

Central Washington Animal Agriculture Team



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Parasite Control In Show Pig Projects

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No “one size fits all” recommendations can be made regarding deworming youth show pig project animals. Variables include deworming and other care given before purchase of the project animal, quality of the project animal’s feeding program, sanitation, environment, stress, and genetic factors that influence performance in spite of parasitism.

It goes without saying that sanitation plays a big role in determining the types and numbers of parasites pigs have to deal with, but we’ll say it anyway for emphasis. Prompt removal of feces from the pig’s environment will lessen the chances of a pig re-infesting itself with worms. Keeping pigs on solid surfaces such as concrete with bedded areas will allow frequent hosing and disinfection of soiled areas. Although letting pigs roam and root is good for their feet and legs and well being, this management practice exposes them to some serious additional parasites.

If a show pig project animal was dewormed early in life, is fed an excellent diet and is kept in sanitary conditions, *perhaps* it may not require more deworming before going to market

or the show. However, this can only be determined through a fecal analysis for worms. This procedure can be performed at a veterinary clinic and some producers have learned how to perform this examination themselves. Many show pigs are owned and managed for about three months, so perhaps just one deworming will be needed; much will depend on the animal’s exposure to parasites, appearance, general health and performance (rate of gain). Fecal analysis can reveal the types and severity of parasite infestation, which in turn may influence which dewormer should be used.

External parasites of swine include lice, ticks, mange and flies. These parasites can cause pigs to scratch and damage their skin, induce stress and reduce feed intake and weight gain. Good sanitation will help minimize fly populations, but if your animal is still harassed by flies, you may need to use chemicals approved for use in livestock environments. Be sure to follow all label instructions carefully and use personal protection to prevent human exposure. Ivermectin products

will kill ticks, mange and some types of lice; other lice must be killed with chemicals applied to the pig's skin—check with your veterinarian for more info.

Internal parasites are a constant challenge to keeping pigs healthy and growing well. They are of special concern in young animals and pastured animals. Different internal parasites can live in the intestinal, respiratory, muscular and urinary systems, so the signs of illness will relate to what tissues are affected. Signs of internal parasitism can include diarrhea, constipation, colic, poor appetite, hiccoughs (“thumps”), poor growth, anemia, weakness, difficulty breathing and even death.

Fortunately, most swine dewormers work against multiple parasites, are safe and easy to administer. Most are fairly cost-effective as well. Communicate with other show pig youth producers in your area and share the cost of an effective product, because most products will expire before a small-scale producer uses up the entire container. See Table 1 for a summary of medications effective against the most common internal parasites of swine.

Valid Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship is Essential

As long as you use over-the-counter swine deworming products exactly as instructed on the label and follow all meat withholding guidelines, you are following all Food and Drug Administration requirements and are staying within federal law. If you use a product not approved for use in pigs or if you use a product approved for use in pigs other than exactly as instructed on the product label, you are violating federal law and are subject to fines and

even prosecution. However, if your veterinarian determines it is necessary for your pig's health that you give your animal a non-approved product or a different dose of an approved product, it is legal as long as you have a valid veterinarian-client-patient relationship and you follow the veterinarian's recommendations exactly. Your veterinarian will tell you how long to withhold meat from market; you must record and keep documentation of this legal extra-label use of a medication.

Conclusions

Otherwise-healthy show pigs kept in environments with excellent sanitation may need minimal deworming during the market project period. Some immunity to parasites develops as pigs mature, so most parasite concerns are focused on young pigs. Increase your show pig's resistance to parasites by maintaining a clean environment, providing a balanced diet, minimizing stress and housing pigs together according to age. Parasite control should not rely only on dewormers; overuse of dewormers may cause parasite resistance to develop.

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For more information

<http://extension.missouri.edu/publications/DisplayPub.aspx?P=G2430>
www.merckvetmanual.com

Table 1. Summary of common intestinal parasites of swine and effective medications.

Parasite	Common name	Effective medications	Notes
<i>Trichuris suis</i>	Whipworm	Fenbendazole, Dichlorvos	In large intestine. May cause bloody diarrhea. Eggs very hardy in environment.
<i>Oesophagostomum</i> sp.	Nodular worm	Pyrantel, Piperazine, Levamisole, Fenbendazole, Ivermectin, Doramectin, Dichlorvos	In large intestine. Eggs very hardy in environment.
<i>Strongyloides</i> ,	Threadworm	Levamisole, Ivermectin, Doramectin	In small intestine. Big concern in young piglets. Larvae can be ingested in feed, water or sow's milk and can penetrate skin. Sanitation important.
<i>Metastrongylus</i> spp.	Lungworms	Levamisole, Fenbendazole, Ivermectin, Doramectin	Live in deep lung airways. Eggs coughed up, swallowed and passed in manure. Earthworms are required part of life cycle, so outdoor pigs are at risk.
<i>Stephanurus dentatus</i>	Kidney worms	Fenbendazole, Doramectin, Ivermectin feed premix	Lives in and around kidney; damage to liver and muscle too. Larvae are in environment and can contaminate feed, cross skin and be consumed in infected earthworms.
<i>Ascaris</i> spp	Ascarids or Roundworms	Ivermectin, Fenbendazole, Levamisole, Pyrantel, Dichlorvos, Piperazine; Fenbendazole and Pyrantel effective against migrating larvae	Common in young pigs. Adults live in small intestines. Eggs very hardy in environment. Larvae migrate through liver and lungs.
<i>Hyoststrongylus rubidus</i>	Red stomach worm	Fenbendazole, Ivermectin, Doramectin	Good sanitation stops re-infestations. More a problem in adult pigs.
<i>Ascarops strongylina</i>	Thick stomach worm	Dichlorvos, Ivermectin feed premix	Life cycle involves beetles, which pig must consume to become contaminated. Good sanitation prevents re-infestation.
<i>Macracanthorhynchus</i> sp	Giant thorny-headed worm	Levamisole, Ivermectin	Live in small intestine. Life cycle involves beetles. Good sanitation prevents re-infestation.