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## Introduction

Globally, roundworms are very common in pigs. They can compromise performance and very occasionally they are associated with clinical disease in their own right. Often intestinal roundworm infestations are associated with reduced daily gain figures and poorer FCRs.

The subtle changes seen in pig performance and behaviour due to roundworm infestations are often missed by farm staff. Although the losses associated with depressed daily gains and poorer FCRs are not that great in the individual animal, over time they can significantly impact the bottom line. These losses can be influenced by factors such as feed quality, climate, house environment and genetics.

Historically, most visible losses were due to milk spot livers caused by *Ascaris suum* and, consequently, most control programmes were against this particular worm. All wormers (anthelmintics) introduced since the 1950s have been effective against this worm.

Even so, *A. suum* is still the most prevalent roundworm in swine globally.

## Control

Control of helminths does not just centre around killing them by the use of anthelmintics or wormers, but also involves utilising a knowledge of their lifecycles, ecology and risk factors coupled with good management practices to optimise control or elimination of the parasite/worm.

## The role of the digestive system

Although you may never have looked upon the digestive system in this way, it offers an easy entry and exit system to the host. In fact, it could be argued, that if the worm or stages in its development do not enter the actual body, the worm never actually enters the pig. That is, the intestinal lumen is outside the body proper.

In the following Pighealth BYTES we shall consider the role worms by the system of the pig's body they affect. The majority will be in the digestive system but there are some interesting adaptations that worms have made so that they can affect other bodily systems.