



Trends in the monitor: Online Monitor results

As part of the Online Monitor, every month pig veterinarians report whether there are any health issues at 3,100 farms on average. These are about 600 farms with sows and piglets, 2,100 with finishers (or rearing pigs) and 400 with sows, piglets and finishers/rearing pigs. Since 2018, about 200 different veterinarians from 90 different practices have reported each month. The number of reports remains fairly

stable over time. Health issues were reported at approximately 35 percent of the farms visited. Most of the health issues relate to weaned piglets (51%) and only 14% of the reports relate to sows. Most frequently reported are gastrointestinal issues in suckling piglets, respiratory issues and problems with the nervous system in weaned piglets, respiratory issues in finishers and fertility issues in sows.



Increased losses

In the Online Monitor, relatively few health issues are reported in sows, i.e. in 14 percent of the visits to sow farms. Frequently mentioned causes of health issues in sows are influenza, PRRS, staphylococci or Brachyspira and zootechnical aspects such as nutrition, housing or breeding management. In the summer, increased losses among sows were reported significantly more frequently: in 2018 and in early 2019, increased losses were reported as a health issue at about 0.5 percent of the sow farms every month, but in the summer of 2019 this increased to almost two percent. In September, this had returned to about 0.5 percent again. Veterinarians often report non-infectious causes and risk factors such as nutrition, climate and cardiac death in case of losses among sows. It seems obvious to point to the exceptionally hot summer of 2019 as the cause or one of the causes. However, in 2018 we also had a very hot summer but no notable increase in the

number of reports of increased losses among finishers or sows. There is no clear trend in

the percentage of reports of increased losses as a health issue among piglets and finishers.

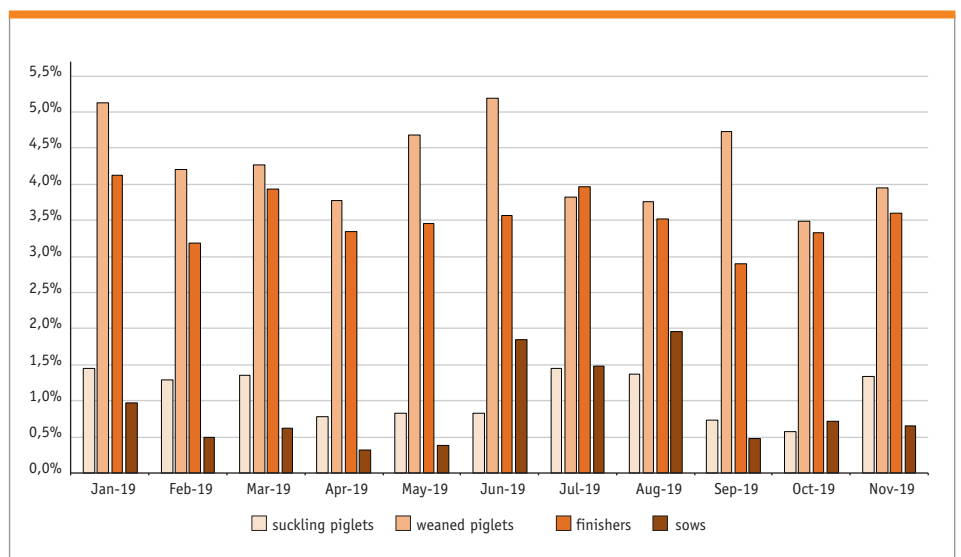


Figure. Losses reported as a health issue in different age groups (suckling pigs, weaned piglets, finishers, sows) as a percentage of the total number of reports in the respective age group.

