

# Pig Owner's News for the

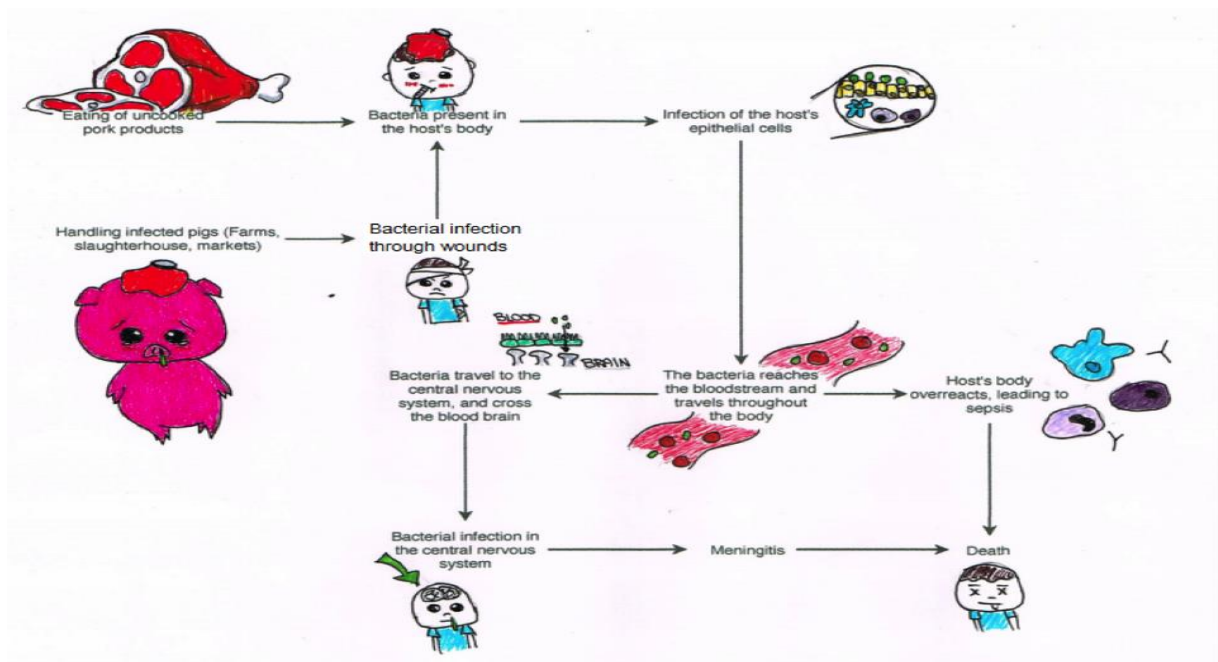
# Hunter



## Zoonoses

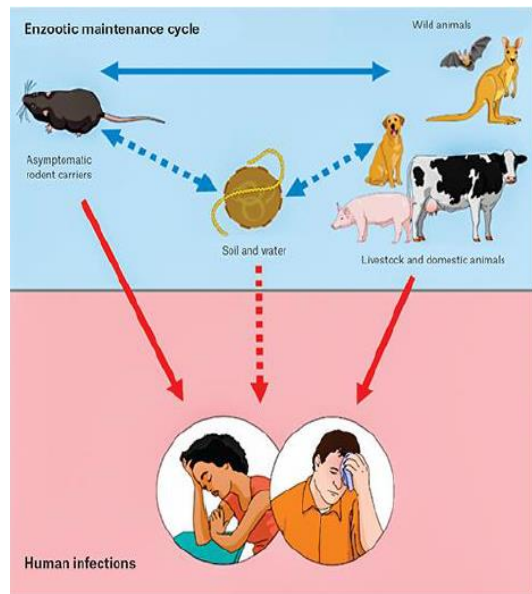
June 2021

Zoonoses are diseases that can be transmitted between animals and humans. Humans can contract zoonoses through direct contact, bites, contact with contaminated materials/water/food, inhalation or vectors (eg. ticks). In the first 5 months of 2021, there have been the following cases of notifiable diseases in NSW: Brucellosis 1, Leptospirosis 51, Q Fever 63.



