

Garth Pig Practice Ltd

The Pig Issue

November 2026

Salmonella – the infection you may not see

Salmonella is something which can be present on a pig farm without causing obvious disease. In many infected pigs there may be few, if any, clinical signs, meaning it can circulate through a herd without being noticed.
This makes Salmonella particularly difficult to manage. By the time there is obvious diarrhoea or other disease, the infection may already have spread between groups or become established in the environment.
For pig producers, controlling Salmonella is more than just treating sick pigs, it's about reducing the amount of Salmonella circulating around the farm.

How does Salmonella get onto a farm?

There are a number of ways Salmonella can enter a unit.
Pigs and people – Incoming pigs can introduce Salmonella, while visitors, contractors, clothing, boots and equipment can all potentially move infection between areas or farms. Good biosecurity remains one of the most important ways of reducing this risk.

Rodents and wildlife – Rats, mice and wild birds can carry Salmonella and contaminate areas around the unit. Effective pest control is therefore an important part of Salmonella control.

Feed and water – Contaminated feed or water can provide a route of infection. Feed storage, hopper hygiene and water systems should all be considered when investigating Salmonella on a farm.
Stress and mixing – Stress can increase Salmonella shedding. Weaning, transport, mixing pigs, overcrowding and other management changes can all increase the risk of pigs shedding larger numbers of bacteria.
The environment – Salmonella can survive in manure, bedding, dust and other areas of the farm. If cleaning and disinfection are not effective, infection can remain between batches and provide a source of infection for the next group of pigs.

What can we do about it?

There is no single solution to Salmonella. Successful control normally requires several areas of the farm to be addressed together.

Keep it out

Review biosecurity regularly, particularly around incoming pigs, visitors, vehicles and shared equipment. Consider how people and equipment move around the farm and whether they could be taking contamination from one area to another.

Keep the environment clean

Good cleaning and disinfection between batches is important. Removing organic material before applying disinfectant is essential, as is allowing buildings to dry properly. Pay particular attention to areas that are easily missed – corners, under feeders, around drinkers, passages and equipment.

Control rodents and wildlife. A good pest control programme should be part of the Salmonella control plan. Look for signs of rodent activity and consider whether feed spillages, holes in buildings or other areas are providing food or shelter. Keep feed storage clean and covered and regularly check drinkers and water systems for contamination.
Where Salmonella is identified, feed and water management should form part of the investigation rather than being overlooked.

Reduce stress. Good management and herd health can help reduce Salmonella shedding. Avoid unnecessary mixing and overcrowding and consider periods when pigs are likely to be under increased stress, such as weaning or transport.

Why does it matter if the pigs aren't sick?
This is perhaps the most important point.
Salmonella does not have to cause obvious disease to be a problem. Pigs carrying Salmonella can shed the bacteria and contaminate their surroundings. Stress during transport and lairage can then increase shedding, creating a greater risk of contamination at slaughter.
Reducing Salmonella levels on farm therefore reduces the infection pressure entering the abattoir and helps reduce the risk of contamination further along the pork supply chain.

The key message: Think beyond the sick pig.
If Salmonella is identified on a farm, the important question is not simply *"How do we treat these pigs?"* but *"Where is the Salmonella coming from, where is it going, and what can we change to reduce the infection pressure?"*
Biosecurity, pest control, feed and water hygiene, good cleaning and disinfection, and reducing stress all have a role to play. **If you have Salmonella identified on your farm, speak to your vet about developing a control plan specific to your unit.**

Intesti-Forte

Intesti-Forte is a valuable support for piglets during the critical weaning period, helping maintain a healthy gut as they adapt to the change from sow's milk to solid feed. Supporting intestinal health through this challenging transition can help promote a smoother, easier weaning period and reduce the risk of post-weaning digestive upsets and loose stools. Used around weaning, Intesti-Forte can help piglets maintain a more stable gut environment, supporting feed intake, growth and overall performance.

Intesti-Forte is available directly from our dispensary and is a practical addition to a proactive piglet management programme were maintaining gut health and avoiding post-weaning looseness are key priorities.





Robus Zen

Robus Zen is available directly from our dispensary as a precision feed additive solution.

It is designed to limit stress and reduce aggressive behaviours in pigs during high-risk periods. In real-farm trials, Robus Zen produced calmer animals with 3 kg higher live weight gain over the same feeding period, and a client reported 33 g/d more growth and fewer tail-biting incidents.

These outcomes are confirmed by us from several of our producers. By supporting smoother social interaction, Robus Zen helps farmers improve welfare and production performance with consistent results, boosting productivity.