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# Hog Louse and Mange Affect Pork Production

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In order to meet increased pork production goals, every effort must be made to reduce losses to a minimum, as well as to make maximum use of available feeds. To reduce pig losses, good management, sanitation, and the control of diseases and parasites are essential. Of the various parasites, the two external species, hog louse and scab mite are often of very great importance. On the other hand, both of these pests can be kept under complete control with reasonable attention to sanitation and good management.

**Hog Louse.**—This is the largest species of blood-sucking louse found infesting farm animals. When full-grown, it is about one-fourth inch in length. It confines its attack entirely to hogs. Its large size makes it rather easy to see though its color matches the skin of the host. It injures the host by piercing its skin and sucking its blood. This irritation causes the hog to rub against posts or other objects and severely infested animals fail to take on flesh properly. Also, at farrowing time their irritation may cause sows to crush some of the pigs. Likewise, the lice quickly migrate to the young pigs, often doing serious damage to them. There is a common saying among hog raisers that young pigs are born lousy.

The hog louse is active all winter, feeding and cementing its whitish eggs to the base of the hair, especially on the lower part of the host's body. Under favorable conditions, the young lice feed and mature in two or three weeks when they are ready to start another generation. This means that they breed rapidly and if not controlled may soon

cause severe injury. They collect in greatest abundance in and about the ears and in folds of the skin.

**Control.**—Because of the hog's tough skin, most any of several readily available oils may be safely and effectively used to control hog lice. Crude oil, used crank-case oil, raw linseed oil, diluted creosote dip, and a mixture of equal parts of cottonseed oil and kerosene may be sprayed or sprinkled on infested animals, or they may be applied with a paint brush or a mop with good results. All the animals in the herd should be treated and the treatment should be repeated a time or two at two-week intervals. Where infestations are less severe, a little crude oil added to the water in a wallow or a gunnysack saturated with oil and fastened around a rubbing post will help to control lice, though they are less effective than where the oil is applied directly on the infested portions of the animal. In case of large herds, a dipping vat is more practical, and crude petroleum, fuel oil, or a creosote dip may be used in the vat.

**Mange Mite.**—This is a very small, light-colored, 8-legged, spider-like skin mite. Forms of this same mite may attack hogs, horses, and cattle. Infested hogs scratch and rub even more vigorously than when infested with lice. Infested animals have the skin about the ears, eyes, neck and back inflamed, scurfy, scabby, cracked, or covered with pimples. The mites burrowing in the skin cause the irritation which may become so severe that the animals make no gains. The mites spread from one animal to another in the herd and both eggs and mites may remain alive on rubbing posts or about the bedding for several weeks.

**Control.**—The same treatment recommended for the control of lice will also control mange, but the applications must be thorough. If possible, infested herds should be treated in a dipping vat, using crude petroleum or a creosote dip. Usually one dipping will clean up an infestation, but where infestations are severe a second treatment should be given. All animals in a herd should be treated and pens harboring infested animals should be thoroughly disinfected to prevent reinfestation. If boars or brood sows are purchased and added to the herd, they should be carefully checked for possible evidence of scab infestation. If found affected, treat them before allowing them to mingle with the clean herd. Also, affected animals should be treated to get rid of mange mite infestation, before they are sent to the market, in order to prevent contamination of trucks, railroad cars, stockyard and other animals which may later come in contact with such equipment. In some regions, mange on hogs, cattle, and horses, and sheep scab are so serious that special control regulations have been enacted.