



## Mitchell Veterinary Services

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Swine Newsletter  
September 2, 2013

#### More on Breeding Herd, Circovirus Vaccination

If you have sows, and didn't read last month's newsletter, then please call us and we will get it out to you via email, fax, mail, whatever. Please read it. In my opinion it is one of the more important newsletters that I have written.

Why? Well, I had been sitting on the fence wondering about the effectiveness of sow herd circovirus vaccination for quite awhile. But, after hearing Dr. Darin Madson from Iowa State University present his research and recommendations I decided that yes, it is worth including in all routine sow/breeding herd vaccine schedules.

During the past month, some of you commented that this was a new idea to you and asked where it was coming from? Well, let me explain...., back in 2004 or 2005 when circovirus was wreaking havoc the first vaccine we got to use was for sows, pre-farrowing. It solved the weaner barn problems but not really the finishing barn problems (maternal antibodies obtained from sows colostrum created by pre-farrowing sow vaccination does wear off and then the pig is no longer protected). While we were using the pre-farrowing vaccination strategy some producers noticed that the health of the breeding herd seemed to improve too. And also the reproductive statistics improved a bit. Then later, when we dropped the sow vaccination strategy and started to vaccinate all the piglets instead (a lot more money, a lot more work but better results and way better return on investment) some of the same producers who had noticed an improvement in health and numbers of the breeding herd, noticed a similar decline! Therefore, some re-implemented the sow vaccinations. This was all testimonial so a vet doesn't really know what to think of it but now there is some science behind it.

But, the handful of swine herd managers that were using the circovirus vaccine on the sows, were pretty well all administering it pre farrowing just as they had originally. Please re read last month's newsletter. We now know that;

1. The breeding herd is healthier if vaccinated (lower sow mortality).
2. Secondary benefits like decreased wean to service interval, improved farrowing rates, decreased pre weaning mortality, increased weaned pigs/sow etc. is real.
3. That the vaccine should be given pre-breeding, not pre-farrowing.

What is the downside if sows are vaccinated pre-farrowing? Well, as mentioned earlier, the piglets receive antibodies against circovirus from the colostrum. These antibodies don't wear off until well after weaning. If these "maternal" antibodies are real high (as they are when the sows are vaccinated just before farrowing) then they will

interfere with the “paternal” antibodies the piglet’s immune system is trying to make when we vaccinate them. Then, you end up with a certain percentage of the starter/growers not having very good protection against circovirus. Those pigs will succumb to porcine circovirus associated diseases and whoever owns them in the grow finish period will not be very happy. I actually had this happen in one case.

According to Dr. Madson, the sows only need the vaccine once a year. Not 2.5 times! My own thought would be to vaccinate the gilts twice prior to breeding, and to vaccinate the sows at or before weaning (the Monday before weaning makes sense to me) from Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> to June 1<sup>st</sup> every year. Between those dates they all should wean once.

So, you can go and add that to your typed up Breeding Herd vaccination Schedule. Ok? Maybe, if we haven’t reviewed those in awhile, we should do that the next time Glenn or I am out to your place.

Obviously, this topic has stimulated a lot of questions. Please call us.

Yours truly,

R.G. Reed

RGR/np