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SUDDEN DEATH IN SOWS AFTER INJECTION OF CONTAMINATED MEDICAL PRODUCT

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Introduction

The highest mortality rate in sows is during the lactation period and several causes are known.

Material & Methods

Sudden death of two sows occurred after birth in a batch of 16 sows. In addition, one sow was found to be in bad general health condition. The sows were submitted for clinical examination and necropsy. The moribund sow was euthanized after collecting blood samples.

Results

A lymphopenia, > 10% of immature neutrophils and azotaemia were detected. The necropsy of all three sows revealed multifocal hyperaemia and acute haemorrhage in the skin over the whole body. In one sow also petechial bleedings on the epiglottis were present. Epidemic diseases such as African and Classical Swine Fever and Porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome virus were ruled out by submitting tissue samples. A bacteriological investigation of the moribund sow revealed unspecific bacterial growth. Sepsis or toxæmia was suspected after the necropsy. Following the post-mortem investigation a herd examination was performed. Sows were found in good general health condition. To rule out epidemic diseases blood samples of ten randomly selected sows in the gestation unit were taken. The applied farrowing management of the affected batch was analysed, revealing that only diseased sows had received a medical product. The death of both sows occurred within 24 hours after application. Bacteriological investigation of this medical product confirmed a contamination with *Bacillus cereus* and *Clostridium perfringens*. Based on all findings we concluded that a toxæmia arising from the application of contaminated injection fluid was responsible for the sudden death and clinical deterioration of the three sows.

Discussion & Conclusion

In this case, the contamination of the medical product was due to an improper handling, i.e. re-use of old and dirty needles. After improvement of the management no further losses of sows in the farrowing unit appeared.