

PERICARDITIS

What is the disease?

Pericarditis is inflammation of the pericardium (heart sac) which is usually due to an infectious agent. Pigs suffering from pericarditis may be seen to be reluctant to move, have shallow breathing or show other signs of pleurisy, pneumonia or other heart disorders.

In young pigs, signs can include stunted growth, and general dull looking animals with no clear patterns of coughing or diarrhoea.

Finisher pigs suffering from *Actinobacillus pleuropneumoniae* infection (APP) may have pneumonia, pleurisy and pericarditis. Other causative bacterial infections are haemophilus, mycoplasma, pasteurella, streptococcus and staphylococcus.



Pig Pericarditis • Source: MINTRAC

How common is it on-farm?

Pericarditis is relatively uncommon in pigs of slaughter age.

How is it spread?

Pericarditis is generally a blood borne infection of endemic diseases in the piggery, so general disease control programs, vaccinations and hygiene are important in reducing the prevalence.

Carcass impacts

Animals affected at slaughter will often result in the carcass being condemned if the inflammation is acute, diffuse or purulent and associated with abnormalities in other body systems. A carcass absent of abnormalities to other body systems can be passed; however, organs and viscera are still condemned.

Treatment

Consult with your veterinarian. For bacterial infections an antibiotic may be prescribed.

Prevention

Good biosecurity and hygiene practices – including cleaning and decontaminating pens and equipment between groups, isolating sick animals and implementing isolation periods for any new stock entering the piggery. Complying with PigPass NVD requirements and having a Herd Health Plan – can help manage the risk of infectious diseases. As pericarditis can be caused by a range of infectious agents it is important that the causal agent is identified to prevent further cases.