

Understanding Common Health Issues in Pigs

Understanding Common Health Issues in Pigs
Designed as quick-reference notes for students, veterinarians, and swine producers.

1. Overview

Category	Typical Age Affected	Primary Concern	Key Management Goal
Respiratory	Neonates ? Grow? out	Reduced growth, mortality	Air quality, vaccination
Digestive	Neonates & growers	Diarrhea, poor feed conversion	Hygiene, diet balance
Reproductive	Breeding sows	Low litter size, stillbirths	Nutrition, biosecurity
Skin & Appendages	All ages	Lesions, lameness	Clean environment, parasite control
Systemic/Metabolic	All ages (stress? sensitive)	Sudden death, weakness	Balanced ration, stress reduction

2. Respiratory Diseases

Disease	Etiology	Clinical Signs	Diagnosis	Prevention / Control
Porcine Respiratory Disease Complex (PRDC)	Mixed viral (PRRSV, Swine Influenza, PCV2) + bacterial (M. hyopneumoniae, Actinobacillus)	Cough, dyspnea, fever, poor weight gain	PCR/RT-PCR on nasal swabs, lung lesions at necropsy	All-in-all vaccination, herd segregation, ventilation
Mycoplasma hyopneumoniae (Enzootic Pneumonia)	Mycoplasma spp.	Dry cough, moist snouts, “dry” lungs	Serology, PCR, ELISA	Sow vaccination, piglet “back? boost” vaccination, all-in-all

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Disease	Etiology	Clinical Signs	Diagnosis	Prevention / Control
Swine Influenza (H1N1, H3N2, etc.)	Orthomyxovirus	Sudden fever, lethargy, coughing, nasal discharge	RT-PCR, virus isolation	Stamping out of outbreaks, biosecurity, annual vaccine update
Porcine Reproductive & Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS)	Arterivirus	Fever, respiratory distress, reproductive failure	qPCR on serum, serology	Live attenuated or killed vaccine, herd closure, gilt acclimation

Key Management Points

1. **Ventilation** – Aim for 0.5 air changes per hour; maintain NH₃ < 25 ppm, CO₂ < 2000 ppm.
2. **All in? All out** – Reduces pathogen carryover between batches.
3. **Stress Reduction** – Minimize mixing, overcrowding, and abrupt temperature changes.

3. Digestive Disorders

Condition	Primary Cause	Typical Age	Signs	Diagnostic Tools	Control Measures
Neonatal Diarrhea (Scours)	<i>E. coli</i> (F4/F18), Coccidia, Rotavirus,	1–7 days	Watery diarrhea, dehydration, lethargy	Fecal culture, PCR panels	Colostrum intake > 200 ml, hygiene, zinc oxide (125 ppm) or copper sulfate, vaccinate sows against ETEC
	<i>Clostridium perfringens</i>				
Post-Weaning Diarrhea	<i>E. coli</i> , <i>Salmonella</i> , <i>Lawsonia intracellularis</i>	3–8 weeks	Loose stool, reduced feed intake	Fecal PCR, culture, serology	Gradual weaning, diet transition, acid