



A Guide to Health Problems of PIGS

Pigs like KuneKunes make wonderful pets on a lifestyle block but do need routine health care to keep them in good condition.

PIG HEALTH PROBLEMS

Here are some of the most common health problems we encounter in pigs:

LEPTOSPIROSIS

Lepto is the world's most wide spread zoonotic disease caused by bacteria called Leptospire. This means it can pass from animals to people and cause flu-like symptoms, liver and kidney damage and in severe cases intensive care is required. Death in humans and animals may occur.

Leptospire are shed in the urine of affected animals which often show no clinical signs of disease. Humans are infected through contact with diseased urine from cattle, pigs, deer and

sheep as well as rats, mice and hedgehogs, so protective clothing should be worn when handling stock and materials that could have been exposed to rodents.

Vaccination of pigs is important to prevent the spread of Leptospirosis. Contact Levin and Horowhenua Vets for more information and to organise vaccination for your stock.

ERYSIPELAS

Erysipelas is an infectious disease caused by the bacterium *Erysipelothrix rhusiopathiae* and is characterized clinically by sudden death, fever, arthritis, and skin lesions.

Treatment involves antibiotics and supportive care. Prevention is best achieved by regular vaccination. There is a combined Leptospirosis and Erysipelas vaccine available. *Contact the vet clinic to organise vaccination of your stock.*

Good sanitation, efficient disposal of faeces, and regular disinfection of pens is also important in the prevention of erysipelas.



Pig with the characteristic diamond shaped lesions of Erysipelas

GASTROINTESTINAL PARASITES



There are four main types of worms in pigs – intestinal roundworms, stomach worms, lungworms, and kidney worms. The most

common one that causes a problem is intestinal roundworms in young pigs.

Ivomec or Dectomax injection or oral wormers can be used to treat worms. A suggested worming program is to treat all piglets for worms routinely at weaning, treat one month later, then again three months later. Adults are ideally treated

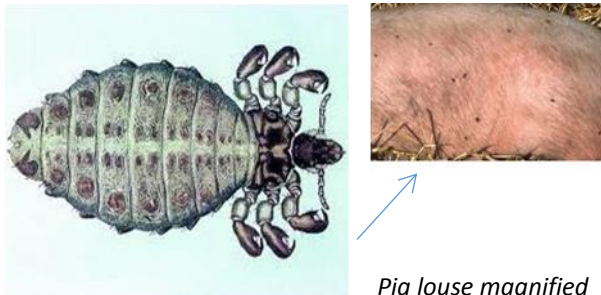
twice a year, with sows treated pre-mating and pre-farrowing. Vet visits for worming and vaccination can be arranged.

LICE

These can be picked up from other pigs such as at shows or from new pigs introduced onto the property. Lice are host specific, so pigs will only get pig lice breeding on them; the lice don't breed on other species.

Pig lice are rather large and brown and move around when disturbed. They lay their eggs on the hair on the sides of the lower neck and at the back of the legs – the eggs look like cream spots stuck to the hair.

Treatment involves using a topical insecticide such as louse powder or a systemic treatment such as an Ivomec or Dectomax injection.



Pig louse magnified

Applying oil to the skin and coat of the pig can also help kill off the lice.

The treatment will need to be repeated at least once three weeks later to kill any further lice that may have hatched from the eggs. Contact your vet for an appropriate product.

MANGE

Mange in pigs is caused by the mite *Sarcoptes scabiei*. It is intensely itchy and affected pigs often rub themselves on fences and troughs until the skin starts bleeding



Sarcoptes scabiei mite - magnified

Occurring mainly in summer, mange usually looks like crusty reddened areas especially around the head and legs.

In young pigs it can be very severe, as they don't have much immunity to it. They can develop dry crusty areas all over their body as well as general symptoms of poor growth rate and ill-thrift.

Treatment is a topical insecticidal wash or Ivomec or Dectomax injection. Contact your vet for the appropriate treatment.

STOMACH ULCERS

Pigs that are fed predominantly meal feeds can develop stomach ulcers. These ulcers can start bleeding and make the pig anaemic.

Signs you might notice are pale gums, weakness and lethargy, inappetance, weight loss, diarrhoea or black faeces.

Avoid this problem with a good varied diet.

Please contact the vet for appropriate treatment.

NOSE RINGING

Occasionally pigs start digging up the paddock or backyard looking for roots and other edible materials.

To discourage this behaviour nose rings can be inserted into the pig's nose. However, as this is a painful procedure, the appropriate pain relief needs to be given. Procedures like this should be performed by a vet only.

Levin and Horowhenua Vets offer farm visits for assessment and treatment of sick animals, farrowing assistance and routine visits for drenching, treating and trimming feet and vaccinating your livestock.

