

Deworming is an essential aspect of pig farming for supporting the health and productivity of the swine herd.

Internal parasites, also known as worms, can severely affect the growth, weight gain and overall well-being of pigs and can cause significant economic losses.

In this article, we will discuss the importance of deworming, the types of parasites, the symptoms, diagnosis and how to develop and implement effective deworming strategies. We will not talk about coccidiosis in this article.

The importance of deworming

Deworming is essential for several reasons. Parasites cause severe health issues, like malnutrition, anaemia, damaging of the internal organs such as the liver, the intestines and the lungs. The economic impact is high due to an accumulation of the following factors:

- reduced feed efficiency
- slower growth rate
- lower market weight
- higher medicine cost



These elements will influence the profitability of the pig farm. A good deworming program will also help to control the spread of parasites within the herd and will minimize the risk of zoonotic diseases that can affect humans. Prevention is always a better than cure.

Common parasites in pigs

Several types of internal parasites can affect pigs. The most important are:

Round worms (*Ascaris suum*)

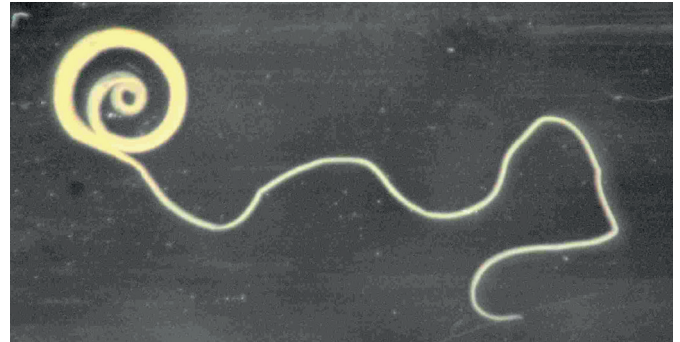
Round worms are the most prevalent worms seen in sows, piglets and growers. They can cause an insufficient daily growth, liver damage (= white spots), respiratory and intestinal issues due the migration of the worm larvae.



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Whip worms (*Trichuris suis*)

Whip worms can cause severe persistent diarrhoea, weight loss and colitis especially in weaned and growing pigs.



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Lung worms (*Metastrongylus* spp.)

Lung worms primarily affect pigs raised in outdoor systems. They can cause and lead to respiratory problems, coughing and reduced performance.



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Stomach Worms (*Hyoststrongylus rubidus*)

Stomach worms cause gastritis and ulcers, resulting in poor feed conversion and growth rates. They can also cause sudden death by bleedings in the stomach.



Symptoms of worm infestation

Recognizing the symptoms of a parasite infestation is crucial for on time intervention.

Common symptoms are:

- slower or bad growth rate
- persistent diarrhoea
- coughing and respiratory issues with lack of response to antibiotics or vaccines
- weight loss
- anaemia
- poor coat condition
- lack of uniformity

Effective deworming strategies

Developing and implementing an effective deworming program involves different steps. It starts with a monitoring and testing program on a regular base. You need to perform regular faecal exams to check the parasite load in sows, piglets and growers and to determine the specific types of worms present. The parasite load gives an indication of the severity of the infection. Identification of the worms is important to find the right deworming medicine.

After monitoring and testing, you can choose the right dewormer medicine. Commonly used dewormer medicines are Benzimidazoles, Levamisole and Avermectins.

Benzimidazoles (Albendazole, Fenbendazole) are effective against a broad range of round worms and whip worms.

Levamisole is often used to treat round worms and lung worms.

Avermectins like Ivermectin are effective against internal and external parasites.

Every dewormer has its own workings mechanism to kill the parasite inside and/or outside the pig. You can verify this with your veterinarian or medicine producer.

An important fact is that worms, just as bacteria, can develop resistance against the deworming medicine. Therefore, it is important to rotate between different classes of deworming products. The overuse and/or misuse of a single type can lead to the development of resistant parasite strains.

The **timing of the treatments** very crucial in a **strategic deworming program**. The critical periods can be before farrowing in sows, around weaning for piglets or when moving the piglets to the finisher house. The treatment timing is important because it will reduce the parasite transmission from a sow to the piglets or between pigs and reduce the infestation rates.

Good hygiene and management measurements are needed to limit the parasite exposure. By making the bedding areas clean and dry, parasite eggs can't develop further because they are very sensitive to a dry environment. It will reduce the parasite load in the pen. Manage and remove the manure in a proper way to prevent contamination of feed and water. Develop and implement proper quarantine procedures. Spreading of worms can happen by dirty, contaminated equipment, boots and hands. Apply a "Strict all in - all out principle" in the farrowing house, the nursery and the finisher house.

Conclusion

Deworming pigs is an essential yet often overlooked part of swine management.

By understanding the pathogenesis of several types of parasites, identifying symptoms and implementing strategic deworming protocols, farmers can improve the health and productivity of their herds. Regular monitoring, good hygiene practices and the proper use of dewormers are vital for controlling parasite infestations. Integrating these strategies into a comprehensive health care plan can effectively mitigate the impact of parasites.

Kela's distributor and swine technical team can help in developing and implementing deworming programs with our products. Please contact us for further details.

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or to share your
experiences, feel free
to reach out.