



PIG TALES



RECTAL PROLAPSE

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Pigs are particularly vulnerable to prolapse of the rectal tissues through the anus. This problem is common in both growing pigs and sows (less common), with the fundamental process being an increase in abdominal pressure forcing a breakdown in the muscular support around the perineum. There is often farm differences in susceptibility which can be correlated with nutrition, gender, breed, etc.

The main causes of prolapse are:-

- Diarrhoea – can be associated with a number of gut pathogens, but may be worse with large intestinal inflammation.
- Coughing – process of coughing causes an increase in abdominal pressure and this may be sufficient to push out the rectum.
- Fast growth – prolapsing can be a problem in fast growing pigs.
- Nutritional issues – excess feed intake (in particular liquid feeding) may result in fermentation and increase in abdominal pressure.
- Mycotoxins – some mycotoxins can lead to swelling of rectal tissue.
- Water shortage – can contribute to constipation.
- Variable temperatures – can lead to huddling and pigs lying on one another. This can also be seen in overstocked sheds.

In sows, prolapses are most commonly seen during parturition, when the abdominal pressure is at its highest.

Consequences

A prolapse will either

- 1) Return to the rectum. These do not require treatment.
- 2) Swell and remain prolapsed. These are very vulnerable to trauma. These pigs require treatment.
- 3) Be chewed by other pigs, causing scarring and stricture. Many of these pigs will become bloated and will require prompt euthanasia. If you have a high level of rectal strictures within your pigs, consider further veterinary investigation, as other causes for this problem exist, e.g. salmonella.

Treatment Options

Depending on the severity, the following treatment options are available.

- 1) Isolation and despatch for slaughter with a casualty declaration.
- 2) Isolation and replace the prolapse if no damage.
- 3) Isolation, antibiotic treatment and replace if damaged.
- 4) Isolation and amputation.

