
GENERAL DIRECTORATE OF ANIMAL HEALTH
Mexico-United States Commission for Prevention of Foot-and-Mouth Disease
and other Animal Exotic Diseases

AUJESZKY DISEASE

Aujeszky disease, also known as “pseudo-rabies”, is a highly contagious viral disease affecting many animal species, both domestic and wild. Pigs in particular are especially relevant since they are natural hosts and source of the virus.

What is its geographical distribution?

This disease is located in some European, Asian and South American countries.

Who or what causes it?

It is caused by a *Varicellovirus* genus virus of the Herpesviridae family.

How is the virus transmitted?

The virus is found in secretions and excreta of infected pigs (saliva, milk, vagina-foreskin exudate, semen and urine.) It can be transmitted by direct contact or by fomites, like individuals, vehicles, materials, equipment, beds or food contaminated with the virus.

What are the clinical signs?

In pigs clinical signs vary according to age:

In neonate pigs (0-21 days) there is fever, loss of appetite, weakness, trembling, kicking, convulsions, walking in circles, paralysis of the rear legs and high mortality that reaches 100% between 24 and 36 hours. In weaned pigs (3-9 weeks) there is fever, loss of appetite, weakness, conjunctivitis, sneezing, coughing, breathing difficulty and mortality that can reach 50%, since pigs recover 5 to 10 days later.

In adult pigs the infection in general is moderate or unnoticed, with predominance of respiratory signs; however, some animals may develop serious respiratory signs that turn into pneumonia; in some sporadic cases there may be neurological signs varying from mild muscular trembling up to convulsions. Pregnant pigs may reabsorb the fetuses, miscarry or birth weak and trembling neonate piglets.

In bovine and ovine cattle there is excessive salivation, pharyngeal paralysis, convulsions, progressive weakness that leads to prostration and intense itching in a specific cutaneous area the animal cannot stop licking, rubbing or biting. This disease is almost always fatal in the course of 1 to 3 days.

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How is the disease diagnosed?

It is difficult to clinically distinguish Aujeszky disease from other diseases such as African Swine Fever, classical swine fever, Nipah virus infection, circovirus, rabies, swine flu, erysipelas, salmonellosis or intoxication with salt, mercury and arsenic, since the signs are similar. Therefore, it is necessary to diagnose in an official laboratory.

How can it be prevented?

Mexico has been free of Aujeszky disease in pig breeding since 2015; thus, it is necessary to control the import of pigs and their products and byproducts, and bolster biosafety measures in Pig Production Units (PPUs), for example:

- Establish sanitary protocols for all individuals entering the PPU.
- Wash and disinfect all vehicles entering the PPU.
- Use sanitary mats at the main entrance and each and every section.
- Check the herd daily to detect pigs with suggestive clinical signs.
- Do not mobilize diseased or dead pigs outside the PPU. Those animals must be isolated or disposed of in sanitary conditions, as the case may be.
- Periodically wash and disinfect facilities, materials and equipment.
- Consider establishing a sanitary vacuum period between each productive cycle.
- Implement procedures to control wildlife and eliminate noxious fauna.

SENASICA carries out a permanent epidemiological surveillance aimed to timely detect animal diseases endangering livestock assets and the public health of our country.

Report immediately to the official veterinarian services about any suspicious case; an official veterinarian will visit the production unit, obtain the samples for laboratory diagnosis and give the appropriate instructions.

Contact us for more information or to report any suspicious cases:

Emergency phone: 01 (800) 751 2100
(24 hours/day - 365 days/year)

Phone: 01 (55) 5905 1000
(Extensions 51236, 51242 and 51243)

E-mail:
gestioncpa.dgsa@senasica.gob.mx