

AN OUTBREAK OF SWINE FEVER IN SRI LANKA

D. D. Wanasinghe

(Veterinary Research Institute, Peradeniya)

and A. A. P. Gunatilake

(Veterinary Investigation Centre, Welisara, Ragama)

Swine fever (hog cholera) has not been reported from Sri Lanka, although it is prevalent in our neighbouring countries. Swine fever was reported for the first time in Sri Lanka in April 1983. An epidemiological study revealed that the disease has got introduced to Sri Lanka through garbage containing infected pig meat products discarded from Katunayake International Airport. The spread of the disease within the country, was mainly by feeding pigs with hotel swill contaminated with infected pork scraps. The disease spread to all the major pig rearing districts killing about 30-40% of the pig population in the affected areas. The estimated pig population in Sri Lanka is about one lakh.

In this epidemic, the principal symptoms shown by the affected animals were lethargy, inappetence, pyrexia 105-108°F, nasal and ocular discharges, constipation followed by profuse diarrhoea. At terminal stages there was posterior paralysis, hyperemia of the skin, especially over the lower abdominal region, the snout, the ears and the medial aspects of the thighs. In infected herds the pregnant sows rarely showed symptoms, but produced still born or malformed fetuses which were carried through the full gestation period.

At postmortem examination maxillary, pharyngeal, and mesenteric lymph nodes were seen to be highly haemorrhagic. Petechial and echimotic haemorrhages were present in the glottis, kidneys and sometimes in the inner lining of the gall bladder and urinary bladder. Haemorrhagic infarcts of the lungs involving one or more lobules were observed. There were marginal infarcts on the spleen. Multiple ulcers of the size of shirt

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buttons—"button ulcers" in the large intestine mostly in the area of the iléocaecal valve were common in chronic cases. Presumptive diagnosis was made from the morbidity and mortality pattern, symptoms and lesions. The diagnosis was confirmed by the Central Veterinary Institute, Netherlands.