



Absolute Swine

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Treating outbreaks of swine dysentery

Treatment centres on the use of effective antimicrobials, although few effective ones remain as a consequence of antimicrobial resistance. Severely affected animals can be treated by intramuscular injection but the most common way is to administer the antimicrobial via the water for 5-7 days. If this can not be done, in feed medication for 7-10 days can be used but it should be remembered that sick animals often have a low feed intake. Water medication can be followed by 2-4 weeks of a reduced level of the antimicrobial in the feed.

The most popular antimicrobials for treating swine dysentery are tiamulin, valnemulin, tylosin and lincomycin. However, it should be noted that antimicrobial resistance in *B. hyodysenteriae* appears to be occurring in some countries. Resistance to tylosin and lincomycin is seen.

Aivlosin, a modification of tylosin, can be used to prevent or treat swine dysentery via the in feed route. Other drugs which have been used to treat swine dysentery with varying degrees of success include bacitracin, spiramycin, gentamicin, dimetridazole, ronidazole, virginiamycin, olaquinox and carbadox, but many of these are no longer available in some countries.

Controlling outbreaks

All-in, all-out management with cleaning and disinfection between batches of pigs reduces the risk of re-infecting medicated pigs and limits the spread of infection.

Stress often precipitates an outbreak of swine dysentery, so efforts should be made to minimise stresses associated with pig handling, crowding, transportation, severe weather and dietary changes.

Rats and mice carry *B. hyodysenteriae* so effective rodent control should be an integral part of any programme.

Bacterin vaccines for controlling swine dysentery are available in some countries. These tend to be serogroup specific and so autogenous (made from an isolate of *B. hyodysenteriae* from the farm with the problem) or multivalent products should be used. Other types of vaccine have been used with limited success.

Closed herds have good chance of remaining free of swine dysentery if they are isolated and control measures to stop the introduction of infection are in place. The greatest risk is the introduction of new stock and these animals should be quarantined for at least three weeks and medicated with an appropriate antimicrobial.

Elimination of swine dysentery

There are several ways to eliminate swine dysentery. These include intensive medication, medicated early weaning and multi-site production and depopulation and restocking. Generally speaking, the larger the herd the more difficult the exercise!