

About Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea (PED) - Questions and Answers

What is PED and where is it present?

PED is a highly contagious viral disease of swine. PED causes diarrhea and vomiting in pigs and significant mortality in nursing piglets.

PED was first reported in North America in May 2013 in the United States (US). The disease has spread to a large number of states. The strain of the virus is from China where the disease is widespread.

The first case of PED in Canada was confirmed by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) in January 2014 on a swine farm in Ontario.

Can humans or other animals contract PED?

No, only swine are affected. This includes wild boar, warthogs and other wild pigs.

Is it still safe to eat pork?

Yes. There is no risk to human health.

How is PED spread?

PED is spread by moving infected pigs or their feces. Trucks contaminated by pig manure are believed to be the most common way the virus is spread. Trucks can become contaminated in high-traffic areas such as assembly yards and slaughter plants.

Is PED present in Alberta?

The first-ever reported case of PED in Alberta was confirmed by Alberta Agriculture and Forestry (AF) on January 7, 2019.

Alberta has been working with the pork industry to create prevention and preparedness plans to address PED.

How can producers recognize PED?

PED causes diarrhea in pigs of all ages, but is most severe in nursing piglets. Death rates in piglets may be as high as 80 to 100 per cent over three to five weeks. Symptoms in older pigs can be very mild. Older pigs recover, but take longer to get to market.

Is PED a reportable disease in Alberta? How are cases reported?

Yes. All suspect and confirmed cases must be reported to the Office of the Chief Provincial Veterinarian within 24 hours at 780-427-3448, or after hours at 1-800-524-0051.

What should a producer do if they suspect PED in their herd?

If a producer suspects PED in their herd they need to call their veterinarian immediately and get the animals tested. It is important to respond quickly to stop the spread of the disease.

What is the treatment for PED?

Currently, there is no treatment for PED.

How can the spread of PED be contained?

Producers need to work with their veterinarian to develop and maintain good biosecurity practices around truck and pig movement for their farm. Close attention should be paid to keeping pig trucks clean, especially those trucks that may have been to the U.S. and other places that have the virus.

How can those who transport hogs help control PED?

Transportation companies can work with producers and their veterinarians to develop good biosecurity protocols around transporting hogs, including truck washing and keeping drivers' boots clean.

Will winter weather kill PED if it is present in transport trucks?

No. PED will survive in manure that is frozen or dirty wash water frozen on a truck. This is why PED tends to spread more in the late winter months.

Can PED be spread through producers having contact with one another or visiting the same public places?

The risk is considered negligible. Basic biosecurity measures that producers have in place should prevent the disease from spreading this way. Producers should change from barn boots and clothes before leaving the farm. Clothing and boots worn to public areas should not be worn on the farm without thorough cleaning. As an added measure, producers can wash personal vehicles when returning from locations where hog manure may be present.

Do special steps need to be taken to dispose the carcasses of pigs infected by PED?

Yes. The Destruction and Disposal of Dead Animals Regulation requires that animals that have died from a reportable disease must be disposed of in accordance with the direction an Agriculture and Forestry veterinary inspector. Natural disposal must not be used.

What can individual producers do protect their hogs from PED?

Producers can do a lot to protect their hogs. They are the most important people in stopping the disease. They must develop good biosecurity protocols with their veterinarian and ensure they are always followed. Producers need to work with their transporters to make sure trucks are always clean.

What is the impact of PED on hog operations? Is PED always fatal to the pigs that contract it?

On farms that are only growing market hogs PED causes mild diarrhea that resolves within a few days. These pigs rarely die from the disease but can take longer to get to market.

Farms that have sows and piglets are severely affected as up to 100% of the nursing piglets may die over a 3-5 week period, until the herd develops immunity. This can mean one month's production of piglets is lost. The virus can be eliminated from the farm over a few months if the farm is cleaned and managed carefully, but sometimes it does reoccur.

Will Alberta farms with PED positive pigs be quarantined?

No, they will not be quarantined by Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) or AF. However, producers may be asked to change their management practices to reduce the risk of spreading the disease and protect other Alberta producers.

PED, like other diseases, needs to be managed by ensuring good biosecurity practices are in place. For example, only healthy animals should leave farms.

Will Alberta stop hogs and trucks from jurisdictions with PED from entering the province?

No. Sound biosecurity measures on farms are the best tool for addressing the spread of PED.

What kind of financial assistance would be available to farmers who lose hogs to PED?

Producers have access to a number of insurance products they can invest in to mitigate business risks for their operations. Producers participating in [AgriStability](#) may be protected against large profit margin declines.

Is PED a threat to Alberta's trade in hogs and pork products?

PED does not affect the pork meat and is not spread through pork products. Therefore, PED is not a threat to trade except for live swine exports for breeding stock.