



Mange



The key parasite to worry about in mange cases is the Sarcoptic mange mite – *Sarcoptes scabiei var suis*.

These mites are very small and barely visible to the naked eye on a dark background. Mites can be found in skin scrapings taken from affected areas of the body and in ear wax and crust samples when viewed under a microscope.

Mites burrow into the surface of the skin, which causes the initial itching, and they require the pig as a host to survive. Adult pigs become chronically infected and then piglets acquire mites when suckling.

Infestation is passed from pig to pig via skin to skin contact.

Environmental contamination can occur, but mites survive poorly off their host; often they survive for less than 3 days in the environment unless it is cool and damp when their survivability is better. Pigs can acquire mites if moved into an environment previously housing infected animals when little time has elapsed and the accommodation has not been properly cleaned and disinfected. Some texts also advocate use of insecticide sprays or fumigation particularly if a herd is attempting to eradicate a mange problem.

Mange infection presents in two forms:- acute and chronic

Acute	Chronic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ear/head shaking – often resulting in aural haematomas • Skin rubbing/itching – leading to skin damage and bleeding, and sometimes secondary skin infections • Red, raised pimples due to a hypersensitivity reaction to mite proteins. Often seen 3-8 days post infection • Often a presentation in younger, growing pigs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thickened and crusty lesions in ears, on neck, hocks and elbows • Excess ear wax • Most common in adult animals

Infections can affect feed intakes and therefore piglet weaning weights as well as growing herd growth rates and feed conversion rates. An infection left untreated should be considered a welfare issue due to the intense irritation and damage that occurs as a result.

Intense itching



Crusty skin lesions



Treatment and Control

Affected animals should be treated using an avermectin product. Treatment can be delivered in feed however this often involves medicating large volume of pig feed which is impractical for many smaller scale producers. For this reason, treatment is commonly delivered by injection.

Injectable treatments should be given as two doses 10-15 days apart following the dosing instructions of the product used. Sows can be treated prior to each farrowing, piglets at the point of weaning and boars every three months.

Mange eradication can be achieved but this should be discussed with your veterinary surgeon and planned thoroughly before being embarked upon.

Herds can be maintained as mange free by observing strict biosecurity when bringing in new animals either by purchasing mange free animals or isolating and treating all incoming stock prior to introduction to the herd.

Lice

The sucking louse, *Haematopinus suis*, is responsible for louse infestations in UK pig herds.

Adult lice are visible with the naked eye on the skin surface of infected pigs and eggs are particularly easily seen attached to black hairs. Louse infestations cause skin irritation and excess itching so can be confused with mange infections. Heavy infestations in young pigs can cause anaemia.

Lice can be found all over the body surface but can focus in skin folds around the neck, jowl and flank as well as the inside surfaces of the legs and ears.

Lice are host-specific to the pig and survive very poorly away from this host; therefore transmission of infection is most frequently by skin to skin contact with an infected pig.

Treatment programmes involve the same, avermectin, products as for managing mange mites and are most successful when two treatments are given 10 days apart.

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