

MARCH 2018

Post weaning diarrhoea (PWD)

The recent weather conditions have been challenging for all to say the least and as a result we have seen a rise in post weaning disease issues. It seemed timely to revisit the common problem of post weaning diarrhoea.

The primary causative agent of PWD is *E. Coli* but it is often joined by others such as *Salmonella*, rotavirus and *Cryptosporidium*; or less commonly by *Campylobacter* or TGE/PEDv. These secondary pathogens will make a manageable situation less so by causing additional damage to the gut of the weaned pig.

Clinical signs of an uncomplicated PWD:

- Seen less than 10 days post weaning, often within 4-5 days
- Grey/brown watery diarrhoea – easier to see on solid floors or straw but may cause faecal staining of the backside of affected pigs
- Pinched or tucked abdomen
- Condition loss
- Dehydration – sunken eyes
- Reduction in group feed and water intake
- Some sudden deaths – more likely if other pathogens involved



What triggers PWD?

- Stress of weaning – moving, mixing, diet, environment
- Withdrawal of milk at weaning reduces protective antibodies present in the gut
- Diet change from highly digestible materials to feed ingredients that are less digestible

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- Mixing pigs that do not carry the pathogenic *E.Coli* with those that do
- Mixing of older and younger pigs
- Poor weaning environment – cold, wet, draughty, contaminated (soiled pens, feeders, drinkers and other equipment)

Treatment of PWD:

- Proper confirmation of pathogen causing diarrhoea from either rectal swabs, fresh faecal samples or gut contents collected at post mortem
- *E.Coli* should have a reasonably diverse antimicrobial sensitivity pattern facilitating treatment with antibiotics either individually by injection or via water– checking the sensitivity pattern is essential to ensure that treatment is effective
- Facilitate rehydration of affected pigs e.g. greater water provision, open troughs, stir groups to encourage drinking and consider oral rehydration powders
- Improve the environment in which the pigs are housed i.e. correct temperature, no draughts, adequate water quality and flow rate, use of a dry disinfectant powder

Reducing the risk of PWD:

- Proper cleaning, disinfection and drying of weaning accommodation between uses
- Consider warming accommodation before weaning if possible
- Check for and stop draughts
- Feed the same diet before and immediately after weaning
- Ensure weaner diets have easily digestible constituents – discuss this with your nutritionist or creep supplier
- Keep mixing to a minimum especially between age groups
- Inclusion of zinc oxide in creep diets is known to be beneficial however this option will not be available in the long term
- Vaccination of piglets just before or at weaning may be necessary for herds with recurrent issues – for further information please discuss this with your vet

eMB reminder

This month's Talkshop heralds the end of the first quarter of 2018 and so another deadline for submitting antimicrobial data to the eMB database is approaching.

The quarter 1 deadline is 12th May 2018.

Please get in touch with our office if you need any further information to successfully complete your submission.

Hope you had a good Easter and fingers crossed there is some better weather ahead of us.

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