

The change of season from summer to autumn, heralded by the changing colour of the leaves, shortening daylight hours and progressively cooler temperatures, can trigger specific issues for pig herds. For the breeding herd, the most frequently discussed issue is that of seasonal/autumn infertility, whereas for the growing herd there may be an increase in ill health associated with day/night temperature fluctuations e.g. *Streptococcus suis*.

AUTUMN INFERTILITY

Occurring in late summer/early autumn, typically from mid-September through until the end of October, autumn infertility can follow close behind reproductive issues caused by periods of hot weather from late June to August.

Causative factors associated with seasonal infertility

- Decreasing daylight length which is particularly rapid during the autumn months
- Wider fluctuations in environmental temperature between daytime and night-time
- A throw-back to the wild pig which did not breed at a time that would result in farrowing a litter in winter

Presentation

- Commonly gilts and younger sows
- Delayed onset of oestrus
- Failure to cycle
- Increase in returns – often regular, three week returns
- Late pregnancy losses are reported
- Outdoor herds may be more vulnerable
- Some herds experience issues year on year
- A poor summer may cause issues earlier than mid-September

Solutions

- Exposing sows and gilts to 14-16 hours of artificial light to counteract shortening day length from mid-August – only possible for indoor herds
- Modestly increasing sow and gilt feed intake to improve plane of nutrition
- Increasing boar contact both before and after service to provide better oestrus stimulus and encourage maintenance of pregnancy

STREPTOCOCCAL MENINGITIS

This disease affects mainly weaners and growers but can be found in other age groups in the feeding herd and pre-weaning. It is caused by *Streptococcus suis*, of which there are many serotypes. Type 2 is a frequently identified serotype.

Clinical signs

- Nervous signs – incoordination, tremor, paralysis, paddling
- Arthritis
- Fever
- Pneumonia
- Sudden death

Trigger factors

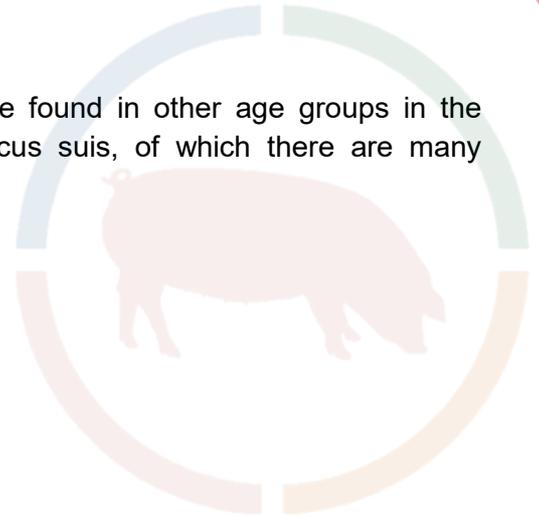
- Mixing infected and uninfected pigs
- Overcrowding
- Poor ventilation
- Large environmental temperature fluctuations

Treatment and control

- Ideally antibiotic treatment should be selected based on a sensitivity test; however, cases commonly respond to penicillin.
- Affected individuals should be treated and provided with feed and water which they may have difficulty accessing
- Treatment should include anti-inflammatories
- Address husbandry issues
 - ⇒ Reduce overcrowding
 - ⇒ Avoid mixing sources of pigs
 - ⇒ Address poor ventilation
 - ⇒ Improve insulation to reduce effect of environmental temperature fluctuation

Diagnosis

- Clinical signs
- Samples from post-mortem examination taken for bacteriology



References:

<https://www.nadis.org.uk/disease-a-z/pigs/seasonal-infertility>

"Pig Diseases" D.J.Taylor Ninth edition

T: 01666 823355

E: pigteam@georgevetgroup.co.uk