

March 6, 2020

Swine Health Ontario Health Update

PRRS – Recently several herds, clustered within Huron County, have been infected by a pathogenic strain of porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome (PRRS). The restriction fragment length polymorphism (RFLP) cut pattern of this strain is 1-30-1. Two of these sites are finishing sites, where pigs were affected in the mid to late finisher. Clinical signs include cough, respiratory distress, lack of appetite, fever and high mortality. Control measures including vaccination and depopulation-cleanup-repopulation are being developed for these sites. The third site is a farrow-to-finish site, where the virus has resulted in severe reproductive issues and young pig disease syndrome, with high rate of abortion in pregnant sows, and high pre-weaning mortality. This site is developing a control program using standard load-close-immunize procedures. Producers are encouraged to review PRRS biosecurity measures with their veterinarians, and notify them of abnormal clinical signs, including reproductive signs or respiratory disease in pigs.

PED – During the time period from December 2019 and March 6, 2020, 11 new sites of porcine epidemic diarrhea (PED) have been confirmed in grow/finishing and sow barns in Ontario; similarly, between December 2018 and March 2019, there were nine sites confirmed in finisher, farrow-to-wean and farrow-to-finish barns in the province. It is important to note that this spike in PED sites is attributed to seasonal effects. Swine Health Ontario has had the opportunity to collaborate with Dr. Greg Wideman is one of the veterinarians associated with some of the PED-positive barns, to provide industry with an update on the current situation.

Clinical Signs

Dr. Wideman explained that “one aspect of the recent cases that should be highlighted is that **PED can cause very mild clinical signs in finisher pigs. Expect abnormal prevalence of diarrhea, but only for a few days, and do not expect any increase in mortality.**” He stressed that producers should contact their veterinarians immediately if there is any new abnormal diarrhea present in a finishing barn, even if it is mild so that further testing can be conducted.

Containment strategy

There are some key facets of the PED containment strategy that Dr. Wideman puts in place:

1. Ensure there is open communication with the processor and transporter in order to develop an orderly marketing plan if the market hogs that are shedding PED virus need to be shipped.
2. If the barn can be emptied following the PED break, he suggests following highest standard wash/inspect/disinfect procedures for the barn. Dr. Wideman noted that “in wintertime heating the barn to 30+ degrees Celsius, with a supplementary heat source, is very helpful.” In addition, whitewashing, the process of liming the facility, can be beneficial to ensuring that the barn is fully disinfected. Producers are encouraged to contact their veterinarians to develop a site-specific plan, as no two sites are identical.

3. If the barn cannot be emptied, reload the site with feeder pigs, recognizing that the pigs will become infected and show clinical signs. Dr. Wideman stresses that it is “important that the site be ‘locked down,’ in other words all external contact with the farm must be handled with high caution, including all service people, feed delivery, deadstock pickup and pig transport, until the pigs are ready for market in three to four months.” Prior to marketing, pigs should be tested for PED and results communicated to the processor and transporter.

What is causing the spread

The Ontario Animal Health Swine Network (OAHN) reported that most of these new sites have a common connection to an assembly point and a common truck wash station. To reduce the risk of spread, special care needs to be taken to ensure thorough washing, inspection to verify the complete removal of organic material, disinfection and lastly a complete dry is required. He says that “wash bay staff must be notified, if possible, so that they can take due caution to also wash and disinfect the washing and drying bays appropriately after handling a high-risk trailer.” Additionally, the power unit and driver’s kit (clothing, boots and paddles) are contaminated, and need to be cleaned and disinfected.

What can you do

Biosecurity is crucial to reducing the spread of disease. This is a good opportunity for producers to review transport biosecurity with their transport partners. Dr. Wideman describes five main things that producers and industry can do to reduce spread and chance of infection:

1. Review with your staff the importance of monitoring for clinical signs.
2. Ensure all trucks that touch farms are washed, disinfected and dried.
3. Minimize the need to pick up market hogs from multiple locations, whenever possible.
4. For on-farm transport and truck wash facilities, review your biosecurity protocols with your veterinarian as soon as possible in light of the increased PED presence in Ontario.
5. For transporters, review your truck wash standard operating procedures and PED prevention plans with your veterinarian.

Effective April 1, 2020, OMAFRA will no longer provide reporting of new sites of PED/PDCoV to Ontario Pork and Swine Health Ontario. PED/PDCoV remains a provincially notifiable disease where new cases must be reported to OMAFRA and the Ministry will continue monitoring the number of new sites. In order to maintain an accurate surveillance program in the province, please continue notifying SHO of changes in site status, for PED/PDCoV and all other diseases.

Biosecurity resources can be found online at:

<http://www.swinehealthontario.ca/Biosecurity>

<https://www.opic.on.ca/bio-security-resources>

<http://www.ontariopork.on.ca/Resources/Animal-care>

For more information, contact Swine Health Ontario at info@swinehealthontario.ca or call 519-767-4609 ext. 1401.