

PREVALENCE OF OSTEOCHONDROSIS AMONG THE PIGS BRED IN LITHUANIA

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Summary. The syndrome of leg weakness that is directly related to osteochondrosis has become quite widespread in pig husbandry. The problem has become acute because, from exterior view point, long and muscular pigs are being raised. Osteochondrosis is a degenerative joint disease of bone and cartilage tissues that leads to leg weakness of pigs. The heritability coefficient of leg weakness defect varies from 0.2 to 0.6 for different pig breeds. Studies of hereditary factors become more important in selection of pigs for higher performance and health improvement.

The monitoring of pig osteochondrosis in lithuania was started in 2001. 1009 pigs of various genotypes and with an average weight of 100 kg have been tested. The pigs were selected at a control fattening station, slaughtered, and osteochondrosis was measured according to the methods applied in sweden by the cut surface of distal femur and humerus. The severity of this disease was scored in elbow and knee joints on a 0-5 point scale. The occurrence of osteochondrosis among all the tested pigs of various breeds made up 48.1 %. Lithuanian white pigs were least affected by osteochondrosis in the joints (32.7 % of pigs), while osteochondrotic lesions were registered in 78.7 % of crossbreds out of imported breeds. The study indicated that castrated males were more inclined to have the leg weakness syndrome than gilts (51.6 % vs. 44.5 %). Front legs were more affected by joint lesions. The investigation data indicated that osteochondrosis should be controlled in the course of selection of pigs bred in lithuania.

Keywords: osteochondrosis, pig breeds, sex, selection.