



Controlling *Ascaris suum*

A wide variety of worm species affect the pig however the one generally considered to be the most important is *Ascaris suum*.

The major losses caused by *A. suum* relate to its migrating larvae. *A. suum* causes milk spot liver lesions, leading to condemnations at slaughter.



It can also cause lung lesions which look very similar to those caused by Enzootic Pneumonia therefore infected pigs can present with coughing.

The life cycle of *A. suum* explains much of its pathology. Eggs in the environment mature and develop into larvae. The larvae are then ingested by the pig. On reaching the small intestine they penetrate through the wall of the gut and migrate around the body to the liver and within 7 days to the lungs. Migration through the liver causes scarring which we see as milk spot liver. Throughout this process the larvae continue to mature and once they are in the correct location and at the correct stage, they are coughed up and swallowed. On reaching the small intestine again they mature into the adults which go on to lay eggs, thus completing the cycle.

Ultimately on most units the biggest source of potential infection is the adult sows because they offer the best environment for a stable population of adult worms, if no control is undertaken. The young stock are then at risk if levels within the sows remain high. The eggs are sticky and easily transmitted around the unit on boots and on the pigs themselves.

Unfortunately lab testing is not particularly accurate when it comes to detecting *A. suum*. The adult worms only produce eggs intermittently meaning that looking for eggs in the dung is often unreliable.

The worms are also difficult to control with cleaning. They are resistant to the vast majority of disinfectants. If a detergent is used then this does break down their sticky outer coating allowing them to be washed away however the majority of dry sow houses are not washed between every batch.

When it comes to tackling *A. suum* the difficulties of controlling it with good hygiene practices, combined with lab tests being somewhat unreliable, often leads to us employing routine control measures. It's generally thought, on indoor units, to be a good idea to worm sows on entry to the farrowing house. In outdoor systems worming 2-3 times per year and around 14 days before paddocks are rotated will generally keep levels low.

Rodenticide Purchasing explained...

From April 2016, rodenticides containing edible baits of first or second generation anticoagulant active ingredients have been produced carrying the following statement:

'For supply to and use only by professional users holding certification demonstrating compliance with UK rodenticide stewardship regime requirements.'

It is expected that by October 2016 'old label' stock will be sold out and only new labelled stock available - this means that you will now require an approved certificate of competence in rodent pest control before being allowed to buy and use professional anticoagulant rodenticides.

Options:

- Complete certification from an approved training programme and awarding organisation confirming professional competence.

A LANTRA based modular online course and exam can be completed online at www.rodentcontrolonfarms.co.uk for a fee of £60. To pass the exam it is also recommended to read the '[AHDB Rodent control on farms practical user guide](#)' which is also available free on the above website.

- Employment of a professional pest control contractor, which have approved certificates.
- Membership of a UK farm assurance scheme e.g. Red Tractor.

NOTE: This is an interim measure, which will cease after December 2017

- The purchase and use of amateur rodenticide products (pack sizes of up to 1.5kg).



Staff news

Dispensary Team

Everyone at Garth would like to welcome one of our newest members Heather Nixon to the dispensary team.



Heather comes from a background in pharmaceutical packaging.

She will be joining Garth on a full time basis so I'm sure you will welcome her when you are ringing your drug orders in!

Veterinary Team

We look forward to welcoming Fiona Bennett to the veterinary team at Garth full time from October.



Fiona qualified from Liverpool University this year and has a keen interest in pig health and production.

Her family are arable farmers in Liverpool and Fiona also enjoys looking after her flock of Texel sheep.

Fiona will be joining our other vets on routine visits over the next few months so I'm sure you will all get an opportunity to meet and welcome her to the team.

Electronic Medicine Book

Can all clients be reminded to start using the electronic Medicine Book (eMB). The use of the eMB is currently a recommendation however it is expected to become a mandatory requirement of Red Tractor. The eMB can be used to collate total usage of antibiotics on farm and is a useful tool to verify responsible use of antibiotics. It is already a legal requirement to record usage and sales data is already being provided by vets and feed mills. Access to the eMB is via AHDB Pig Hub at <https://www.pighub.org.uk>.

Topical Talk

Captive Bolt Servicing and Maintenance

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you, that these important pieces of equipment require regular maintenance and care.

The captive bolt should be cleaned after each use using an appropriate cleaning kit. Particular attention should be paid to the area where the bolt leaves the housing as this commonly corrodes if left. Carbon deposits can build up around the breech creating friction and reducing power. Even a small reduction in the speed with which the bolt leaves the chamber can lead to an ineffective stun.

If the bolt does not return to the housing after firing then this means that the mechanism is excessively worn and the stunner is not suitable for use.

The Humane Slaughter Association website has a useful guide regarding this titled; 'Captive-Bolt Stunning of Livestock'. Pages 29-31 deal with maintenance and include a step by step guide. As a summary after each use the following should be carried out:

1. Dismantling of the stunner.
2. Visual examination for evidence of damage and signs of excessive wear.
3. Removal of blood and water.
4. Removal of carbon deposits from the breech and undercut.
5. Checks on the condition of the recuperator sleeves.
6. General lubrication.

The captive bolt should also be serviced annually. However please be aware that the certified staff need constant access to this equipment and this may mean, you need two captive bolts, to cover periods of servicing and also any malfunction.

Records should be kept of use, subsequent cleaning and servicing.

There has been continued animal rights activity. We urge all producers to follow the 'tidy units' campaign and check everything is in order on your unit before you leave at the end of the day. Ask all visitors for ID and report unwanted visitors to the police and NPA. The use of gates and laser alarm systems are useful deterrents.