

ABSCESS

What is the condition?

Abscesses are localised pockets of pus, which are walled off from body tissues, containing dead cell material and bacteria. Abscesses that are visible externally can be an indicator of a larger internal infection.

How are they caused?

The formation of abscesses can be caused by a range of factors. This could include traumatic injuries such as fighting or tail biting, skin conditions (e.g. dermatitis) and poorly administered injections. Abscesses could also occur as a secondary infection following conditions such as pneumonia.



Source: MINTRAC

Carcass impacts

Abscesses found on the carcass can be trimmed off the carcass (along with its associated lymph node) provided that no other signs of disease or infection are found. Abscesses found in the lungs and liver may result in only the affected organ being condemned, if no other lesions are found. When an infection has spread through the bloodstream (a condition called pyaemia) and caused lesions to develop in multiple organs, the spine or in multiple muscles, the entire carcass will be condemned.

Treatment

If the abscess is small, keep the area and environment clean and monitor for changes. If the abscess is large, move the animal to a hospital pen and consult a veterinarian for treatment and care advice. When there is a high incidence of pigs with abscesses, identify the source of the problem. If no improvement is seen in severe cases within several days, euthanasia may need to be considered.

Prevention

Ensure good hygiene practices are followed during vaccinations and other injectable medication procedures. Change needles regularly, ensure pens and pigs are clean and dry, store medications according to vet recommendations, and use correct needle sizes for different classes of pigs.

Ensure pens are free from any sharp objects that could cause injury. Minimise fighting and tail biting behaviours to reduce injuries and subsequent potential for infections.