

Vaccination Against HOG CHOLERA



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By Dr. W. C. Banks
Extension Veterinarian
Texas A. & M. College System

Hog cholera continues to take a heavy death toll of swine in Texas. Authorities say that in some years as high as fifty percent of all swine death losses have been caused by cholera.

There is no good excuse for this high annual loss of swine. Several methods of vaccination are highly successful, and if all swine raisers took advantage of these methods of protection, hog cholera could probably be eradicated. But many owners neglect to have their pigs protected or fail to get the vaccination job done properly, by a veterinarian. These are the main reasons cholera keeps on killing so many hogs.

METHODS OF VACCINATION

1. Serum and virus method (Simultaneous method)

The first and most widely used method is to employ the live virus of hog cholera and a hog cholera anti-serum and inject both the virus and the serum at the same time. This is known as the "simultaneous" method.

The serum and virus method has several advantages and disadvantages. One advantage is it produces immunity in from seven to ten days after being administered to healthy pigs. The resulting immunity, in normal pigs, is usually strong enough to give lifetime protection. And, finally, the cost of this type of immunization for weanling pigs is moderate.

The main disadvantage of using the serum-virus method is that live virus is introduced on the premises. Mis-used, or carelessly used, it can cause cholera in unprotected pigs. The virus may stay in the hog lot, in an infective form, until another lot of susceptible pigs is brought in. For this reason, once vaccination is done with serum and virus, it is wise to repeat the vaccination year after year on all pigs raised.

Also if these injections are given a pig with some other disease or a pig harboring many parasites, death may result. Or the ani-

mal does not obtain good immunity, and the owner experiences a false security.

2. The killed vaccine method

The advantages of this method of vaccination are based on the fact that the virus has been killed, and it will not introduce hog cholera on clean premises nor infect susceptible pigs. In addition, this vaccine can be used on ailing and unthrifty pigs without risk of adding one disease to another. The cost is the same, regardless of the size of the pig.

There are a few disadvantages or inconveniences with this method of vaccination. One disadvantage is that it takes about three weeks to develop immunity, so the vaccination is not as effective if pigs are exposed to hog cholera in less than three weeks. Also, pigs do not develop a lifetime immunity from this vaccine. For this reason, pigs to be kept for breeding stock have to be given several injections. One injection, given about two weeks after weaning, will protect these pigs until they are fattened for market. However, breeding animals should be reinjected about six months following the original vaccination and then should be revaccinated each year.

The question of which type of vaccination an owner should use sometimes depends upon the individual herd. However, on the basis of available information about hogs and hog raising in Texas, it is felt that the use of the dead vaccines is better suited for the majority of hog owners. It will also eventually lower the incidence of hog cholera.

A final word of caution regarding the use of the "simultaneous" vaccination is indicated. It has been the experience of many veterinarians to find that a number of cholera outbreaks is due to faulty vaccination or to vaccination of heavily parasitized animals. In a typical case-history it is found that an owner will vaccinate against cholera and, to his dismay, his pigs shortly begin to sicken and die of the very disease he was attempting to prevent. Most of these vaccination "breaks" can be prevented by employing a veterinarian to do the job. He is trained to examine the pigs and best decide or determine the proper procedure to safely immunize the herd.

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Vaccines

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