

A Plan For Pseudorabies Eradication

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Officer

An Open Letter To Pennsylvania Pork Producers

Dear Pennsylvania Pork
Producer:

I am the Federal Veterinarian with USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services who has been assigned to work with the PA Pseudorabies Advisory Committee. Recently, we have been drawing up our plans for how we are going to eradicate Pseudorabies Virus from PA hogs. Presently, it is our goal to have every quarantined herd signed up for a herd plan.

A herd plan is an individual "road map" of how each producer will work to remove Pseudorabies from his herd and thus get off of quarantine. A herd plan is selected based on the type of operation, the facilities, the value of the bloodlines, the disease profile of the herd, the number of pseudorabies positive animal in the herd, the use of vaccination, the commitment and management ability of the personnel, and other factors.

I plan to mail a packet of information to each quarantined producer in early June and begin visiting them on a one-on-one basis a few weeks later. I will not be entering the animal facilities. I plan on beginning with the herds most recently put on quarantine and working my way down the list. Each herd plan I write will then be sent to the herd veterinarian for his or her approval before it is considered complete. Even then it will not be

considered the "final word" but will be subject to change if needed.

Hopefully we can all work together and getting Pseudorabies out of our PA hogs will no longer be just a dream but it will become a realistic goal. I am excited about this program and I look forward to receiving your support.

Sincerely,
Amy J. Nesselrodt, DVM
Veterinary Services

The Pennsylvania Pseudorabies Advisory Committee is moving forward in its plans to eradicate Pseudorabies virus (PRV) from Pennsylvania hogs. The goal is to have each producer put on a written herd plan. The herd plan will be chosen to fit the needs of the individual producer with the assistance of Dr. Amy Nesselrodt, pseudorabies coordinator, and the producer's private veterinarian.

The first step is to set up a herd plan to determine the prevalence of PRV (or number of positive animals) in the herd. If the herd has been on quarantine for longer than six months and/or has been vaccinating for a period of time, it would be advisable to do a statistical test of the herd. There is a chance that the herd may already be free of the disease or it may only have a very small number of positive animals.

The next step is to choose from one of the basic Livestock Conservation Institute (LCI) herd plans and to modify the plan according to the needs of the individual producer. The first plan is called "Phased Test and Removal". This can be done with or without vaccination, though there is an increased risk of reinfection if vaccination is not used. The advantage of this plan is that it minimizes interruption of pig flow. The disadvantage of this plan is that positive pigs stay in the herd longer, and can be a source of reinfection. The plan calls for testing the breeding herd and a sample of the finishers, then vaccinating the entire herd. Positive boars are removed immediately and positive sows are removed either after weaning or as soon as possible. They are then replaced with negative vaccinated gilts. After a tur-

nover of the known positive animals has occurred, the herd should be retested and then state regulations should be followed for quarantine removal.

Another plan, "Immediate Test and Removal", can be very successful when 20% or less of the herd is infected, and there is no infection in the grower or finisher pens. In this case, all the positive animals are removed to slaughter or a quarantined feedlot. The entire herd is then vaccinated. A month after the positive hogs have been removed from the herd, a statistical sample of the breeding animals and their offspring over 16 weeks of age are tested. If the test is negative, then state regulations should be followed to get the herd off of quarantine.

"Offspring Segregation" is a useful plan in herds where at least 6 months have past since a clinical outbreak of PRV has occurred and/or in herds that have subclinical infections. There are a couple variations of this method but the basic idea is to wean new gilts off the sow before they have a chance to become infected. Then the gilts are

raised in isolated facilities. Before vaccinated gilts are moved into the regular nursery or grower pens, the areas will have to be free of positive hogs and cleaned and disinfected. This method is labor and space intensive but works well.

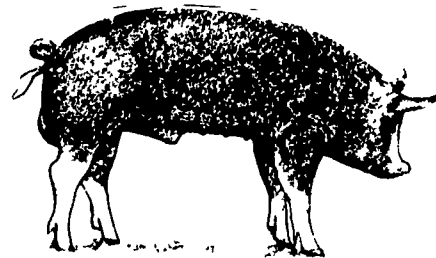
The last basic type of herd plan is not a popular option and that is "Depopulation/Repopulation". Due to the cost and down time involved, this is not a method most producers will choose. However, in some cases it can be profitable, such as in a herd where a lot of other disease problems are present or in a herd that needs to improve its genetic base.

Along with any basic herd plan chosen, biosecurity issues and management factors must be addressed. Biosecurity issues include, but are not limited to, footbaths, limited visitor access, wildlife exposure, traffic on and off the farm, people and pig flow, and handling of purchased additions. New additions should be isolated for 21-30 days and should be both tested and vaccinated for PRV before they are added to the herd. Management factors to be

addressed include vaccination, the facilities, swine handling, moving to all in/all out, etc. It is important to remember that vaccination is not a "cure all". Vaccine is helpful to decrease or eliminate clinical signs of the disease and it helps decrease the amount of virus shed. Vaccine however does not prevent entry of virus into the herd nor totally prevent spread within an infected herd. With the development of the differential vaccine, it is one of our best tools as long as the limits are understood.

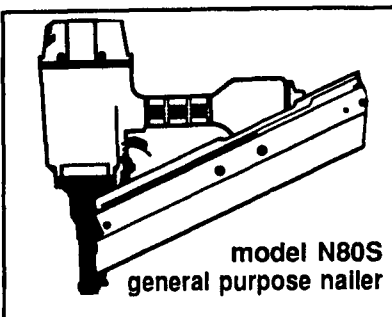
Most Lancaster County herds

will probably employ vaccination with phased test and removal. While perhaps the most realistic method for these producers, it is also not without some risk due to possible circulation of virus within the herd. Therefore, it is important to keep goals realistic, stay flexible, and practice all forms of biosecurity. Area spread of PRV is always possible as long as there are infected herds in PA, but if everyone works together at the same time to get cleaned up, the chance of success will be much greater.

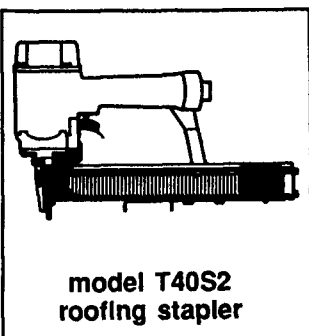


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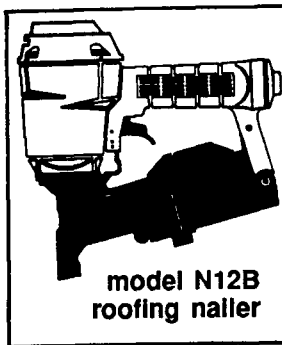


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