



PIG TALES



John Mackinnon



Adrian Cox



Jennie Sykes



Julia James



Liz Windsor

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES OF PIGS

Written by Jennie Sykes

What is a notifiable disease?

A notifiable disease is a disease named in section 88 of the Animal Health Act 1981 or an Order made under that Act. Notifiable diseases, although by definition are rarely seen, are an important group of diseases to be aware of. The spread of animal disease within the international community is usually the result of movement of infected livestock and/or contaminated products of animal origin. Controls on imports are the mainstay of the defence against introduction of exotic disease. However, it would be foolish for the industry not to be fully aware of the risks should these control measures fail.

The diseases of pigs which are notifiable in the UK are:

- African Swine Fever
- Anthrax
- Aujeszky's Disease
- Classical Swine Fever
- Foot and Mouth Disease
- Rabies
- Swine Vesicular Disease
- Teschen Disease
- Vesicular Stomatitis

This newsletter will concentrate on the clinical presentation of those diseases that have been present in the UK most recently.

Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) and Swine Vesicular Disease (SVD)

These diseases, despite having very different causative agents, will be considered together due to the inherent similarities in their clinical presentation. It is virtually impossible to distinguish these diseases from one another without the aid of specialist diagnostic techniques. Foot-and-mouth disease is a highly infectious disease, capable of producing devastating economic consequences on the livestock industry (as seen in the 2001 UK outbreak) and therefore there should be no delay in diagnosing this condition. Pigs are very important in the spread of FMD. An infected pig can excrete up to 3000 times as much virus in its exhaled breath than an infected cow.



Signs of FMD and SVD in Pigs:

- Severe fever and pigs going off their food.
- Sudden lameness and a preference to lie down. In SVD lameness is usually transient but the foot lesions persist.
- Blisters form on the upper edge of the hoof, where the skin and horn meet, on the heels and in the cleft. They may extend right round the top of the hoof with the result that the horn becomes separated.
- Blisters may develop on the snout or on the tongue and rupture to leave a red lesion. Teats of lactating sows may be affected.
- Sudden death in piglets.

Classical Swine Fever

The last UK outbreak of Classical Swine Fever started in August 2000 and was focused within the East Anglia region. This disease is a serious haemorrhagic (bleeding) disease caused by a viral pathogen. It is spread easily from pig to pig through oral and nasal secretions but can also be transmitted through infected waste food.

Signs of acute Classical Swine Fever:

- Pigs huddle and show depression due to a high fever.
- Purple/red patches appear on the skin.
- Purulent discharges can be seen from the eyes.
- Abortion can occur and piglets may be born dead or mummified.
- Nervous signs such as tremor and in coordination can occur.
- There is a high mortality and deaths occur from 5 days after signs.

There is often a comparison drawn between the clinical signs of PDNS and those of CSF. There are some definitive differences that can aid in diagnosis, as shown below.

The Differences in clinical signs observed between PDNS and CSF

(Mackinnon: The Pig Journal (2001) 47, 105-124).

PDNS	Clinical Signs	CSF
✓	Relatively age specific	✗
±41°C	Pyrexia	41-42.5°C
✓	Appetite	✗
✗	Diarrhoea	✓
?	Lateral spread	✓
✓	Lameness/stiffness of gait	✗
✗	Ataxia/incoordination	✓
✓	Pigs alert	✗
✓	Evidence of pain	✗
✗	Conjunctivitis/ocular discharge	✓
✗	Erythema	✓
Less so	Lesions bilateral/symmetrical	More so
✓	Lesions raised	✗
✓	Lesions well circumscribed	✗
✓	Lesions multifocal	Sometimes
✓	Oedema/swelling of limbs	✗
✓	Swollen joints	✗

Aujeszky's Disease

Although Great Britain is currently an Aujeszky's free country, the rise in trade between countries within the EU, many of which have Aujeszky's disease, necessitates vigilance with respect to the signs of the disease. Again, this disease is caused by a virus and is spread from pig to pig, through the air and also through wildlife/other animal hosts e.g. dogs and cats within a herd. The clinical signs vary depending on the strain of the virus and also the age group affected. Some general signs are common to all.

Signs of Aujeszky's Disease:

- Fever, depression and anorexia are the signs most commonly seen first
- In the growing herd, nervous signs such as trembling, recumbency and paddling can be seen
- Mortality is at its highest in young pigs with neonates at approximately 100%. This decreases with increasing age.
- Respiratory signs such as coughing, sneezing, nasal discharge and difficulty breathing can be seen in all ages.
- Reproduction failure including abortion and increase in returns to service are seen in the breeding herd.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE - BIOSECURITY

- All visitors should be provided with clean protective overalls and boots
- Unnecessary visitors to the farm should be avoided
- Foot and wheel dips / Virkon-S knapsack sprayers should be provided at entrance gates
- Any equipment going into or out of the farm should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected

