

Pighealth BYTES

Number: 132

Roundworms IX

Your own reference source on pig health



Animine

BCF

Berg & Schmidt

CCPA Group

Coventry Chemicals

ECM

Lung worms

Three lungworms – *Metastrongylus apri*, *M. pudendotectus* and *M. salmi* – are global in their distribution, with *M. apri* being the most common. However, mixed infections of two or all three species are commonly encountered.

These worms are normally found in the bronchi and bronchioles, especially in the diaphragmatic lobes of the lungs.

Adult worms are 4-5cm long, slender and whitish in colour. They usually appear as masses of entwined worms in mucus that virtually occlude the airways. They lay embryonated eggs.

These worms have an indirect lifecycle. Eggs are laid in the pig's airways and then coughed up, swallowed and voided from the pig in faeces. They are then ingested by certain species of earthworm in which the larvae hatch and invade the earthworm's tissues. When the pig then eats the earthworms, these larvae migrate to the lungs via the lymphatic system.

As the earthworm's role in this cycle is critical, lungworms are primarily a problem in outdoor pigs.

Pathology

The disease caused by lung worms is metastrongylosis. Lungs of pigs affected by this condition have wedge shaped areas of emphysema when the airways are only partially occluded by the worms or atelectasis (collapsed lung) when the airways are totally occluded. These lesions only occur at the tips or about midway along the diaphragmatic lobes where their bronchi approach the periphery. The right lung is usually more affected than the left one.

Surrounding alveoli can show pneumonic changes as a result of worm eggs falling into them instead of being coughed up.

Clinical signs

These are generally not very pronounced but heavy infestations and those complicated with bacterial infections may show some coughing or thumping.

Diagnosis

Diagnosis is by post-mortem findings, including demonstration of the worm eggs in lung/bronchial samples.

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