

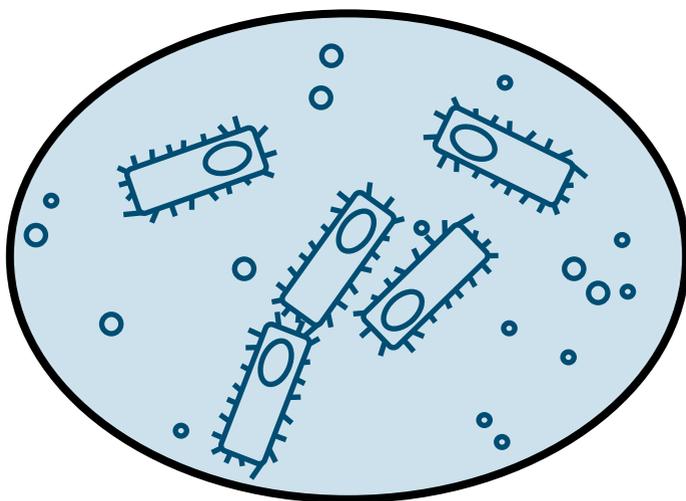
ISSUE #12



JANUARY 2017

# SWINE QUARTERLY

THE PIG ISSUE



## *INFECTIOUS DISEASES SPECIAL EDITION*

*Featuring:*

*Swine 'flu*

*Erysipelas*

*Salt Poisoning*

## EDITOR'S NOTE

**Surely it can't be the 12th issue already?**

How time flies when you're having fun. This quarter we've got a bit of an insight into some interesting diseases of pigs. These are all important and relevant in their own way—particularly because of the opportunities for prevention.

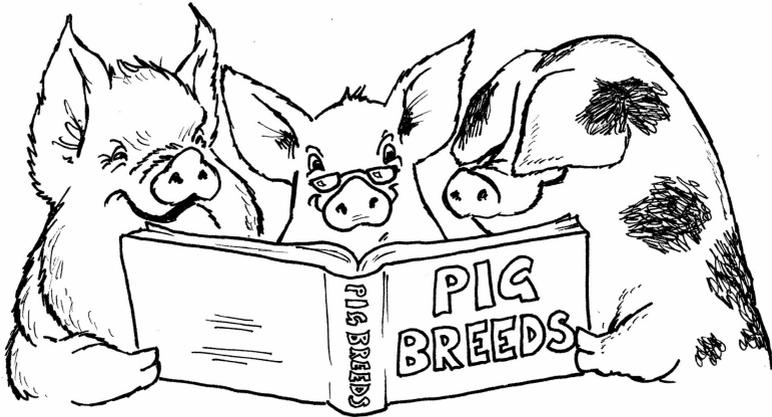
There is also news. This will be the last regular 'Swine Quarterly' publication for the time being. Do not weep—the mailing list will still exist as a way of keeping you all informed of important outbreaks or pig-related info, and we will still plan to hold pig meetings as



often as possible. You will of course also be invited to any Synergy Smallholder events which have relevance to the porcine world (see p.7). Folk have told me that it is still useful to have a network of pig enthusiasts, so that will very much be maintained, and I am always available for such contact.

