SPLAYLEG IN ONE-WEEK-OLD PIGLETS IN IBADAN, NIGERIA: A CASE REPORT

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ABSTRACT
A myopathy was diagnosed as splayleg (myofibrillar hypoplasia) in one week-old Landrace piglets of both sexes. The syndrome was characterised by inability to stand, inco-ordination, tucking of forelimbs and splaying of hindlimbs. The cause could not be established, the owner was advised accordingly.

Keyword: Splayleg, Piglets, Nigeria.

Defective animals have since ancient times aroused man’s curiosity. Many are born with the defects (congenital), others develop them later in life (acquired). These animals are a considerable loss to farmers. Congenital and acquired diseases have been recognised in pigs (Priester et al., 1970; Pearson 1979) and are being monitored to control undesirable genetic traits and defects.

This paper is a report on splaying (myofibrillar hypoplasia) in a herd of pigs in Ibadan, Nigeria.

A sow in a herd of 102 Landrace pigs in Ibadan farrowed eight piglets a week earlier. The owner observed and reported abnormal posture and gait in five piglets. Three had earlier been crushed to death by the sow. Clinical examination of the remaining five piglets and the sow revealed two piglets with sternal recumbency, with forelimbs tucked in and hindlimbs spread out almost perpendicularly to the trunk. (Plate 1)

The remaining three were inco-ordinated and unable to support their weight. The piglets had no difficulty in suckling. Neurological examination revealed normal spinal reflexes, pain sensations and strong tail movements. There was loss of tonicity and apparent underdevelopment of the pelvic limb muscles.

Based on the presenting signs (Ward, 1978) a diagnosis of splayleg was arrived at. A request for use of the piglets for further investigations was turned down by the owner. Management was therefore commenced. The hindlimbs of each of the five piglets were loosely tied together using a figure-of-8 knot with a creep bandage. Suckling was facilitated by bringing the piglets closer to the sow at regular periods of four hours apart, and the pathological presentation of these cases.
Splayleg has also been reported in calves in association with skeletal myopathies (Bradley, 1979) and in six weeks to three-month-old puppies (Anderson and Anderson, 1982) in association with abnormalities in the development of the parietal and frontal bones and the dysfunction of cerebral motor cortex.

The treatment applied to the piglets based on the clinical signs led to improvement in their ambulation, to their feeding ability and general well-being. It was not possible to speculate on the aetiology of this condition without in-depth history and pathological studies.

REFERENCES


