


**Pennsylvania
PRV HEADLINES**



A bi-weekly communication from
PA Pseudorabies Committee and Penn State Extension
to alert you to developments in PRV and its control

**PSEUDORABIES
VACCINATION
QUESTIONS AND
ANSWERS**

**Dr. Amy J. Nesselrodt
Dr. Paul M. Pitcher
USDA Veterinarians**

In the last edition of Pennsylvania PRV Headlines, issues surrounding pseudorabies vaccination were discussed.

This week, commonly asked questions will be answered.

More than 200 of Pennsylvania's swine herds are being vaccinated against pseudorabies. There are many swine herds that are not vaccinating but which should because they are located near other herds that are infected with pseudorabies.

Will vaccination prevent pseudorabies infection? Not always. Vaccination does not provide perfect protection against infection.

Why, then, should I vaccinate? Properly administered vaccination is very effective at reducing or preventing signs of pseudorabies in a swine herd.

These signs were discussed in

an earlier article in this series (October 24, 1992 issue of *Lancaster Farming*). The signs of pseudorabies can be obvious and costly in an acute outbreak. Often, however, the signs are not as obvious. In the grow/finish herd, losses because of slower and less efficient growth may be hard to observe unless careful measurements of feed consumption and days to market are made.

Even though these less obvious signs are harder to observe, they are very costly. Also, there is evidence that pseudorabies infection makes a herd more prone to other, more devastating diseases such as rhinitis and pneumonia.

Properly vaccinated pigs have greater resistance to infection with pseudorabies than unvaccinated pigs. This means that it takes a larger amount of virus to infect a vaccinated pig. Vaccination can allow the swine producer to avoid being quarantined for pseudorabies, because this resistance will help prevent infection of the herd if the pigs are exposed to pseudorabies.

Exposure to infective doses of pseudorabies virus is much more likely during the cool months, so it is important to boost herd protection now.

If they do become infected, properly vaccinated pigs shed much less virus than unvaccinated pigs. This prevents new infections and controls the spread of pseudorabies on the farm and to neighboring farms.

Is it cost-effective to vaccinate against pseudorabies? Yes. Field studies in Illinois and Minnesota have indicated that conversion of feed to pork can be improved by 6 to 10 percent when pseudorabies virus circulation is prevented by vaccination of fat hogs. Daily gain is also improved, so pigs reach market weight sooner. The Minnesota study found that one dose of vaccine given to fat hogs returned an additional \$13 gross profit per pig!

The incidence of diseases such as rhinitis and pneumonia can be reduced by pseudorabies vaccination. A producer in Illinois estimated that pseudorabies vaccination returned \$3 to \$4 in improved performance for each \$1 spent on vaccine.

Do I need to vaccinate the entire herd, or can I just vaccinate my breeding herd? Experience has shown that it is difficult to prevent or eliminate the disease in a breeding herd if virus is circulating on a nearby finish floor. Have fat hogs blood-tested for pseudorabies to determine if they have been circulating virus.

Vaccination is only one of several tools effective at eliminating

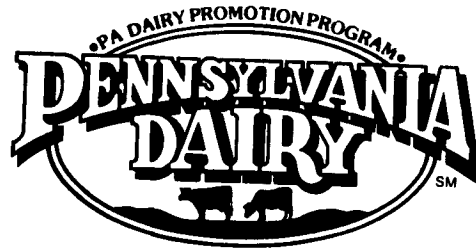
pseudorabies from a herd. Several top managers in Lancaster County have apparently eliminated pseudorabies from their finish floors by using segregation and biosecurity techniques (see the Pennsylvania PRV Headlines column in the December 19, 1992 issue of *Lancaster Farming*). Their management skills ensure a stress-free environment for their hogs, which helps to prevent pseudorabies virus circulation.

I have heard different recommendations of how often to vaccinate for pseudorabies. What is the best advice? In the past, we advised vaccinating the breeding herd against pseudorabies twice a year or prior to each farrowing. However, experience has shown that the protection given by vacci-

nation may be gone in less than six months, making the herd prone to infection before the next booster is given. Ideally, the breeding herd should be vaccinated every three months, or four times per year. In many herds, it appears that vaccinating every four months or three times per year provides continuous protection against pseudorabies infection.

A word of caution: If the herd is severely challenged at a time when protection is at a low ebb, vaccinating every four months may not be adequate to prevent infection of the herd.

Try to time pseudorabies vaccination to anticipate periods when severe challenge is likely (late fall, winter, and early spring).



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