

New Brachyspira Responsible for Recent Rise in Swine Dysentery Cases

30 January 2013

CANADA & US - A professor with the Western College of Veterinary Medicine reports a new species of Brachyspira can be blamed for the bulk of cases of swine dysentery being reported in Canada and the US today, writes Bruce Cochrane.

Swine Dysentery, a bloody diarrhea, that affects grow-finish pigs typically over 12 weeks of age, is caused by a bacteria of the genus Brachyspira and a number of species within that genus will cause infection.

Dr John Harding, a professor with the Western College of Veterinary Medicine, told those on hand earlier this month for the Banff Pork Seminar, the species we have known for many years, Brachyspira hyodysenteriae, is being displaced by a species discovered over the past two to three years provisionally being called Brachyspira hampsonii.

Dr John Harding-Western College of Veterinary Medicine

Swine Dysentery is a relatively old disease.

It was first identified by researchers in England and Iowa back in the 1970s to 1980 and it was a very common disease in North America until the mid 1990s.

It was really associated with the old way of raising pigs, purchasing through auction marts and lots of movement of small numbers of pigs.

I think in the intensification or the modernization of the industry back in the mid-1990s, the disease essentially went away.

We did not really see any swine dysentery for upwards of ten years.

That all changed in early 2000s, 2005 to 2007 in the US and in western Canada 2009 we started to see some re-emergence of swine dysentery.

Since then in western Canada it's affecting a small number of farms in the western provinces at this point in time.

In the US unfortunately it's a lot more common than that and it's probably related just to the number of pigs that they're raising down in the US and how many are being moved around between states.

Dr Harding says what's interesting about this re-emergence is while we are seeing *Brachyspira hyodysenteriae*, the new species *Brachyspira hampsonii* is being seen more commonly.

ThePigSite News Desk