

# Hog operation disinfectants discussed

NEWARK, Del — Cleanup and disinfection are two vitally important parts of any swine-management program. Most producers are more familiar than they would like to be with the cleanup process. Disinfectants are another matter.

Why should you use a disinfectant? "It's cheap insurance," says University of Delaware extension livestock specialist Ken Kephart. "We often talk about disease build-up. That's the con-

tinuous growth of disease-causing bacteria, with no break in the cycle. Cleaning and disinfection provide the break and will go a long way in keeping the lid on disease problems in your operation. For example, bacterial scours in the farrowing house are largely a problem of sanitation. Control and management of another important disease — swine dysentery — also center around sanitation."

How does one choose a disin-

fectant? That depends on several things, says Kephart.

What are you trying to disinfect? The product you use to sterilize a manure pit may not be the best one to use on the udder of a cow.

How clean will the surface be when you apply the disinfectant? Only a few products retain good germicidal properties in the presence of organic debris.

What kinds of organisms do you want to kill? All disinfectants kill most bacteria. But many have

little effect on viruses

What compounds are available? - Formaldehyde and other aldehydes (Cidex, DC & R, Formaldegen, Formalin).

- Creosols and phenols (Cresl-400, Environ, Laro, Lysol).

- Quaternary ammonium compounds (Germex, Hi-Lethol, San-O-Fec, Warden, Zephiran).

- Iodophors (Iofec, Isodyne, Betadine, Losan, Tamed Iodine, Weladol).

- Sodium hydroxide (lye)

Formaldehyde is probably the most effective disinfectant available, Kephart says. It kills nearly all types of microbes and viruses under a wide variety of conditions. Unfortunately, at high concentrations its fumes are very irritating. When used as a gas it's an excellent fumigant, but it must be used with caution. Solutions of formaldehyde also provide good germicidal activity and are safer to use than the gas.

Creosols and phenols, like formaldehyde, can produce objectionable odors. That's especially true with creosol, the specialist says. But they have excellent resistance to organic debris. So if a swine facility contains a lot of wood or hidden crevices, these compounds might be the best choice. They also provide good results in foot baths.

Quaternary ammonium compounds are not recommended for disinfecting livestock facilities, since organic matter quickly inactivates them. They have limited effect on viruses, fungi and spores. They do work well for sanitizing dairy and food handling equipment. But since these compounds are neutralized by soap, be sure that surfaces are rinsed well before using the quaternary ammoniums.

Iodophors are a combination of iodine and detergents. They aren't very effective in the presence of organic material. And they provide only limited activity against viruses and salmonella bacteria. But the iodophors are non-irritating and rarely cause skin reactions. For producers who wash and disinfect sows before farrowing, one of the iodophors is a good choice.

Sodium hydroxide provides good germicidal properties under most conditions. And it's cheap. But it's also very caustic and can cause serious burns, Kephart cautions. Use accordingly.

"So, to get the most from your disinfectant dollar, think about how and where you plan to use the disinfectant," he advises. "Remember that good sanitation is a must. An effective cleanup will remove 95 percent of the contamination. And it allows the disinfectant to penetrate and do the job you expect."

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