

# Pighealth BYTES

Number: 133

## Lung flukes

Your own reference source on pig health



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## Introduction

*Paragonimus kellicotti* is a fluke that can be found in a wide range of animals, including pigs, in North America. Its relative, *P. westermani*, occurs in South America and Asia.

These flukes are fleshy and brownish in colour and measure up to 12mm in length and 6mm in width, often occurring in pairs.

## Life cycle

The life cycle includes two intermediate hosts. The first is a snail and the second is a crayfish or crab. When eaten by the pig the metacercariae in the crustacean penetrate the intestine, burrow through the diaphragm and enter the tissue of the lungs where they settle as pairs in the bronchi and mature. The cycle takes about two months and then these mature flukes start laying eggs again.

## Pathology

In the lungs they are often encysted and these cysts and their associated areas of inflammation are approximately 2cm in diameter and can easily be spotted or palpated on post mortem examination.

## Clinical signs

Usually the cysts are few in number but heavy infestations can produce a productive cough, especially after exercising.

## Diagnosis

The lung lesion is pathognomonic at post mortem, as is the presence of the very characteristic fluke eggs.

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