

ARTHRITIS

What is the condition?

Arthritis is inflammation of a joint. It is caused by trauma to the joint or through bacteria entering the joint via the bloodstream, resulting in inflammation of the joint tissue. This leads to a build-up of fluid, causing swelling, which can lead to lameness.

Disease on farm

Arthritis is somewhat common in suckling pigs, growing pigs and sows. In well-managed herds, very few piglets will require treatment for arthritis, but this could increase to 15% if there are problems with husbandry or hygiene practices.

How is it spread?

Arthritis that is caused by trauma cannot be spread between pigs, however arthritis that is caused by bacterial infections has the potential to be spread. These infections can enter the body via the respiratory tract. It is important to identify the agent causing the arthritis to enable treatment or prevention.

Carcass impacts

Where arthritis is noted in only one or a small number of joints, then only the affected limb will be trimmed off from above the affected joint. In severe cases where arthritis is noted throughout the body or is present with signs of other disease, the whole carcass is condemned.

Treatment

Treatments used can vary with the disease so consult your veterinarian to determine the causal agent and the best course of action.

Antibiotics may be used to treat the bacterial infection at the recommendation of a veterinarian, however once an infection has caused damage to the joint(s) this may be irreversible. Anti-inflammatory medication may be prescribed for pain relief and to improve recovery time.

Prevention

Determining the cause of the arthritis is key to managing the condition. If arthritis is linked to swine erysipelas, consider implementing a vaccination program within the breeding herd.

Where arthritis is linked to poor flooring or handling, implement management practices that prevent injury to pigs to reduce the likelihood of arthritis occurring following a bacterial infection.



Source: MINTRAC