

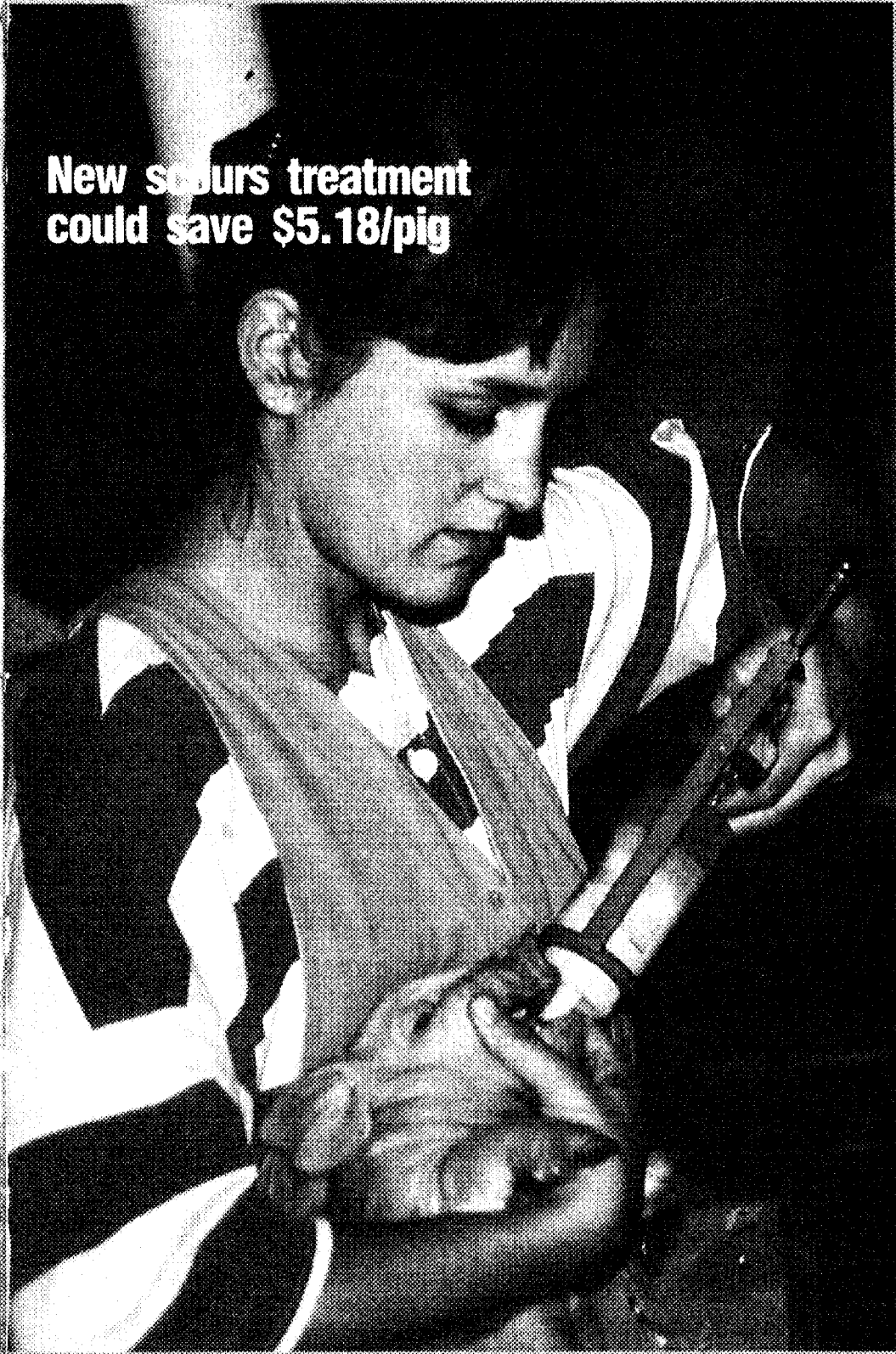
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could save \$5.18/pig**

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Auspig model indicates new scours treatment could boost returns by \$5.18 a pig

Australian-developed technology could help save the pig industry Australian-developed technology could help save the pig industry millions of dollars in lost income with the development of a safer and more effective way of controlling one of its most devastating and costly disease — scours.

by JIM LINDSAY

A preventative treatment which is non-antibiotic, non-vaccine and non-probiotic, "Detach" is claimed to effectively control 7—10 day scours when given at five or six days of age, and early post-weaner scours when given at weaning.

