What is Aujeszky’s disease and what causes it?

Aujeszky’s disease, or pseudorabies, is a contagious viral disease that primarily affects pigs. The virus causes reproductive and severe neurological disease in affected animals; death is common. The disease occurs in parts of Europe, Southeast Asia, Central and South America, and Mexico. It was once prevalent in the United States, but has been eradicated in commercial operations; the virus is still found in feral (wild) swine populations.

What animals get Aujeszky’s disease?

Pigs are the most frequently affected animals, however nearly all mammals, including cattle, sheep, goats, cats, and dogs can become infected with the virus. Pigs are capable of carrying the virus without showing signs of disease.

How can my animal get Aujeszky’s disease?

Aujeszky’s disease is usually introduced into a herd from an infected animal. All new animals entering the herd should be tested and isolated prior to introduction into the herd. Disinfection measures can be useful for controlling the spread of the disease and should be used on equipment, vehicles and footwear in contact with pigs. Domestic pig herds should be kept away from feral swine.

Vaccines are available for pigs but they only prevent signs of disease and do not prevent infection. In the U.S., a surveillance program monitors pig populations, making sure that the disease is not spread from feral pig populations to domestic pigs.

For More Information

CFSPH Technical Fact Sheets. Aujeszky’s Disease at http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/DiseaseInfo/