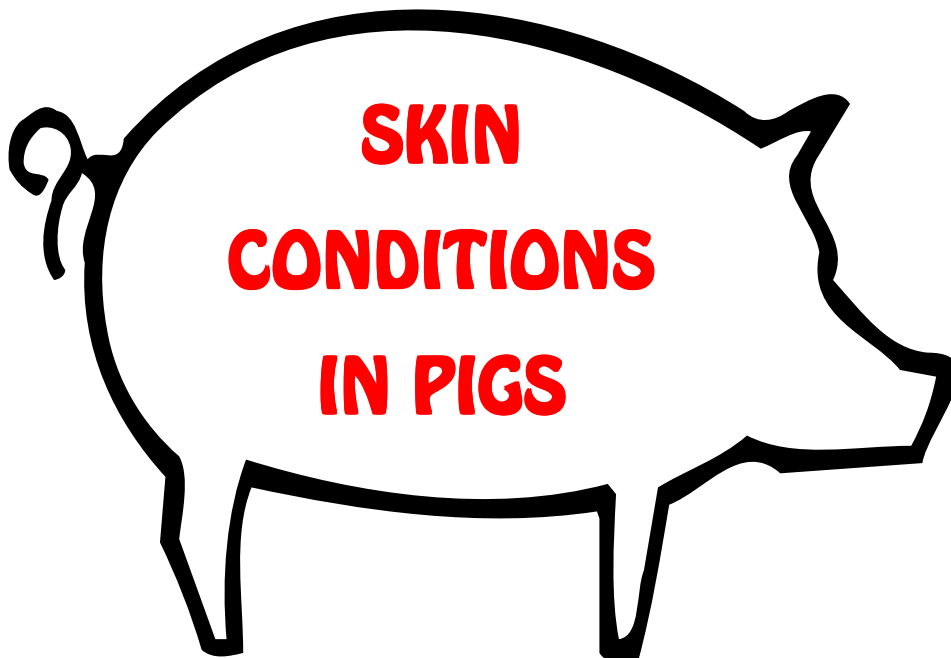




DEPARTMENT: AGRICULTURE

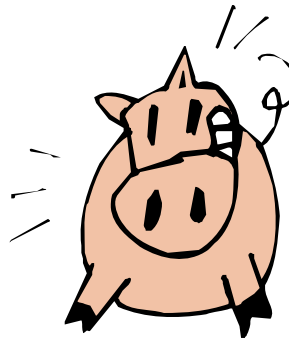


**Jenny Turton**

2001

Compiled by  
Directorate Communication, Department of Agriculture  
in cooperation with the ARC-Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute

Printed and published by Department of Agriculture  
and obtainable from Resource Centre, Directorate Communication  
Private Bag X144, Pretoria, 0001 South Africa

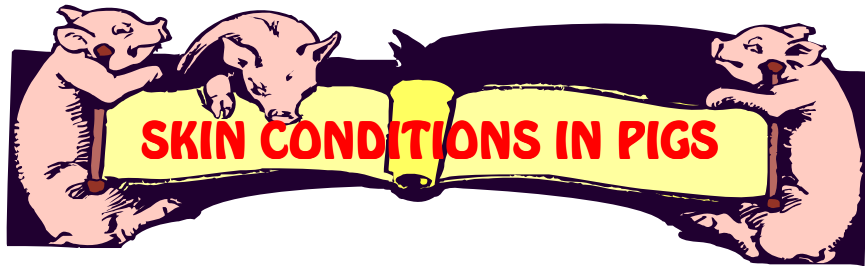


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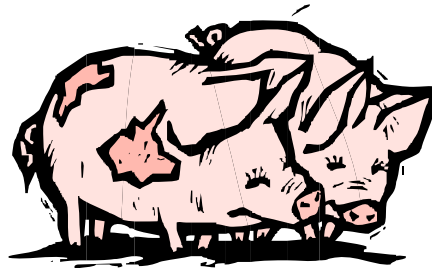
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ARC-Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute  
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- ★ Skin conditions can result in loss of production and even death in pigs. Some of the diseases causing these conditions only affect the skin, whereas for others there are also signs in other parts of the body.
- ★ Healthy pigs should have smooth and unbroken skin, and normal hair distribution (note that many pig breeds do not have much hair).
- ★ Signs of skin conditions include:
  - 🔔 animal rubbing itself
  - 🔔 skin is discoloured
  - 🔔 skin has scabs or sores
  - 🔔 patches of hair missing
  - 🔔 thickening of skin
- ★ Skin conditions can be grouped into those causing:
  - 🔔 sores
  - 🔔 lumps
  - 🔔 different skin colour
  - 🔔 thickening of the skin
  - 🔔 hair loss

### **Conditions causing sores**

#### *Bite wounds, sharp objects*

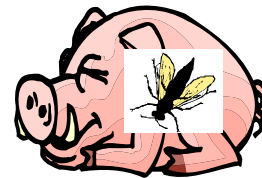


- ★ Wounds are often caused by pigs biting one another, particularly if piglets do not have their eyeteeth cut when they are young. The tail is often affected in this case. Piglets can cause injuries to the teats of the mother when suckling. Wounds can also be caused by sharp objects in the enclosures of the pigs and by biting flies.

