

Atrophic Rhinitis

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Texas swine producers are faced with the problem of a new malady that is becoming increasingly costly. Stopping the spread of atrophic rhinitis is primarily a responsibility of the individual swine producer. Sale of infected or exposed breeding animals must be discontinued and public sales must no longer be used as dumping grounds for ill or unthrifty animals. Unless these practices are stopped, rapid spread of atrophic rhinitis will continue.

DESCRIPTION OF DISEASE

The cause of atrophic rhinitis has not been identified. However, it definitely has been proved to be infectious and contagious. Atrophic rhinitis has a mild, and sometimes unnoticed, onset and usually does not cause significant damage in a herd until the second year. The disease usually follows a common pattern on infected farms. A boar of unknown history is purchased to propagate litters from home-raised gilts. The first offspring usually do not reveal real evidence of their infection, although four or five pigs may develop chronic nose trouble and do not attain normal market weight. The first year is the lull before the storm. In the following year, gilts retained from this herd will produce descendants that are seriously affected with atrophic rhinitis.

SYMPTOMS

In the early stages of atrophic rhinitis, it is extremely difficult

to recognize the disease unless there is a history of previous outbreaks on the premises or in herds from which some of the animals were obtained. However, if the herd has a history of these, it is possible to diagnose the condition with a fair degree of accuracy.

Acute cases of atrophic rhinitis are usually recognized in pigs during their first three weeks of life by these symptoms:

1. Sneezing is frequent among all the pigs of an infected litter.
2. A clear, sticky discharge usually comes from the nose.
3. Frequently an affected pig will rub its nose vigorously against the bedding or walls, and shake its head as if to dislodge something from the nose.
4. Pneumonia may develop within a week to ten days.
5. General unthriftiness, rough hair-coat, diarrhea and loss of weight usually follow.

The death rate at this point is usually around 20 to 30 percent. Atrophic rhinitis, in this early stage, is often confused with colds, baby pig pneumonia, various deficiencies, and other infectious diseases.

Pigs that survive the initial attack usually follow a typical pattern. One group comprising up to 20 percent, are stunted for life and never attain a weight of over 120 pounds. This group shows the most obvious signs of the disease. Twisting and distortion of the bones of the face give a typical dished-in appearance. This distortion interferes with respiration and causes frequent sneezing and a purulent discharge from the nose. Nose bleeding is common.

Another group of the surviving pigs will show less obvious changes from the disease, and although they will finally attain market weight, it will take two to three months longer feeding than normal pigs. The balance of the pigs will be apparently normal and may attain market weight in the usual time. However, this group of animals will be carriers of the disease.

CONTROL

Use of various serums, vaccines, and drugs have proved unsatisfactory. Therefore, control must be based on various means to prevent its spread and to eliminate it from the herd.

In herds where the infection has gained entrance, the following program is recommended for control:

1. All pigs showing deformity of the nose or other signs of rhinitis should be destroyed as they transmit the infection.
2. All pigs from litters where rhinitis was present should be sent directly to slaughter as they are potential carriers of the disease.
3. Pigs originating from infected premises should not be transported to clean premises.
4. All sows must farrow in isolation to prevent contact

between the highly susceptible pigs and possible infective animals. Brood sows that were mature before the disease broke out in the herd will not be carriers.

5. Susceptible pigs should not be exposed to infected areas until those areas have been allowed to rest 90 days and have been plowed and all houses and utensils disinfected.

PREVENTION

If atrophic rhinitis is to be prevented from entering a clean herd, definite rules must be observed:

1. Animals intended for breeding purposes must be purchased from a breeder who has a herd free of the infection.
2. Pigs purchased for feeding purposes must be kept segregated from the breeding herd.
3. Outside swine should not be brought to the farm for breeding unless they can be kept completely isolated from sows and nursing pigs.
4. All garbage or table scraps that might contain pork scraps must be cooked before being fed to the swine.
5. Young swine being returned home from shows or exhibits must be isolated for 90 days before being placed back among the breeding herd.
6. Should any suspicious signs show up in the herd, consult a veterinarian immediately. An early diagnosis might prevent the disease becoming so firmly implanted as to necessitate disposal of the entire herd.