**Soldier on!**

**Peter Siviter**



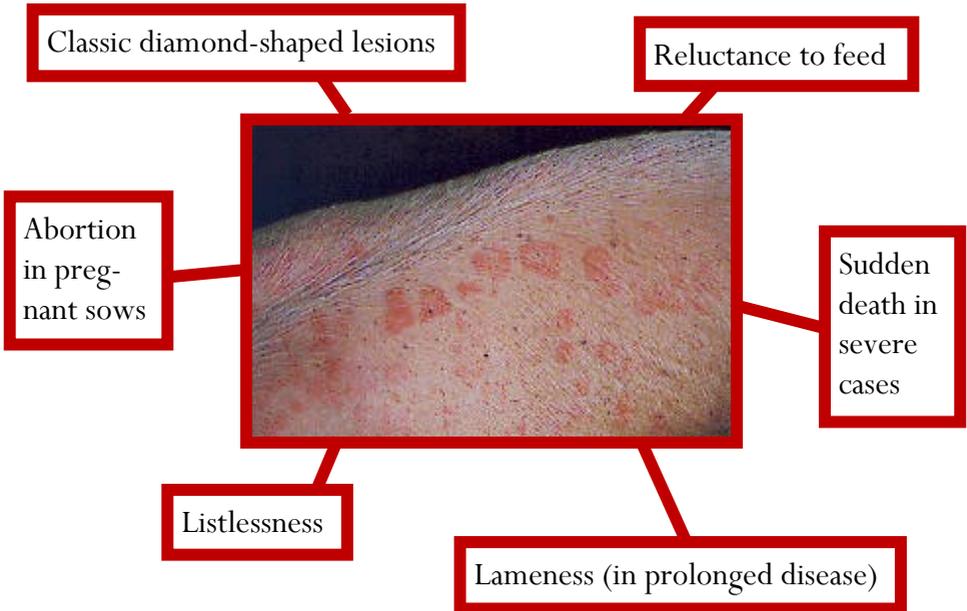
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# ERYSIPELAS

To anyone who has received a veterinary education, erysipelas is the classic infectious disease of pigs—because of its characteristic and memorable appearance in acute cases; diamond-shaped skin lesions. The causative organism is *Erysipelothrix rhusiopathiae*, a bacteria which commonly colonises the tonsils of healthy pigs and can exist in the ground, as well as in the bodies of a number of other animals. The disease has a number of different forms when triggered, the most insidious being the gradual vascular deposit of bacteria in the joints and heart valves, which causes long-term disease. The more common form is associated with a high fever and characteristic raised and reddened lumps on the skin as shown. Vaccines are available for erysipelas, and due to the ubiquitous nature of the organism all pigs are potentially at risk from it.

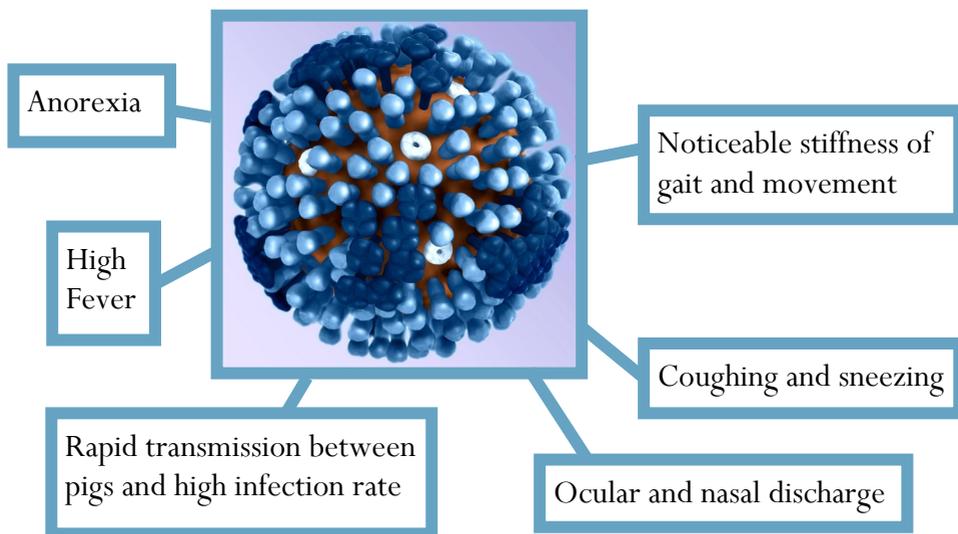


# INFLUENZA

Influenza, or ‘flu, is a household term. Increasingly, we are becoming used to phrases such as ‘avian ‘flu’ and ‘swine ‘flu’ as well. In truth there are thousands of variations of influenza virus, all with subtly different preferences for species and abilities to cause disease. The basic ‘flu virus is very adaptable, can infect almost any mammal, sometimes crossing species barriers, and, crucially, some become *highly pathogenic strains* through random genetic mutations. This means that they have a considerably increased ability to spread between individuals and cause more serious disease.

