

ILEITIS

What is the disease?

Ileitis is inflammation of the small intestine where the intestinal walls thicken and can form lesions, negatively impacting pig growth. It is also known as proliferative enteropathy and is usually caused by the bacterium *Lawsonia intracellularis*. The disease may present in three stages of acute, subclinical, and chronic. Symptoms of the disease range from reduced weight gain and diarrhoea, to weakness, depression, bloody or black diarrhoea and even sudden death in acute cases.

How common is it on-farm?

Ileitis is common, with *Lawsonia* likely to be present on over 90% of farms, but the incidence of disease varies.

How is it spread?

Ileitis is spread primarily through faecal shedding, is highly transmissible, and can be shed for up to 12 weeks after clinical signs have ceased.

Carcass impact

Intestines will be condemned. Ileitis can also cause the guts to become overfull. This can be a problem at slaughter as it may lead to carcasses becoming contaminated if the intestine is punctured during the removal process. This can then lead to the carcass being condemned.

Treatment

Veterinary consultation is recommended. Antibacterial therapies have been found to be effective in the treatment of the disease.

Prevention

A prevention plan should be developed in consultation with your veterinarian. Vaccination and medications (antibacterials are recommended). Apart from medication, general farm biosecurity measures are recommended to prevent the occurrence of disease including:

- avoiding stress
- not over-stocking and mixing pigs
- maintaining clean feed
- water and living conditions
- isolating sick pigs in hospital pens; and
- ensuring proper disinfection of pens and equipment between different groups of pigs.



Blood clots and thickened gut wall in the ileum associated with black faeces, pale pigs and sudden death • Source: R Fogarty