



SWINE PSEUDORABIES

FACT SHEET

WHAT IS SWINE PSEUDORABIES?

Pseudorabies, also known as “Aujeszky’s Disease”, is a highly contagious viral disease found in swine. The virus is capable of infecting most domestic and wild mammals including cattle, sheep, goats, cats and dogs. Horses may become infected as well, though it is rare.

Swine pseudorabies does not affect humans and meat from infected animals is safe for human consumption.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

Within 24 to 36 hours after exposure to the virus, infected piglets can develop central nervous system signs, high fevers, respiratory distress, vomiting, convulsions, and high mortality rates. Death can occur in less than three days.

Older swine may simply develop short term flu-like symptoms with low mortality rates. Infected sows may abort or absorb their fetuses. Even after recovery, swine with a latent infection may intermittently shed the virus causing future disease outbreaks in the herd.

TRANSMISSION

Pseudorabies is primarily transmitted from infected swine through direct, nose-to-nose, contact. Venereal transmission is possible and prevalent amongst the feral swine population. Piglets may also be infected prior to birth.

Under favorable conditions, the virus can survive for several days in contaminated bedding and/or water. Widespread viral contamination enables the disease to move quickly through a herd. Thus, once the virus has entered a population, it continues to circulate indefinitely until a successful eradication plan is established.

DIAGNOSIS

Swine pseudorabies is detected through blood sample collection and laboratory confirmation.

Regular swine testing is required for sexually intact swine, six months or older, going through change of ownership and the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) works in coordination with the Department of State Health Services to test breeding-aged animals at state-monitored slaughter facilities.

If swine pseudorabies is detected in a domestic swine herd, the premises will be quarantined and the TAHC will work with the animal owner to clear the herd of the

disease. Options may include depopulation or repeated testing and removal of infected or incubating animals until the herd is disease free.

REPORTING PSEUDORABIES

The TAHC should be notified of all suspected and confirmed cases of swine pseudorabies within 24 hours of diagnosis. Reports can be made to any TAHC region office or the TAHC Central Office at 1-800-550-8242.

SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM

Though the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has declared all U.S. commercial swine operations free of pseudorabies, the USDA and TAHC continue to enforce regulations designed to prevent potential introduction and spread of the disease, as it is still prevalent in the wild hog population.

TAHC regulations outline the requirements for movement, testing, identification, record keeping, and surveillance. For more information about the TAHC pseudorabies regulations, visit: <https://bit.ly/3HTJKfy>.

Swine producers may also participate in the optional TAHC swine pseudorabies qualified free status program. Validation status may allow animals to be moved with fewer regulatory restrictions, increase marketability, and reduce concern of disease presence for herd breeding animals. For more information about the herd validation process contact the TAHC Program Records Department at 512-719-0777.

PREVENTION

There are a variety of on-the-farm practices animal owners can take to protect their swine and to reduce the risk of disease exposure.

Preventing contact with feral swine is of the utmost importance, since the disease is known to be in the feral swine population. Producers should maintain good fences and surveillance on their property to decrease the risk of feral swine coming in contact with their animals.

Swine owners should also strive to keep a “closed” herd by only purchasing swine from validated pseudorabies free herds. It is also best practice to isolate newly acquired animals from the rest of the herd for 30 days to prevent disease introduction, and it is encouraged to test those animals at that time. Testing is also encouraged when utilizing breeding boars.