



Stomach worms

Some five genera of stomach worms can occur in pigs. The most common of these is *Hyostrongylus rubidus*. The other four (*Ascarops*, *Physocephalus*, *Gnathostoma* and *Simonsia*) are less common and have limited geographical spread.

The red stomach worm

The red stomach worm attaches to the mucosa (lining) of the lesser curvature of the stomach and is hair-like and just one centimetre long. This worm has a direct lifecycle and does not need an intermediate host. Infective larvae are produced in seven days. The eggs are passed out in the faeces and migrate on to the grass. These infect the pig when the grass is grazed. *Hyostrongylosis* is therefore a disease of outdoor pig production.

The ingested larvae enter the glands in the gastric mucosa where two moults occur. These worms suck a small amount of blood (hence their name) and initiate a catarrhal gastritis. There is some debate as to whether infestation with this worm could be a precursor to gastric ulceration.

The minute thread worm

Strongyloides ransomi is common and is especially pathological to suckling pigs in tropical and subtropical areas.

This worm embeds itself into the small intestine's epithelium. This worm is parthenogenetic and does not need a male for the production of fertile eggs. Its life cycle can produce an exponential increase in worm numbers. Larvae can infect a new host percutaneously, orally, transcolostrally or prenatally. Larvae enter the bloodstream and are taken to the lungs from where they are coughed up and swallowed.

The lesions caused by this worm depend on the number of worms present and host resistance. In heavy infections poor weight gain, scouring and death occur. Deaths can occur before the pigs are two weeks old.

Hookworm

Adult hookworms attach themselves to the jejunal mucosa in the pig's small intestine. This worm is not very pathogenic but young pigs can become anaemic through blood loss if infestation numbers are high.

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