IDENTIFYING SICK PIGS IN FINISHING AND SELECTING A DRUG FOR TREATMENT

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Introduction

I conducted a research project during this past summer where individual sick pigs in the finishing phase of production were identified as sick, tagged, and treated. I used a video camera to record the clinical signs observed before treatment, after treatment, and then while the pig recovered. The clinical signs observed included coughing, rapid and obvious breathing, rough hair, off-feed, gaunt or thin body condition, and weakness. Pigs that showed one or more of these clinical signs were placed on this study. One pig was injected with one antibiotic and the following five treatments were included in the study. Treatment 1 was tulathromycin (Draxxin®); treatment 2 was procaine penicillin G (Pro Pen G); treatment 3 was saline (negative control group); treatment 4 was long-acting oxytetracycline (Maxim 200®); and treatment 5 was ceftiofur (Excede®.) One-thousand and fifty-nine individual pigs were identified as sick, tagged, and treated. Each pig was examined daily during the study and their health status was recorded. In addition, blood samples were collected on 60 pigs, 12 from each treatment, and tested for PRRS, mycoplasma, H1N1 SIV, H3N2 SIV, and PCV2. Four sentinel pigs were examined and their tissues sent to the laboratory for testing.

Video of selected sick pigs will be used in this presentation to show the type of clinical signs associated with porcine respiratory disease complex (PRDC.) Video was collected on individual tagged pigs so that signs prior to treatment, after treatment, and again as the pig recovered from sickness. Mortality of pigs, total pounds of pork produced, and pigs that required a second or third treatment in order to recover was recorded. Samples collected during the study and at the conclusion revealed mycoplasmal pneumonia, swine influenza virus, PRRS virus, PCV2 virus, and important bacterial pathogens were present in these pigs. Over ninety-percent of the pigs examined at slaughter had lesions of pneumonia typical of mycoplasma infection.