International Pig Topics

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Number: 125

Roundworms II

Stomach worms

Five roundworm genera can be found in the stomach of the pig. Hyostrongylus is common, but the remainder are less common and more limited in their geographical distribution. These four are Ascarops, Physocephalus, Gnathostoma and Simondsia.

The red stomach worm

The red stomach worm, which is also known as Hyostrongylus rubidus, is a trystrongyloid that occurs unattached on the mucosa of the stomach's lesser curvature. These worms are less than 1cm long and thin.

The lifecycle

Roundworm eggs are typical strongyloid eggs that, at the time of being laid, contain a 16-32 cell stage embryonic larva. Their lifecycle is a direct one so no intermediate host(s) is required. Once eggs have been voided in the faeces, it takes a week for them to develop into infective larvae which then migrate from the faeces, for example on to grass, where they are ingested by pigs. The disease caused by this worm is called hyostrongylosis and is typically a disease of outdoor pigs.

The ingested larvae then enter the gastric glands, where two moults occur, before they re-enter the gastric lumen and develop into adults.

Pathogenicity

Their pathogenicity is not that great as they suck little blood. However, they can cause a catarrhal gastritis which may lead to catarrhal erosion that can adversely impact weight gain and FCR.

Other stomach worms

Physocephalus sexalatus, Ascarops strongylina, Gnathostoma spinigerum and Simondsia paradoxa are all much larger than Hyostrongylus rubidus, being both thicker and longer (about 2cm). These are spiruroid worms that attach by their mouths to the gastric mucosa where they appear to cause little harm other than to stimulate excessive mucus production.