



APHA Briefing Note 03/17

Enhanced surveillance for Aujeszky's Disease using sera from pig diagnostic submissions to APHA

Purpose

1. To inform Official Veterinarians (OVs) of changes to the Aujeszky's Disease surveillance programme.

Background

2. An information note (at Appendix A) has been sent to veterinary practices and Pig Veterinary Society members who submit porcine blood samples to APHA from pigs kept in England and Wales.
3. From **1 February** APHA is running a pilot study to evaluate enhanced surveillance for Aujeszky's Disease. Diagnostic pig submissions to APHA Veterinary Investigation Centres from which serum is available will be used to test for antibody to ADV.
4. During the pilot, submitting vets will have the option to request that this testing is not performed on a submission. Details are provided in the information note.

Further information

- Queries about this surveillance should be directed to your local APHA Veterinary Investigation Centre:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/animal-and-plant-health-agency/about/access-and-opening>

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Appendix A



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

Enhanced Surveillance for Aujeszky's Disease Virus – testing of porcine diagnostic samples submitted to APHA Veterinary Investigation Centres

Purpose

This information note is being sent to veterinary practices and Pig Veterinary Society members submitting porcine blood samples to APHA Veterinary Investigation Centres from pigs kept in England and Wales. This is to inform you that revisions to the Aujeszky's Disease surveillance programme will be trialled between January 2017 and March 2017 prior to full implementation. Extending the scheme to cover submissions to Scotland's Rural College veterinary laboratory (SRUC) will be considered following this pilot. This communication applies only to England and Wales.

Aujeszky's Disease Status in the UK

The UK is recognised as being officially free of Aujeszky's Disease Virus (ADV) providing the UK with preferential trading conditions. Northern Ireland runs its own surveillance scheme having been declared free in 2012, whilst GB has been recognised as free since 1991.

To retain this preferential status we collate evidence from a variety of sources to support the disease freedom claim. Monitoring of pig herds by pig keepers and private veterinarians for clinical signs of Aujeszky's Disease, the legal obligation to notify suspicion of disease and the subsequent veterinary and laboratory investigation remains a key element of surveillance. Data is also gathered from laboratory testing of samples collected from healthy pigs, namely cull boars at slaughterhouses (cull boar survey), regular testing at semen collection centres approved for international trade, together with some limited pre-export and post-import testing.

Enhanced Passive Surveillance for ADV

Following a number of reviews we have concluded that the current system can be improved at low cost by screening porcine serum samples from bloods or pigs submitted to APHA Veterinary Investigation Centres for diagnostic investigation. The number of cull boar serum survey samples collected will be reduced as the latter are not representative of the pig population as a whole and are limited to healthy

animals. This decision was endorsed by the UK Government's animal disease policy and pig core groups.

Post-weaned growing pigs and adult boars acutely infected with ADV may show relatively non-specific signs, including respiratory illness, pyrexia, anorexia and loss of condition, with the clinical picture often obscured by secondary or concurrent infections. In breeding herds, acute ADV infection is likely to be more conspicuous with abortions, stillbirths and birth of weak piglets, and nervous signs and high mortality in pre-weaned pigs. The testing of diagnostic porcine sera submitted to APHA, many of which are from cases of respiratory or reproductive disease, will enhance surveillance thus providing further assurance of disease freedom, and if ADV was unexpectedly present, earlier detection.

It is important to raise awareness of the clinical signs, pathology and epidemiological scenarios associated with Aujeszky's disease amongst pig farmers and veterinarians.

Testing details

The primary test will be the Aujeszky's Disease Virus gB-ELISA. This test is sensitive and highly specific for antibody to Aujeszky's Disease Virus. The nature of the test means that occasional non-negative results will need investigation. These non-negative results will be further evaluated using additional serological tests and the results will be interpreted by the disease consultant and discussed with the APHA notifiable disease veterinarians. This approach is designed to minimise the impact on premises submitting samples.

As a result we expect very few cases to then be formally considered as suspicious of notifiable disease i.e. a report case. Such suspect cases will be investigated using standard notifiable disease investigation procedures. The premises will be placed under restrictions whilst undergoing official veterinary investigation in order to prevent potential onward spread. We will closely monitor the occurrence and frequency of any such investigations during the pilot.

Opting out

The information above explains the importance of these samples as a source of evidence for continuing disease freedom and an opportunity to detect disease incursion earlier. It is also important intelligence for supporting trade agreements. Therefore we encourage full participation from industry. We will evaluate this pilot by April 2017. If veterinarians do not want this surveillance to be performed on serum samples from bloods or pigs submitted to APHA Veterinary Investigation Centres for diagnostic investigation, then this should be clearly specified on the APHA submission form at the time of sample submission.

Queries

Queries about this surveillance should be directed to your local APHA Veterinary Investigation Centre.