



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

APHA Briefing Note 16/15

Porcine Epidemic Diarrhoea becomes a notifiable disease in England

Purpose

1. To inform Official Veterinarians (OVs) that from 18th December 2015, Porcine Epidemic Diarrhoea (PED) will become a notifiable disease in England. [The Specified Diseases \(Notification\) \(Amendment\) \(England\) Order 2015](#) refers.
2. The way that PED will be managed as a notifiable disease differs from other notifiable diseases in pigs. The two main elements of the legislation for PED as a notifiable disease are that:
 - Pig-keepers, their veterinary surgeons or veterinary laboratories must report suspect and confirmed cases of PED in pigs kept in England to the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA).
 - APHA is permitted to share identifying details of suspect and confirmed PED cases for disease control purposes with the industry levy board, AHDB Pork.
3. Unlike other notifiable disease in pigs, there is **no legislative requirement** for official testing, culling, movement controls or other restrictions and control of disease will be industry-led.

Background

4. Following the emergence of a virulent form of PED in North America and more recently, the Ukraine, discussions within the pig industry in England led to a proposal by Defra that PED be made a notifiable disease.
5. Porcine Epidemic Diarrhoea Virus (PEDV) is a coronavirus that infects the cells lining the small intestine of a pig, causing severe diarrhoea and dehydration. The disease is most serious in new-born sucking piglets where the virulent strain of PEDV can cause mortality to reach 100%. In older pigs, the diarrhoea is transient with no or low mortality and may cause loss of production.

6. Infection is believed to have entered the US pig herd from Asia where virulent strains have also spread in recent years, although the exact route of introduction to the US remains uncertain. PED has not been diagnosed in GB since 2002 but strains of PED have been causing outbreaks in several European Union member states since 2014. To date, the virulent strain has only been identified in the Ukraine in Europe.
7. PEDV is highly infectious and is mainly spread by infected pigs and anything contaminated with their infected faeces, including people, vehicles, equipment, contaminated bedding, feed and manure. Experience has shown that implementing stringent biosecurity measures, detecting clinical outbreaks promptly and maintaining good communication and cooperation between the various industry, veterinary, government and laboratory partners are key to controlling spread of infection.
8. Virulent PEDV represents an emerging threat to pig health and welfare and to food security by affecting pork production. It does not affect humans or have any food safety implications, and other livestock species are not affected.

The role of veterinary practitioners

9. Veterinary surgeons with clients who keep pigs play an important role in preventing PED outbreaks and controlling spread by:
 - Encouraging their clients who keep pigs to take measures now to minimise the risk of diseases being introduced to their premises and pigs. PED is an exotic risk but there are endemic pathogens that they should also take measures to keep out and safeguard the health of their pigs, notably, swine dysentery and porcine reproductive and respiratory virus.
 - Making sure that they and their pig-keeping clients are familiar with the clinical signs of PED, the key features of which are:
 - Diarrhoea spreads rapidly in a group of pigs over a few days
 - High proportion of pigs in a group develop diarrhoea (50% and more)
 - High mortality (30-100%) in young suckling piglets if due to a virulent strain of PED
 - Disease can affect any age of pig
 - The diarrhoea tends to be watery
 - Diarrhoea in older pigs is transient and they recover
 - Sometimes pigs also show reduced appetite and lethargy and may vomit
10. The case definition for suspect PED is “*An outbreak of unusual or rapidly spreading diarrhoea in pigs of any age*”.
11. If an outbreak of PED is suspected or confirmed, the pig keeper or their vet or a veterinary laboratory is now legally obliged to report this to APHA on the Defra Rural Services Helpline (03000 200 301), selecting APHA and then option 1 to

report disease in working hours, or selecting the option for the Region to reach the Regional out of hours Duty Vet if outside working hours.

12. After reporting disease, it is important to promptly progress PED testing of faecal samples from affected pigs on suspect premises so that disease can be confirmed or ruled out. APHA provides diagnostic PCR testing for PED and samples submitted direct to APHA Weybridge from suspect PED cases will be tested rapidly.

13. While waiting for results, it is essential that pig keepers implement strict biosecurity measures to prevent spread of infection from the premises.

For further information

- AHDB Pork's PEDV website www.pedv.co.uk.
- Guidance on reporting and sampling suspect PED outbreaks and testing: <http://pork.ahdb.org.uk/health-welfare/health/emerging-diseases/pedv/>
- Details of the industry Contingency Plan for the Control and Elimination of Porcine Epidemic Diarrhoea are available here: <http://pork.ahdb.org.uk/media/73937/contingency-plan-ped-v4-1-aug-2015.pdf>
- Bio-security advice: <http://pork.ahdb.org.uk/pig-production/biosecurity/>

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