- ★ Wounds can become infected with bacteria (germs), and this can lead to abscesses and flystrike.
- ★ Treatment involves washing the wounds with water and disinfectant, and using a spray to keep the flies away.
- ★ Prevention involves good management, including cutting of eye-teeth of young piglets.

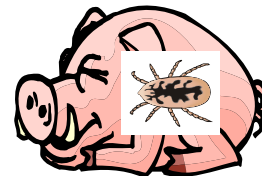
### *Flystrike*

- ★ Flystrike occurs when flies are attracted to wounds or skin soiled by urine or droppings. The flies lay eggs that hatch into maggots, and the maggots feed on the wounds, causing further damage. This condition can be very serious, resulting in death if not treated in time.
- ★ Treatment involves removing the maggots, cleaning the wounds and using an insecticidal cream or powder. You may need to inject the pig with antibiotics.
- ★ Prevention involves prompt treatment of wounds, fly control by traps, fly papers and sprays (do not spray the pig food) as well as good hygiene.



### *Mange*

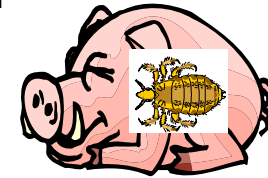
- ★ Mange is one of the most important problems of small pig herds.
- ★ It is caused by small parasites called mites that live in the skin.
- ★ The skin becomes itchy, and the pig scratches and rubs against pen walls and other objects.
- ★ The animal's coat looks dull, and there are bare patches, heavy crusts and lines on the body that look like ribs. The skin can also become thick. Initially it mainly affects the ears, but it can also spread to other parts of the body.
- ★ Treatment is by spray-on or pour-on preparations or injection that also treats worms.
- ★ If you have only a few pigs, buy the medicine jointly with your neighbours, and treat your pigs at the same time.



- ★ Treat adult pigs regularly; you then do not need to treat piglets, as they will not be infected (piglets are infected by their mothers).
- ★ Remember always to treat the boars, because they are often severely infected and will infect the sows when mating.

### *Lice*

- ★ Pig lice are large and easy to see. They tend to occur around the head and neck and between the legs.
- ★ They cause skin irritation and scratching, and possibly loss of blood.
- ★ They are treated with insecticidal sprays.

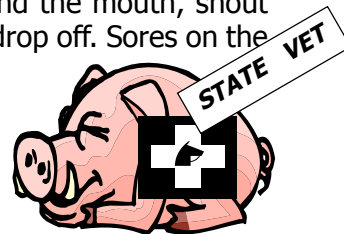


### *"Greasy pig disease"*

- ★ Greasy pig disease is caused by bacteria (germs). The germ causes yellowish crusts on the snout, around the mouth, behind the ears, and these can spread all over the body. It is called greasy pig disease because the pig looks greasy.
- ★ It affects young piglets, and can result in death.
- ★ This disease is treated by antibiotic injections.

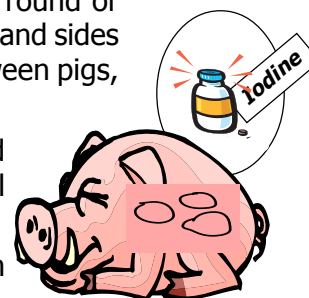
### *Foot-and-mouth disease*

- ★ This disease is caused by a virus. It is controlled in the red line area of South Africa by vaccination of cattle and control of movement of animals. All cloven-hooved animals can be affected, including pigs.
- ★ Signs are bursting blisters, particularly around the mouth, snout and feet, causing raw sores. The claws may drop off. Sores on the teats of sows stop piglets from drinking.
- ★ There is no treatment for this disease. It is a controlled disease, and if you suspect it you should inform your animal health technician or veterinarian.



### Ringworm

- ★ Pigs can get ringworm, which is caused by a fungus. It is called ringworm because the sores are round or ring shaped. These usually occur on the back and sides of the pigs. It is spread by close contact between pigs, particularly if there is overcrowding.
- ★ It will often get better with time but may need to be treated with iodine or other antifungal agents.
- ★ People can become infected with ringworm through close contact with infected pigs.



There are other conditions that can cause sores on the skin of pigs. If in doubt, seek advice from your animal health technician or veterinarian.

