

# 'Hidden' Form Of Ileitis

(Continued from Page 24)

Although much is still unknown, Dr. Guedes attributes performance losses from subclinical ileitis to the microscopic lesions cause disease, which has a negative impact on growth. He adds, "The influence on herd variation and uniformity can be very high."

Producers should consider three key areas:

1. Performance. Although clinical signs of ileitis may not be present, subclinical ileitis can rob pigs of performance, as energy is diverted from growth to the immune system to fight invading bacteria. Pigs with subclinical ileitis also shed *L. intracellularis* and infect other pigs.

2. Pig Flow. Because ileitis has several forms, it

affects pigs differently. The results range from mortality caused by severe clinical ileitis to lightweights and variable pigs from subclinical ileitis. Variation impairs pig flow by creating production bottlenecks and compromising all-in/all-out.

3. Economics. While less visible than finisher mortality caused by clinical ileitis, the subclinical form can still cost up to \$3.42/pig from reduced performance and poor pig flow.

Ileitis-causing bacteria (*L. intracellularis*) inflict harm by multiplying inside intestinal cells, causing a thickening of the gut wall. This causes poor digestion, reduced feed intake, slow growth, and even death. These diseased cells inside the gut slough off, are excreted through the feces, and can infect other pigs.

## Ileitis cycle

