



Continuing our look at post-weaning diarrhoea (PWD)

In a recent study looking at farmers' diagnostic ability in assessment of faecal consistency in nursery experience carried out at a Danish pig conference, farmers with less than four years of practical experience detected clinical diarrhoea by sight more accurately than farmers with more than four years of practical experience and most significantly, there was no significant difference between the ability of farmers (n=119) and veterinarians (n=18) observed!

Diarrhoea is defined as an increased frequency of defecation accompanied by faeces containing an increased concentration of water and decreased dry matter content. Additional faecal abnormalities include changes in colour, smell and/or the presence of blood, mucus or necrotic material.

Consistency scoring:

Normal



1 - firm and shaped



2 - soft and shaped

Diarrhoea



3 - loose (mush, often shining surface)



4 - watery (gruel to watery in consistency). Rarely seen as it's fallen through slats or absorbed by straw.

Faecal scores of 3 or 4 are associated with shorter villi – low feed intake may lead to shorter villi which causes diarrhoea through maldigestion, malabsorption and increased fermentation. Pathogens including *E.coli*, *Salmonella spp.* and rotavirus are also associated with the faecal consistency scores 3 and 4.

Garth news - Commercial Director

We are pleased to announce that Mark Stanton (previously from Boehringer-Ingelheim) has joined the Garth team as Commercial Director.

Mark has a wealth of experience in the commercial pig world and many contacts throughout the pig industry generally, many of you will know him already.

He is looking forward to meeting old friends and new as he spends time supporting the veterinary team with meetings with both our suppliers and Farm clients

Ear Necrosis

At this time of year, we see an increase in ear necrosis in weaner accommodation as buildings ventilated based on temperature sensors limit the amount of fresh air entering the weaner space and the relative humidity increases.

Relative humidity is the ratio of water vapour in the air at a specific temperature to the maximum amount that the air could hold at that temperature expressed as a percentage. Pigs are tolerant of a range of RH % but too dry an environment and the risk of airborne infections increases...too wet an environment and the risk of pathogen overgrowth and conditions such as ear necrosis increases. Relative humidity should be kept within a range of 60-90%.

Heating weaner accommodation before pig entry will cause a decrease in relative humidity as long as a minimum airflow is maintained.

Ear necrosis is a syndrome of pigs consisting of the appearance of open wounds, crust and bleeding on one or both of a pig's ears. It's not considered to impact the performance of pigs when lesions are mild to moderate, and pigs tend to grow well and tend not to be condemned at the abattoir (would indicate that the damage is confined to the ear). However, pigs with severe ear necrosis can fail to thrive and it can be associated with underlying management or disease issues e.g. PCV2.

Primary ear necrosis has been associated with a number of microorganisms including *Staphylococcus hyicus*, *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Treponema spp*, and more recently *Actinobacillus spp*. and *Haemophilus spp*. Secondary necrotic ear lesions associated with systemic insult e.g. PCV2, mycotoxins have also been described – in this instance, the pathogen and the pig's immune system form a large complex which blocks the small blood vessels in the ear and causes it to start to die off.

However, in most instances, ear necrosis is largely attributable to environmental and management factors:

Factors increasing the risk of ear necrosis

- 🕒 Poor air quality – particularly diffuse air intake through the ceilings rather than through wall inlets.
- 🕒 High humidity - high humidity in pig buildings facilitate the build-up of pathogens, e.g. *Staphylococci* in the environment. Leaving the temperature settings alone but moving the minimum ventilation fans set point up helps to move more air and improve the environment (lower humidity, lower gas levels, fewer bugs, etc).
- 🕒 High stocking density of weaners
- 🕒 Fighting and mixing of pigs – similar to 'greasy' pig, moving and mixing of pigs may lead to breaks in skin which allow the normal bacterial inhabitants of the skin surface to get into the layers below and cause damage.
- 🕒 Dirty feed spaces
- 🕒 Concurrent mange – itchy pigs may break their skin while scratching and rubbing, allowing surface bacteria to infect the layers below.
- 🕒 Folded ears versus upright ears – ear necrosis more commonly seen in Landrace pigs, but most studies don't focus on breed so that may be incidental.



Garth Pig Practice Christmas Opening Hours



It is nearly upon us and our Christmas arrangements are as follows:

24th December:

Office/dispensary closes at 3.30pm.

27th, 28th and 29th December

Normal service.

31st December

Office/dispensary closes at 3.30pm.

Christmas and New Year Van Deliveries

Christmas Week:

24th December, 27th December, 28th December

New Year:

2nd January, 3rd January, 4th January