### Diseases causing lumps

#### Abscesses

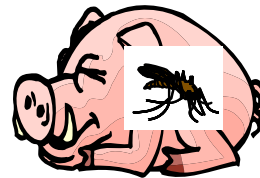
- ★ Abscesses often start from infection of injuries from fighting or injection sites, navel infection and tooth infections. A bacterial infection occurs, resulting in lumps filled with pus. These often burst open and discharge pus.
- ★ Treatment involves cutting the abscesses with a sharp blade if they are soft and cleaning them with water and disinfectant. When cutting open the abscess do it over a piece of newspaper or on cement. Then either burn the newspaper or disinfect the area so that the pus does not infect other animals. You should use a spray to keep flies away from the wound.
- ★ Antibiotics containing penicillin may be needed in the case of severe abscesses.
- ★ Prevention involves good hygiene and prompt treatment of wounds.
- ★ Note that hernias can look like abscesses, although the skin covering an abscess is usually



thicker than normal while hernias are covered with normal skin. Hernias are swellings caused by body parts coming through holes in the muscle layers. These are usually seen in either the navel or scrotum area of pigs. In this case you do not want to cut the area as in the case of an abscess, because the intestines will fall out, and the pig will die. Treatment of hernias requires surgery by a veterinarian. It is best to cull affected pigs because they may pass this condition to their offspring.

### *Mosquito and fly bites*

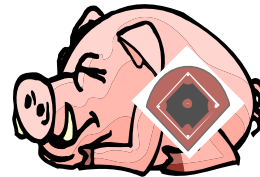
- ★ Mosquito and fly bites can also result in lumps on the skin.



### **Diseases causing different skin colour**

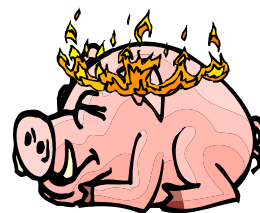
#### *"Diamond skin" disease*

- ★ This disease is caused by bacteria (germs). Diamond skin refers to the affected pigs developing large dark red diamond-shaped patches on the skin. This disease can cause death.
- ★ It is treated with antibiotic injections.
- ★ This disease can be prevented by vaccination.



#### *Fever*

- ★ Pigs with fever caused by any disease can develop red or purple skin. They will often be lying down and showing other signs of disease.

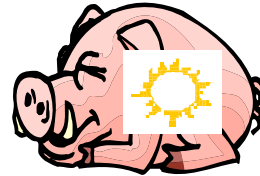


#### *Sunburn*

- ★ Areas of skin with little hair, such as the backs and behind the ears of pigs with white skin and the scrotum, can be affected by sun-

burn. The skin becomes red and may have blisters. Areas of affected skin fall off, leaving bleeding sores.

- ★ Treatment involves wound dressing or antibiotic powder to prevent infection and providing shade.
- ★ Prevention for pigs housed outdoors involves providing a mud bath so that the pigs can cover themselves with mud. Some shade should also be provided.



### *Ergot poisoning*

- ★ This condition is caused by fungal contamination of food. It results in dead skin on the feet, tips of ears and tail.
- ★ This can be prevented by feeding pigs fresh feed which is not mouldy.

## **Diseases causing thickening of the skin**

### *Mange*

- ★ Mange has already been discussed, and can cause thickening of the skin in addition to the other signs.

### *Zinc deficiency*

- ★ A deficiency of zinc (mineral) in the diet can result in thickening of the skin. This can usually be seen in young piglets.
- ★ The belly tends to be affected first, and it then spreads to include the legs, face, neck, rump and tail.
- ★ At first there are red circular areas on the skin, which become covered with scales. Eventually the skin becomes dry and horny, and crusts and cracks occur. However, this is not itchy for the pig.

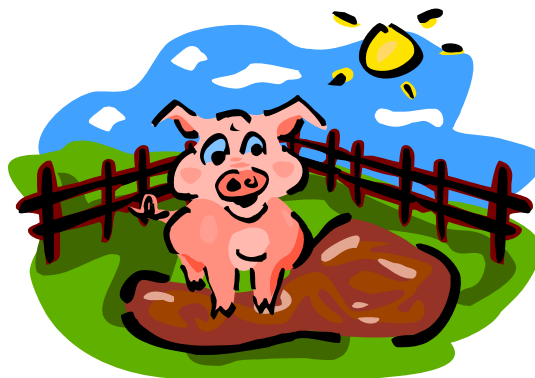


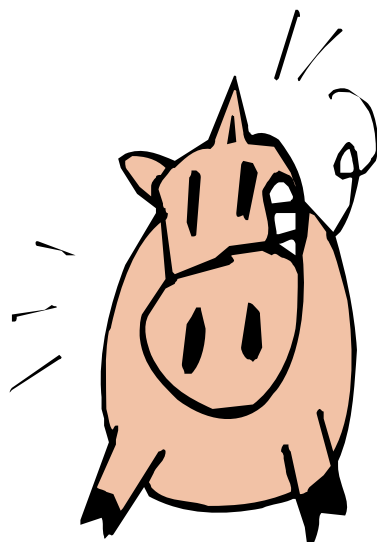


- ★ Loss of hair and diarrhoea also occur.
- ★ Treatment and prevention involves giving the correct quantity of zinc in the diet. Commercial feed normally contains the correct quantity of zinc and other minerals.

### **Diseases causing hair loss**

- ★ As already mentioned, some diseases such as mange and zinc deficiency can cause hair loss as well as the signs mentioned above.





For further information contact your nearest animal health technician or  
state/private veterinarian

or

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