aware there has been a recent confirmed case of Swine Dysentery in Yorkshire.

Swine Dysentery is caused by infection with the bacterium *Brachyspira hyodysenteriae*. A pig becomes infected when it ingests only a small amount of infected pig muck. Although it is only spread through infected faecal material, only around half of Swine Dysentery outbreaks are due to spread by infected pigs, the remainder involving movement of infected pig faeces by items that come into contact with them such as transport lorries. Many disinfectants are effective, but only on spotlessly clean surfaces and not if the bacteria are protected by faeces or mucous. The bacteria survives in wet and cold conditions, but heat and dry, clean surfaces will destroy them.

Thorough biosecurity principles are important at all times, but these should be especially heightened at present in light of the recent confirmed cases.

Please bear in mind the following:

- Lorries – should be able to access your farm over a clean route without becoming contaminated with your farm faeces or run off. If stopping them at your perimeter is not possible, at the very least wash off their wheel arches and tyres and then disinfect them, both before and after the visit. Make sure these washings have no contact with your pigs. Staff should also wash and disinfect their hands and boots before re-entering the farm, and drivers should remain on the loading area.
- Please remember that cull sow transport probably represents more risk than slaughter pigs due to the smaller nature of loads and the busy nature of markets with multiple sources.
- Laboratories – after entering this high risk public access site, a full wash and disinfect of both the vehicle and the driver's boots is advised.
- Fellmongers – be careful of where they drive, how and where they collect your deadstock, and always thoroughly clean and disinfect areas where they have been.

Please [click here](#) for our full Swine Dysentery article.

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

At the moment we are seeing another small increase in meningitis signs within recently weaned pigs due to suspected *Streptococcus suis* infections. This is following a previous slight flare of this in July of this year.

Infection with the bacterium *Streptococcus suis* can result in not only meningitis-like signs, but also sudden death of good pigs with no prior clinical sign of ill-health, and swollen, warm, painful joints. The hock joints are most commonly affected.

Please [click here](#) to read our full article on *Streptococcus suis* and please discuss any issues that you may be having with your vet.



Anaemia in Pigs

The major cause of anaemia in pigs is a shortage of iron. This shortage results in a reduction in red blood cells which carry and transport oxygen around the body, meaning that organs and tissues within the body do not get as much oxygen as is required. To prevent this occurring, most indoor piglets are injected with iron in the first few days of life.

The manufacturers estimate that an extra 10 grams per litre of haemoglobin (the protein inside the red blood cells that carry the oxygen) relates to an added 18 gram per day growth post weaning.

It is important to minimise the risk of iron deficiency anaemia developing – remember to ensure that all dosing equipment is giving the correct dose and not less. Making time to regularly calibrate all dosing equipment is important, so ensuring that pigs are given their full dose of iron. A drop left on the skin will be approximately 1/20th of a millilitre, which amounts to 10 milligrams of iron. Although initially this does not sound a lot, a couple of drops and this quickly builds up to piglets not getting sufficient quantities. Proper injection technique is critical in making sure that the piglets receive the iron they need at this important time point.

Please contact your vet with any questions you may have.

Now Available - Stockton Blue

We now have tubs of Stockton Blue available from dispensary. This is a paste which can be used to assist in preventing further tail damage during an outbreak of tail biting.

As is commonly known, a number of factors can be involved in an outbreak of tail biting. These include feed and water issues, ventilation changes, stocking density issues and disease. Please check clean feed is flowing freely within the feed pipes to ensure there is no bridging of feed or blockages, and that water can be accessed easily, dependent on pig size, and water flow rates are optimal. As well as trying to identify a cause for the tail biting, provision of toys, extra environmental enrichment and anti-bite strategies, such as Stockton Blue, are important to help prevent further tail biting occurring.

Stockton Blue should be applied thickly to any affected tails using a paint brush or a gloved hand. It is odourless but has a strong, bitter taste. The blue colour will also leave a mark on the snout of any pig that has been biting tails, aiding removal of the culprit from the pen. Proper and repeated application is necessary for this to work – it will need to be re-applied for up to three days in order for the pigs to become discouraged. Following use of this product, hands do need to be washed – the foul taste is persistent and eating by humans should be avoided!

This product is not a replacement for identifying and correcting the initial cause of tail biting, but can be a useful aid to reduce the impact of an episode on farm.

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