

How These Farmers Make It Work Pseudo Rabies, How It Spreads And Steps To Eradicate It

BY PAT PURCELL

Editor's Note: In last week's issue spread of pseudo rabies and what is being done to eradicate the disease was discussed. This article details how the virus spreads and what can be done to control it.

LITITZ — Identifying how the Pseudo Rabies Virus (PRV) spreads and locating specifically which herds are already infected are crucial to eradicating the disease.

"The key to eradicating this disease is identifying the units which test positive for the disease so we can track its spread. The individual herds are so interconnected. It goes from sows to feeder pigs, to finishing floor and around those three. Feeder pigs are more of the problem and it is feeder pigs which are shipped more than any other pig throughout the county," explained Dr. Timothy Trayer, D.V.M. of Denver.

"We have had it spread from feeder barns to finishing floors with a 10-sow herd which has had no contact with an infected herd," said Trayer. "We think it might be passed by prevailing wind within one mile without a physical barrier, like a river."

Up until recently the disease has been confined to the Lancaster County area. Apparently it was not able to cross the Susquehanna River. However, within the last two weeks diseased herds have been located in the York County area, according to Trayer.

One of the most common practices spreading the disease throughout the county is the truck used to haul the animals. The producer hauls finished pigs to market, pickups feeder pigs and takes them to the finishing barn. There is a good chance at the stockyards to contact hot manure, manure from a diseased animal, and the break-out starts in the finishing barn and then usually goes to the sow barn. According to Trayer, this is the most common way PRV goes from farrowing to finishing.

"The producer has two choices. If you must use the same truck you must completely clean down the

truck and allow it to rest for one to two days before you move the feeder pigs. The other choice is to move the feeder pigs to the finishing floors and take the finished pigs to market and then clean the truck," explained Trayer.

The feeder pig producers have the big risk of contracting the disease in their herds. Out of their need to replace breeding stock the replacements may not be from a disease free herd. Dr. Trayer recommends that if certification can not be provided then the replacements should be isolated

from the rest of the herd immediately on the farm. A blood test should be run on those animals before mixing them with the rest of the herd.

Trayer recommends blood testing of feeder pigs and he feels the cost of testing would be covered by the premium paid for a certified psuedo rabies free feeder pig.

"There are people who have taken 13-15 years to develop a reputation of breeding stock, but because of the incidence of the disease in this area, they are losing sales because of the potential of

pseudo rabies. People won't buy feeder pigs unless they are certified and there is a premium paid for feeder pigs which have been tested and show negative," said Trayer.

There is a blood test which can make the results available within 36 hours. The rapid results allows the producer to have his pigs tested when he is preparing to sell and avoids a holdup. Trayer strongly supports the certification of feeder pigs to control the spread of the disease.

New Vaccine

Within the last two months an important development in vaccines has been made which is being touted by many people in the swine industry as the key ingredient in an "industry-approved eradication effort".

"The vaccine we now have allows us to be able to tell the difference between the vaccinated hog and the field infected hog," said Trayer.

This new development gives producers the capability to test out

(Turn to Page C9)



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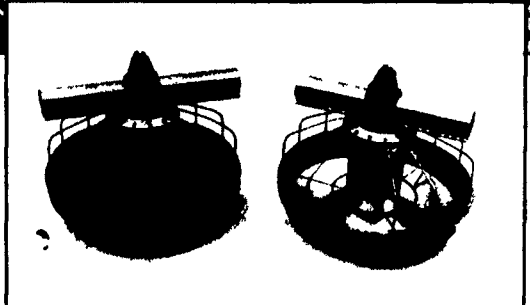
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