

Monitoring Animal Health

Pigs

Highlights Report, First half of 2018

Trends in monitoring pig health

In the first half of 2018, GD Animal Health received slightly more submissions of pigs for pathological examination than in the second half of 2017. The number of questions put to the 'Veekijker' is increasing. In the first half of 2018, most of the questions about specific diseases concerned PRRS and *E. coli*. There were few questions about PED, although the PED epidemic in the Netherlands is definitely not over. In contrast, there were a lot of questions about *Brachyspira* in this period. Most questions about health problems concerned increased mortality. In addition, there were plenty of questions about lameness and also

about diarrhoea and skin disorders. In the Online Monitor veterinarians reported the absence of disorders in 60 percent of their farm visits. When disorders were reported at a farm, two thirds of the cases were attributed to an infectious disease. By far the most commonly identified pathogen among pigs is *Streptococcus*. In addition, many health problems were attributed to influenza. In Eastern Europe, especially in the Baltic states, almost 3,200 outbreaks of African swine fever were reported in the first half of 2018. That is almost as many as in the whole of 2017.

Swine pox in newborn piglets

In the first half of 2018, the Veekijker was made aware of three cases of piglets that suffered a typical skin disorder at birth. This related to either one or a few litters, and the mortality in the litters affected was clearly raised versus litters without the disorder. Given the symptoms, these were most likely cases of congenital swine pox. The swine pox virus is fairly common and basically never causes any problems. The congenital form in which the infection apparently already arises in the uterus of the sow is described in the literature, but it is not clear which circumstances cause the infection to manifest in this way. Histological examination of the skin lesions can provide clarity as to whether it is a case of swine pox. Such examinations were not carried out in the cases described.



Short news

- African swine fever is spreading further throughout Europe, but also in China. The key vector for infection appears to be through pork products. Infection through wild boars is very slow, but products infected with the virus can be transported quickly over large distances. If those products then find their way to pigs in the form of domestic waste or offal, there is a real risk of outbreaks at a large distance to the source of infection.

This Pig Monitor newsletter provides a summary of a number of important and striking matters from the first half of 2018. The basic pig health monitoring is financed by the pig industry, the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality and contributions from farmers. In this edition, topics include congenital swine pox and streptococcal infections.

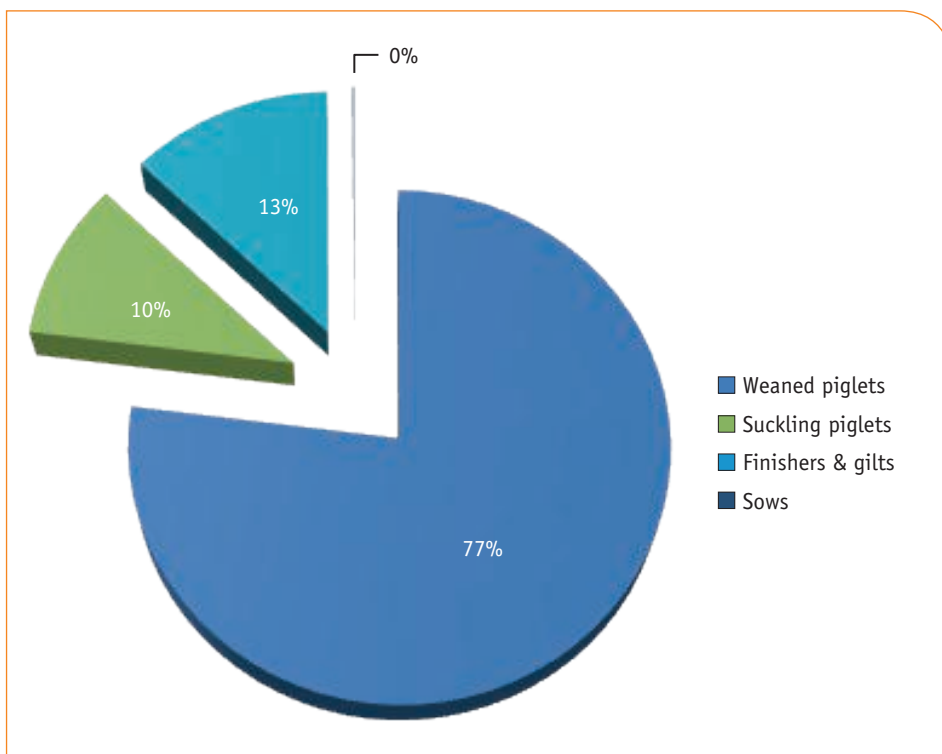


Online Monitor: streptococcal infections

In the Online Monitor, streptococci are at the top of the list of infectious causes of health problems, especially in weaned piglets (see the figure). But in suckling piglets too, streptococcal infections are most often reported as the likely cause of a health problem found. The symptoms reported for streptococcal infections differ per age category: locomotion problems (joint inflammation), especially in suckling piglets, and brain symptoms, especially in weaned piglets.

The submissions for pathological examination enable a fair comparison with the picture painted by the Online Monitor, with the proviso that lameness due to joint inflammation is reported relatively more often as diagnosis in the Online Monitor than it is determined by pathological examination. At around 5 percent, the percentage of questions about streptococci posed to the Veekijker by phone is not as high as might be expected based on the information from the Online Monitor and the submissions for pathological examination.

Furthermore, this percentage appears to be declining gradually. *Streptococcus suis* continues to be a major health problem, but there seems to be less reason to seek advice by phone about the action to be taken.



Distribution across the age categories of the probability diagnosis 'streptococcal infection', as reported by veterinarians in the Online Monitor (1st half of 2018)

Disease symptoms related to streptococcal infections as reported by the pathology department of GD Animal Health and in the Online Monitor

Health problem:	Pathology	Online Monitor
Respiration (pneumonia, endocarditis)	17%	15%
Locomotion (especially joint inflammation)	6%	32%
Nervous system (especially meningitis)	41%	39%
General symptoms (incl. septicaemia)	36%	14%