**Q Fever** (*Coxiella burnetii*) is found in the placenta, birth fluids, urine, faeces and milk of infected animals (livestock and wildlife). The organism can survive in the soil and dust for years. It can be inhaled from contaminated air or dust. Q fever causes flu like symptoms in humans which can recur or they can develop chronic fatigue. Vaccination is recommended for all people who handle livestock. No vaccine for animals is available. You must have a skin test and blood test prior to vaccination. If both are negative (no evidence of prior exposure), you are then administered a single dose vaccine for long immunity. It is an expensive vaccine, but cheap insurance against a debilitating disease. Contact your local GP or the local Public Health Unit for more details.

**Leptospirosis** is a cause of abortions or weak and stillborn piglets. It can also cause loss of appetite, fever, depression or mild diarrhoea in pigs. It is spread from birthing fluids and urine and can be spread from mice and rats. Pigs become infected when bacteria enter their bodies through the mouth, nose or eyes or through breaks in the skin. The bacteria multiply in the kidney and are then shed in the urine at rates of up to 1 billion per litre. Humans show flu like symptoms, can have ongoing fatigue and joint soreness and potential severe complications such as kidney failure. This is a significant WHS issue for pig producers, as treated, recovered pigs remain a source of infection. Protection is through vaccination of pigs, as there is no human vaccine available. An excellent rodent control programme is essential as rodents will spread disease on farms.



**Brucella suis** is most commonly seen in association with feral pigs and dogs used for pig hunting. It can be associated with people who take part in these activities, but also those who butcher feral pigs. It is important to ensure feral pigs do not have access to domestic pigs to prevent infection. *Brucella suis* causes severe flu like symptoms in humans that requires aggressive treatment.

**Erysipelas** in pigs causes skin lesions, sudden death, fever and arthritis. It is excreted in saliva, nasal secretions, faeces and urine. It survives for weeks outside of the pigs especially in litter bedding or earth bases. In people it usually causes erysipiloid, a local skin lesion. It can also cause acute septicaemia and endocarditis.

**Streptococcus /Strep suis** commonly colonises tonsils and nasal passages of weaner pigs. In pigs, infection with *Strep suis* can cause septicaemia, meningitis, arthritis, myocarditis, endocarditis and pneumonia. It rarely causes disease in people in Australia, but can affect pig farmers, butchers and vets. It can cause meningitis, septicaemia or toxic shock syndrome in people. It can be fatal if not treated aggressively. There is no vaccine currently available for pigs. Good husbandry and disinfection assists in control.

