Livestock Insects – Swine

Sarcoptic Mange Mite

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Identification and Field Biology

The mange mite is a tiny white mite. They are termed Sarcoptes or itch mites. They burrow through the skin making threadlike tunnels within which the females lay eggs. When feeding, strong digestive enzymes are released, which breaks down the animal’s tissue into liquids. Eggs deposited in the tunnels hatch within 3-10 days, and a generation can be completed in about 2 weeks.

Animal Response and Economic Losses

Mange mites cause severe itching, and infested animals scratch profusely. Lesions and scabs are usually around the head, eyes, nose or ears. Swine scratch with their hind legs, so lesions often occur on the legs and may spread to most of the body. The skin about the eyes and ears, top of the neck and shoulders becomes scurfy, inflamed, scabby and eventually raw and cracked. Mange infested pigs have a reduced growth rate and feed efficiency, and because of their appearance, are usually downgraded at market, and the hide is also usually downgraded.

Management Strategies

Cultural
The same methods mentioned for hog lice are utilized for mites as well.

Chemical
Numerous insecticides are registered for control of hog lice and mange mites, and these are listed at the end of the chapter. Application methods include sprays, dusts, pour-ons and bedding treatment. The animal should be completely covered by the treatment, including inside the ears. Subsequent treatments may be required at 10-day intervals to completely eliminate mites or lice.

Categories: Livestock insects, Swine, Mange mites, Sarcoptic mange mites

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