

# Why Deworm Your Show Pig?

Article by: *Merck Animal Health*

### **Worms make your pig look rough**

Parasite infections cause rough hair coat and rob pigs of their "glow"

### **Worms decrease weight gain**

Your pig may not make its weight class for the show

### **Worms rob feed from your pig**

Your feed cost will increase

### **Worms can be embarrassing**

Sometimes large roundworms can exit the rear end of a pig during a show

### **Worms can cause bloody diarrhea**

You will need to call a vet or, if left untreated, your pig could die

### **Worms can cause coughing**

You will not be able to treat verminous pneumonia with antibiotic injections

## **WHERE DO WORMS COME FROM?**

Worm eggs can survive in the environment for many years<sup>1</sup>. Eggs can be found in the dirt, on the pig's hair, in trucks and trailers, even on the bottom of your boots. Eggs can remain on concrete and wood even after power washing. There is no disinfectant that can kill worm eggs. Dirt lots and solid floored concrete pens can develop very high worm egg burdens over the years, especially if pigs are not treated regularly. Anywhere there have been pigs, there will be worm eggs.

## **I NEVER KNEW WORMS COULD CAUSE PNEUMONIA, TELL ME MORE!**

The larvae of the large roundworm (*Ascaris suum*) can cause a unique type of pneumonia called "verminous" pneumonia as they migrate through the pig's lungs, where they are coughed up and swallowed. The cough can be quite severe and is often mistaken for a bacterial pneumonia and treated with antibiotics. Antibiotics will not have any effect on verminous pneumonia and these pigs may die or become stunted.

## **WHICH WORM CAUSES BLOODY DIARRHEA?**

The whipworm (*Trichuris suis*) attacks the lining of the large intestine and causes ulceration which appears as a bloody diarrhea. In heavy infestations, loss of blood and electrolytes can be fatal to the pig. Often the diarrhea is misdiagnosed as Swine Dysentery and treated with antibiotics which have no effect on whipworms. If the pig recovers from a whipworm infection, its growth will be stunted.



## **HOW MUCH OF AN IMPACT WILL WORMS HAVE ON MY PIG'S GROWTH RATE?**

Heavy roundworm infections can decrease average daily gain by up to 9%<sup>2</sup>. This means that if you expect your pigs to gain 13 pounds a week, it will only gain 12 pounds a week. A loss of one pound per week may mean that your pigs will not hit its weight class.

## **HOW MUCH OF AN IMPACT WILL WORMS HAVE ON MY FEED BILL?**

Heavy roundworm infections can increase feed conversion by up to 15%<sup>3</sup>. Feed conversion is defined as the pounds of feed required for the pig to gain a pound of body weight. This means that if you expect to purchase 500 pounds of pig feed to grow up your pig, you will end up purchasing 575 pounds of feed. Assuming \$.50 per pound for feed, you will end up paying an extra \$37.50 per pig.



## Show solutions

### HOW DO I KNOW IF MY PIGS HAVE WORMS?

Most of the time the worms stay in the intestinal tract and are not visible. A notable exception to this is the large roundworm, which is an aggressive swimmer. If there is a large population of adult roundworms in the pig's intestine, they will spread out looking for more room. They can appear coming out of the pig's rear end or the pig can vomit them up. Since the large roundworm can grow to over twelve inches in length, they are hard to miss. One sign of a worm infection is that the pig will have poor muscle development and a rough hair coat. Wormy pigs don't win championships!

### HOW DO I PREVENT MY PIG FROM GETTING WORMS?

Since it is nearly impossible to remove the worm eggs from the environment, the pigs must be regularly treated with a dewormer, such as SAFE-GUARD® (fenbendazole). Show pigs are usually treated every month because they are continuously exposed to worm eggs from the environment. Purchasing a pig dewormer containing SAFE-GUARD® (fenbendazole) is the most convenient and fool proof way to treat pigs. SAFE-GUARD® does not have a bitter taste and pigs readily consume it.

### CAN'T I JUST USE SAFE-GUARD® PASTE OR LIQUID FORMULATED FOR CATTLE OR HORSES?

No, because the dose of fenbendazole per body weight is very different for pigs than for cows and horses. Unlike cows and horses, which can be dewormed with one-day treatment, pigs need to be treated over a time period ranging from 3 to 12 days. For this reason, it is much more effective to treat pigs by using a product specially formulated for swine with the correct levels of fenbendazole already included. Following the label directions will ensure that you properly dose your pigs.

#### References:

1 Diseases of Swine 10th edition page 910

<sup>2</sup>Hale et al Journal of Animal Science, Vol 60, No 1, page 222

<sup>3</sup>Hale et al Journal of Animal Science, Vol 60, No 1, page 222

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RESIDUE WARNING: Swine intended for human consumption must not be slaughtered within 2 days of the last treatment.

Consult your veterinarian for assistance in the diagnosis, treatment and control of parasitism