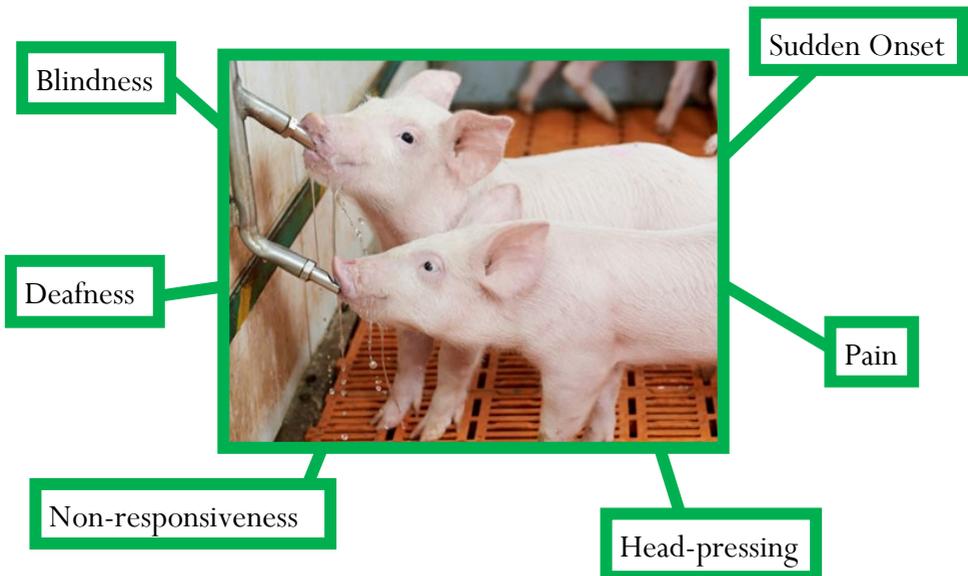
Influenza is rarely fatal in healthy pigs, but just like us the effects can be very serious in elderly or compromised patients, especially if the environmental conditions predispose to respiratory disease.

Commercial pig farmers are advised to have annual ‘flu jabs to protect themselves and their livestock—this is worth considering!



# SALT-POISONING

Although not a true infectious disease, salt poisoning can occur in outbreaks which resemble the transmission of bacteria or viruses. The name salt-poisoning is misleading, as this condition is rarely associated with a toxic ingestion of salt. It is more commonly caused by a **prolonged absence of water** (which induces a *relative* imbalance of internal electrolytes), and is then seriously exacerbated if the water is suddenly reintroduced in large quantities. This rapid rehydration causes cerebral oedema (fluid accumulating around the brain) and can be deadly. The best way of preventing salt poisoning is to ensure there is a *constant* available water source to all pigs. If, for some reason, the water is cut off for more than a few hours then the supply must be reintroduced *very gradually* so that the animals cannot gorge themselves with fatal consequences.



# OVER TO YOU

## FUTURE MEETINGS

We've got a few ideas up our sleeves for future pig meetings, but are always open to new suggestions! If you have any ideas for farm walks, pub meetings or workshops then please get in touch with the editor and we'll set the wheels in motion. Assuming there is enough interest, we will continue these meetings even in the absence of regular newsletters.

## SYNERGY SMALLHOLDERS

For those who are not already members of Synergy Farm Health's Smallholder Group, you may be interested in investing for a modest fee (£100 per annum + VAT) which will include the quarterly smallholder magazine along with 2-4 farm meetings per year, an exclusive veterinary health plan which can cover all aspects of husbandry and disease, as well as access to other veterinary services. For more information, please call the practice on 01935 83682.



*Meetings are available to non-members for a small fee.*

## SPREAD THE WORD!

If you know any fellow pig enthusiasts who may be interested in meetings or information from us at Synergy Farm Health, please don't hesitate to put them in touch.



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