

# Pighealth BYTES

Number: 126

## Roundworms III

Your own reference source on pig health



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## Strongyloides

The minute threadworm, or *Strongyloides ransomi*, is ubiquitous and common. It can be particularly pathogenic in suckling pigs, especially in the tropics. In older swine it is of little pathological significance.

## Life cycle

The adult worms, which are only 3-5mm long, embed themselves into the small intestine's epithelium. The female is parthenogenetic (produces fertile eggs without the assistance of the male) and lays thin shelled, embryonated eggs in a burrow in the epithelium. Larvae hatch within a few hours and the sloughed eggs are passed in the faeces. Within three days these larvae develop into third stage infective filariform larvae or free living adult males and females. These free living worms eventually produce infective larvae which boosts the yield of infective larvae.

## Routes of infection

Infective larvae infect the next host via several routes – percutaneous, oral, transcolostral or prenatal. Percutaneous transmission is common and these larvae go via the bloodstream to the lungs where they are coughed up and swallowed. The main route of infection to young piglets is via the colostrum. Prenatal infection occurs when the sow is infected during the latter stages of her pregnancy.

## Lesions

In heavy infestations the main clinical signs are poor weight gain, diarrhoea and death. In young piglets death can occur before the piglets are 10-14 days old.

## Natural resistance

Natural resistance develops according to previous exposure of the host to infective larvae and age.