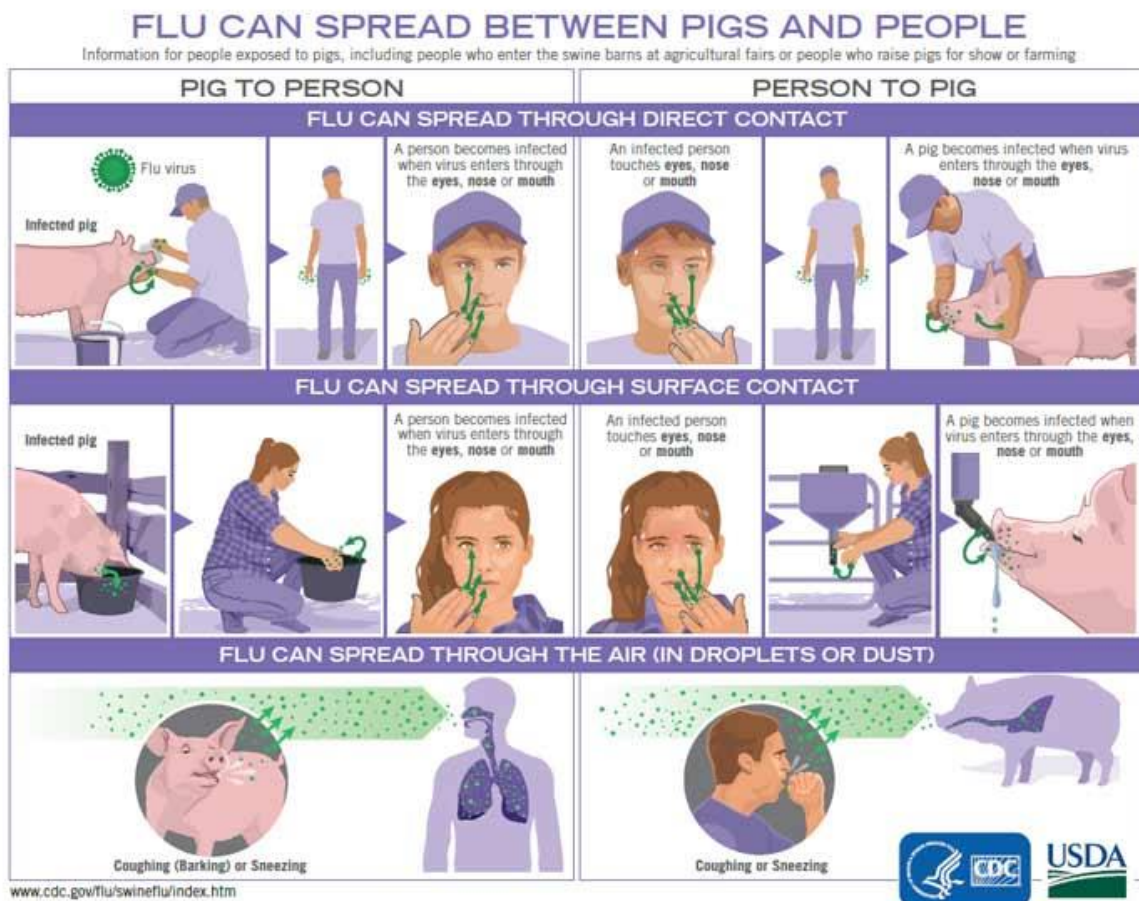
**GIT – E.coli, Campylobacter, Giardia, Crypto, Salmonella** – these can all cause diarrhoea and/or vomiting in people. Most people become infected from handling infected faecal material or from eating contaminated meat. *Campylobacter* is a common cause of gastroenteritis in people. *Salmonella* is commonly found in pig production systems throughout Australia. Infection rates with *Salmonella* of up to 30% of pigs have been documented. It is often asymptomatic in pigs, but can cause diarrhoea in people. *Cryptosporidium* has shown 6% occurrence in pig herds, more commonly in animals between 5-8 weeks of age (preweaning diarrhoea). *E.coli* causes pre and post-weaning diarrhoea in pigs.

**Ringworm** is uncommon and superficial in most circumstances, but can be mistaken for Erysipelas

**Swine Influenza** is the influenza strain that primarily infects pigs. It can be transmitted to people in close contact with infected pigs via respiratory secretions. People can also transmit the flu to pigs, so it is advised that all people in contact with pigs receive the annual flu vaccination to protect the health of their pigs.

**Measures you can take:**

- Handle animals safely to avoid bites and injuries
- Thoroughly wash any bite wounds and report injuries
- Do not eat or drink while handling animals or in animal housing areas
- Wear personal protective clothing (PPE) including gloves when handling sick animals, body fluids and waste. Cover any wounds you have on your hands etc.
- Launder soiled clothing separately from your personal clothes
- Keep animal areas clean and disinfect equipment after using it on animals or in animal areas
- Wash hands after contact
- Vaccinate where possible – yourself and your animals
- Maintain good rodent control
- Practice Farm Biosecurity
- If unwell, always remember to remind your GP that you own farm animals



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