Did this cause this? [sarcoptic mange of pigs]

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The mite on the left was detected by using a microscope with a magnification of 100 times to examine a skin scraping taken from the above pig. This confirmed the suspicion that sarcotic mange mites were the cause of the skin lesions.

History
The owner commented that since purchasing six baconer gilts at a local sale, rubbing had increased in all pigs on the property. This was evident from the trees in the sow paddock, which had been virtually ring barked. He had sprayed sump oil on the backs of all sows, but this hadn’t improved matters.

When the itching and rubbing was noticed in this litter the farmer blamed the straw bedding in the farrowing pen. He replaced it with sawdust but when the rubbing continued he sought advice.

Investigation
The visiting veterinarian found one piglet in a litter of ten severely affected (as shown in the picture). Other piglets in the litter had numerous raised lumps mainly along the belly and around the head. Their mother appeared to have plenty of milk and creep feed was available, but the piglets were not good “doers” and they seemed to spend a lot of time rubbing themselves.

The history and symptoms indicated that mange mites were the most likely cause of the trouble so the veterinarian took a skin scraping which was examined under a microscope and revealed the presence of sarcotic mange mites.

Cause
The sarcoptic mange mites had been brought on to the farm by the six baconers purchased at the local sale. These pigs appeared to be all right when purchased...
but the small mange mites must have been
buried in the skin. Once on the new pro­
erty they had increased in number and
spread unnoticed to the owner's own sows,
causing minor skin lesions, irritation and
rubbing. The oil had had little effect on
the spread, and when this particular sow
had farrowed, mange mites soon made
their way on to the piglets where they
rapidly increased in number. After their
favourite sites of attack, the skin along the
belly and around the head, had become
crowded they spread all over the body
causing unusually severe lesions.

Action

The farmer was advised to purchase
enough of an organic phosphate insecti­
cide to treat all pigs, as trials using an
0.25 per cent. concentration of this insecti­
cide had shown it to be very effective. The
farmer's son mentioned that they had a
tin of insecticide left over after jetting
the sheep against blowfly strike. A search
of the "medicine cabinet" was made and a
tin of diazinon, an organic phosphate in­
secticide was found. A look at the direc­
tions revealed that an 0.25 per cent. solu­
tion would be 10 times stronger than that
recommended for sheep lice.

The required solution was made up and
the piglets dipped in it. The sows were
all crushed in a small yard and thoroughly
sprayed from above and below, using a
knapsack spray. The pig houses were also
sprayed as the owner had been warned
that mites could live away from the pig for
up to 14 days.

Two weeks later the treatment was re­
peated to kill any new mites which might
have hatched out.

Results

The sows and litters soon stopped rub­
ing and the skin lesions disappeared.

To avoid another possible build-up of
mange bite, the farmer will spray each sow
before farrowing. Any pigs which he pur­
chases in future will certainly be sprayed
twice before being placed in the main
piggery.

— F. C. WILKINSON,
Veterinary Surgeon

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