

December 2017

NEW TEAM MEMBER

Just a reminder that our new vet Anne will be joining us from the start of January all the way from Germany, bringing many years of experience working within the pig and pharmaceutical industries. Expect to see her out and about on farm soon!



LAMENESS IN THE FEEDING HERD

Many producers are reporting outbreaks of lameness at the moment, particularly in finisher pigs, starting from around 40-50kg. Diagnosis of the cause of lameness is most often based on clinical signs and response to treatment, however further investigations can be carried out by performing joint taps, or by full post mortem examination and subsequent sampling.

Causes of lameness in the finishing herd:

Mycoplasma (most common)

- Typical presenting signs of stiffness in one or multiple limbs, sometimes joint swellings (most noticeable in the hocks, though often affecting the upper leg where joints are less visible), shaking legs on rising, arched back and sometimes going off the hind legs.

Erysipelas

- Other clinical signs associated with this disease include skin lesions (classic diamond-shaped raised red areas), fever, red/blue ears, laboured breathing and sudden death.

Streptococcus

- This can be associated with *Strep suis* meningitis (wobbling, head tilt, flickering eyes, paddling) and increased mortality/sudden deaths.

Glasser's

- Other findings include sudden deaths (often good pigs), meningitis, coughing, laboured breathing and general malaise/lethargy in the group.

Miscellaneous injury/riding

- Assess the environment for any risk factors for injury, like slippery or uneven floors, mixed sex pens, sharp edges, tail bites etc.

Treatments:

NB. Antibiotics will of course only be effective if the cause is bacterial in origin and if appropriate treatment is administered in a timely fashion. The following are the treatments of choice for Mycoplasmal lameness:

Lincocin – 1ml/10kg IM for 3 consecutive days, or
Vetmulin/Denagard – 1.5ml/20kg IM for 3 consecutive days

Consider use of an anti-inflammatory pain relief such as **Metacam** (1ml/50kg repeated once after 24-48 hours) to reduce damage to joints by inflammation and aid recovery.

Penicillin is an option for certain types of lameness (**Norocillin** or **Betamox/Vetrimoxin LA**), though mycoplasmal lameness won't respond to it – use this as a second line treatment if there has been no response to the above. Penicillin's are good for infections involving wounds and pus, so for example lameness following a tail bite or foot infection, and for single-limb lameness in weaner pigs.

If you suspect Glasser's disease, **Engemycin 10%** is a good option for first line treatment, as well as a call to your vet.

Treatments are dependent on clinical picture and most likely cause of disease, however most of the problems listed above should respond to Lincocin, and given the meat withdrawal on this product it is usually an appropriate choice for finishers. If unsure, we are always available to talk through cases and options on the phone.

To ensure treatment success, pigs need to be injected with a FULL COURSE of antibiotic at the earliest signs of lameness (when simply stiff and slow to rise) – if only given one or two injections, the potential for recurrence is higher due to leaving a few bacteria alive to recolonise. This is also a risk for antibiotic resistance development.

*A note on **Mycoplasma hyosynoviae**:*

This is a disease which affects joints, but one that is actually spread more like a respiratory disease. Bear this in mind when facing an outbreak in terms of ventilation, cleaning and disinfection, hospital pen location and any other concurrent factors affecting stress levels and strain on the immune system (e.g. stocking density, temperature fluctuations and moving/mixing).



The Ladies in Pigs are currently looking for a new chairperson to help to drive the business forward within a strong team – lads or ladies considered! The successful applicant would ideally have some pig industry knowledge, and pose skills in communication, presentations, budgeting and food preparation.

Happy New Year!

Alice Brough BVM&S MRCVS