Abnormal findings

Sudden death among sows

Last spring, thirty gestating sows of the 1,600 sows present at a sow farm died within a short period. Pathological examination of two deceased sows showed that both sows had an enlarged, swollen spleen and there was a strong indication of sepsis. Examination of a further five animals showed purulent inflammation of the sinuses and brain associated with a *Streptococcus equi* ssp. *zooeidemicus* (*Str.*

zooeidemicus) infection. A comparable case was reported in early 2019 and a third case came to light in the autumn of 2019. Last summer, very similar clinical signs were reported in Canada. In an article about this, the authors state that *Str. zoeeidemicus* is generally considered a commensal and opportunistic pathogen in humans, horses, dogs and pigs. However, the bacteria can also cause serious clinical signs characterised by

pneumonia, sepsis and meningitis. In April 2019, an outbreak of sudden death and abortion occurred at four sow farms in the province of Manitoba. Within a short period, the sows got a fever, became listless and died without any other specific clinical symptoms. Pathological examination of several animals showed purulent rhinitis, pulmonary oedema, gall bladder oedema and haemorrhagic lymph nodes especially in the upper respiratory tract.

The necropsy indicated sepsis. No known pathogens were found. Microscopic examination showed Gram-positive bacteria (cocci) in heart tissue and lymph nodes. Sequence analysis made it clear that all Canadian isolates were similar to previously described virulent *Str. zooepidemicus* strains from China and to a virulent strain from a

horse with strangles in the United Kingdom. All isolates from pigs were of sequence type ST-194 with specific virulence factors. The findings suggest the rise of *Str. zooepidemicus* ST-194 as a cause of death among pigs in North America. Further investigation of the *Str. zooepidemicus* found in the Netherlands showed that the strain found deviates from

the commensal strains usually found. Further analysis and comparison with the strain from Canada have yet to take place. It is clear that *Streptococcus zooepidemicus* can cause serious clinical symptoms in pigs, horses and dogs. In case of losses among sows, this bacteria should be considered as a possible cause.

Animal health of pigs in the Netherlands

DISEASE/DISORDER/ HEALTH CHARACTERISTIC	SITUATION IN THE NETHERLANDS/EUROPE
Article 15 diseases (compulsory notification and eradication)	
Foot and mouth disease (FMD)	The Netherlands has been disease-free since 2001. No outbreaks in Europe in the 3 rd quarter of 2019, but an outbreak in Turkey.
Classical Swine Fever (CSF)	The Netherlands has been disease-free since 1997. No outbreaks in Europe in the 3 rd quarter of 2019.
African Swine Fever (ASF)	The Netherlands has been disease-free since 1986. Outbreaks in the Baltic States, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Russia and Belgium in the 3 rd quarter of 2019.
Swine Vesicular Disease (SVD)	The Netherlands has been disease-free since 1994. No outbreaks in Europe in the 3 rd quarter of 2019.
Brucellosis	The Netherlands has been disease-free since 1969. No outbreaks in Europe in the 3 rd quarter of 2019.
Aujeszky's disease	The Netherlands has been disease-free since 2007 (vaccination is prohibited). Outbreak reported among wild boar in Finland in the 3 rd quarter of 2019.
Article 100 diseases (compulsory notification)	
Salmonellosis	In the 3 rd quarter, the Veekijker received quite a few questions.
From the monitor: trends and abnormalities	
PRRS	Pathogen about which the most questions were received. About diagnostics for instance, and about the risks of recombination between field and vaccine strains.
Lawsonia	The Veekijker received many questions, often found during pathological examination and often reported in the Online Monitor.
Lameness	The Veekijker received numerous questions, especially about metabolic disorders such as osteochondrosis in finishers and rearing gilts.
Losses too high	Many questions and many reports in Online Monitor. Relatively many reports of losses among sows from June to August, perhaps in part due to the hot summer.



Animal health monitoring

Since 2002, Royal GD has been responsible for animal health monitoring in the Netherlands, in close collaboration with the veterinary sectors, the business community, the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, vets and farmers. The information used for the surveillance programme is gathered in various ways, whereby the initiative comes in part from vets and farmers, and partly from GD Animal Health. This information is fully interpreted to achieve the objectives of the surveillance programme – rapid identification of health problems on the one hand and monitoring trends and developments on the other. Together, we team up for animal health, in the interests of animals, their owners and society at large.