**Coccidia in Mini Pigs**

Taken from the Merck Veterinary Manual, \* *(are my additions)*

Eight species of *Eimeria* \*(*Parasites*) and one of *Isospora* infect pigs in North America. Piglets 5–15 days old are characteristically infected with only *I suis*, which produces enteritis and diarrhea. These agents must be differentiated from viruses, bacteria, and helminths that also cause scours in neonatal pigs.

*I suis* is prevalent in neonatal pigs \*(*newborn*). Infection is characterized by a watery or greasy diarrhea, usually yellowish to white and foul smelling. Piglets may appear weak, dehydrated, and undersized; weight gains are depressed, and sometimes piglets die. A contributing factor to mortality is that piglets become covered with diarrheic feces and stay damp. \*(*Keeping them warm and dry is essential to keeping the piglet alive*) Oocysts \*( *A hardy, thick-walled stage of the life cycle of coccidian parasites*) are usually shed in the feces and can be identified by their size, shape, and sporulation characteristics; however, in peracute *\*(acute or violent)* infections, diagnosis must be based on finding stages of the parasite in impression smears or histologic sections of the small intestine, because pigs can die before oocysts are formed. In severely affected piglets, histologic lesions confined to the jejunum and ileum are characterized by villous atrophy, blunting of villi, focal ulceration, and fibrinonecrotic enteritis with parasite stages in epithelial cells. *\*(Many times you just have to use the history of the piglet to know if you are dealing with Coccidia. Do the symptoms match?)*

Preventive control by feeding anticoccidials to sows from 2 wk before farrowing through lactation or to neonatal pigs from birth to weaning has been reported; however, effectiveness of the latter has not been confirmed. Although the sow is a logical source of infection for piglets, this has not been well documented. \**(This is one option to do*) Thorough removal of feces and disinfection of farrowing facilities between litters greatly decreases infection. \**(This should be the pattern always used by a good ethical breeder. If you are not doing this and have avoided this issue so far, you are playing Russian roulette. Please reconsider.)* Piglets that recover from infection are highly resistant to reinfection.

Treatment of coccidiosis may include sulfamethazine in drinking water. The control of coccidiosis in newborn piglets infected with *I suis* has been unreliable. The use of coccidiostats in the feed of the sow for several days or a few weeks before and after farrowing has been recommended and used in the field, but the results are variable.