



## What You Should Know About Swine Health

by Glenn Shirk  
Lancaster Extension Agent

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(Editor's Note This is the first of a series of about ten articles on swine health and management)

LANCASTER — Pseudorabies has made the headlines this past year. However, it is only one of several diseases which pork producers need to be concerned about. Good disease control is one way a producer can improve efficiency of production to be in a

better position to survive these economic hard times.

The number of farms quarantined for PRV infection reached a height of about 43 in June. This has been reduced to 24, and this is encouraging. Whether the number of quarantined herds continues to decline will depend largely on the determination of everyone affiliated with the swine industry.

As winter approaches, we face a very challenging time. Efforts to

control diseases need to be renewed and intensified. As pigs become stressed by all those other diseases, problems and conditions associated with winter confinement, those that are carriers of PRV may suddenly become shedders, and thus affect other animals in the herd.

So, now is the time for everyone to be very observant and cautious, and a time to sharpen their husbandry and management skills. It is a time to be working closely with your veterinarian regarding any herd health concerns.

What is the health status of Pennsylvania pigs? This question is answered by Dr. Lawrence J. Hutchinson, Penn State Extension veterinarian:

There are about 900,000 pigs on Pennsylvania farms and they're a very healthy group of animals. While some pork producers feel that they have more health

problems than they should, our Pennsylvania pigs generally have a lower incidence of several important diseases than some of the major swine-producing states.

Here are some swine diseases and the current Pennsylvania situation for each of them.

**Brucellosis** - Pennsylvania has been declared a swine brucellosis-free state. No cases have been diagnosed in the past 15 months. Seventy Pennsylvania herds have brucellosis-validated status.

**Pseudorabies** - About 24 herds are currently under quarantine, all in the northern Lancaster County area. This disease is widespread in the midwestern United States. It is also present in New Jersey and in some states to our south. Testing of Pennsylvania hogs shows that other areas of the state are pseudorabies-free. We'll need continued vigilance to prevent the introduction of pseudorabies with importation of feeder or breeder stock from other states.

**Swine Tuberculosis** - This condition is not a threat to human or animal health, but can result in condemnation or passed-for-cooking status of hogs at slaughter. Some packers have felt that Pennsylvania hogs have a higher incidence of swine TB than out-of-state hogs slaughtered in Pennsylvania.

**Haemophilus Pneumonia** is a problem of increasing concern to midwest hog producers. Starting in 1980, cases of Haemophilus pneumonia have been seen in Pennsylvania. The incidence is still low, but may be increasing.

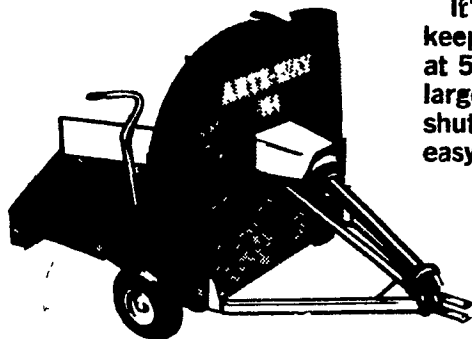
**Economically important diseases** - There are many economically-important diseases that are present in almost every area in which hogs are raised. A few of the most important ones are rhinitis, mycoplasma pneumonia, dysentery and roundworm scarring in feeder pigs; coli scours and TGE in baby pigs; leptos, parvovirus and MMA in sows.

These conditions are present on many Pennsylvania hog farms. Good management is minimizing their effects on many farms. A slaughter-check program is helping to identify the extent of these problems on some Pennsylvania finishing operations. Autopsies, blood testing, and other diagnostic tests help supplement routine veterinary examinations to monitor these diseases.

Buyers of breeding swine, feeder pigs, and market hogs want to buy healthy animals. Pennsylvania pork producers have an enviable record of producing healthy pigs. With top-notch management and continued vigilance, we can do even better.

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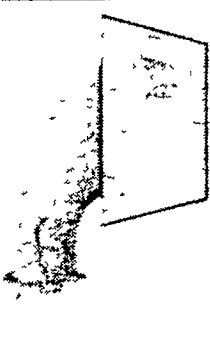
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