Its distributors, Ciba-Geigy, claim field trials have shown impressive decrease in piglet mortality and significant increases in growth rates for suckers (10%) and weaners (5%). Some trials have reported up to 43% and 13% increases, respectively.

According to Ciba-Geigy marketing manager, Jeremy Cocks, computer simu-

Detach trial summary.

	Suckers	Weaners
Number of trials	11	8
Number of piglets	4752	1409
Average daily weight gain	12.7%	8.6%
Reduction in mortality	42.4%	41%
Reduction in antibiotic use	67.4%	31%
\$ Benefit/100 head	\$526	\$299

lation using the CSIRO's Auspig program has indicated treatment with Detach could increase returns at slaughter by up to \$5.18 per pig.

"Pigs treated with Detach produced a \$16.60 margin at slaughter compared to \$11.42 for the untreated pigs, which is a 45% improvement in net revenue per pig," he said. "This would equate to an \$11,000 increase in revenue (less treatment and labour costs) in a 100 sow piggery with an "average performance" and a return to investment of between six and nine times the treatment cost."

(Assumed factors in the untreated

herd were a 14% mortality and a weaning rate of 6.2kg at 21 days. The treated herd was assumed to have a nine percent mortality and a weaning rate of 6.9kg at 21 days).

The product of combined government and private sector expertise, Detach was researched by David Chandler at the



David Chandler

Victorian Department of Agriculture's Institute of Animal Science, Atwood (Vic), and developed by Enzacor and Ciba-Geigy Australia.

Dr Chandler said Detach was similar to trypsin, a naturally occurring protease enzyme which digests protein in the smaller intestine of pigs. "Whereas older pigs produce sufficient trypsin to combat scouring, young pigs can't, which makes them particularly prone to this costly menace," he said.

"Detach's patented controlled-release coating allows it to pass through the stomach to the small intestine where it temporarily mimics the intestinal environment of older pigs. Detach destroys

Producers give Detach 'thumbs up'

Workers at Australia's second largest piggery, the Commercial Pig Company, have given Detach the 'thumbs up' as an effective tool in scours management.

Unit manager at CPC's Mayfair Farms, Huntly, Phil Henderson, believes Detach has significantly improved mortality and growth rates in his 800-head piggery.

A Mayfair Farms employee for 10 years, Mr Henderson said he was more than satisfied with the results. "Our 'normal' mortality rate used to be up towards 15%, but things have settled down since we started using Detach in March," he said. "We've had a particularly good spell lately and during May our mortality rate was down to about nine percent.

"The most important and noticeable change is that our young pigs are definitely bigger. They're showing a heap of condition especially in the second week. The piglets have got a better look about them and they don't look like they're being challenged by scours at all."

Mr Henderson said his shedhands had also noticed the improvement in overall weaner health and had commented on the ease of application. "To avoid double handling, we dose our piglets at two days when they are getting their teeth cut," he said. "This worked well for us because we knew we had a problem with scours at two days anyway. Only pigs showing signs of scours are given a second dosage, which has proven both effective and cost efficient."

David Chandler, who researched Detach, said the CPC trial showed that Detach-treated pigs weighed an average 500 grams heavier at weaning. "And once pigs are on that different growth curve, it continues right through and that 500g could mean a 45% increase in profitability at the end of the day," he said.

microbial attachment and toxin sites in the small intestine, eliminating adhesion sites for diarrhoea-causing bacteria. And as it controls scours without actually attempting to kill the microbes, the product does not encourage selection for resistant pathogen strains. Remaining active for about three days, the product allows treated pigs to still develop their own natural immunity.

"Trial results have also indicated improvements in pig performance in the presence of a broad spectrum of microbial pathogens such as E. Coli, Coccidia and Rotavirus. Furthermore, it is derived from naturally occurring plant enzymes which leave no residues."

Dr Chandler said Detach was ideally used in conjunction with vaccination. "Vaccination should still be seen as the first line of defence, but even then, about 10% of piglets still develop scours if the vaccine breaks down, or if the piglet is not getting enough milk from the sow, or if its own stomach isn't functioning correctly."

Currently available as an orally-applied calibrated doser, a feed pellet is under development for the easier dosing of larger weaners. Mr Cocks said Detach had enormous market potential both here and overseas, and that exciting trial work was already being carried out for its use in calves and even humans.

Industry looking to buy sales

The Australian Pork Producers' Federation and the Australian Pork Corporation are considering buying out the NSW computerised sale by description system owned by Partridge & Harvey Pty Ltd and the South Australian physical sale by description system operated by the SA Stock Agents' Association.

The APPF at its meeting in Sydney resolved to investigate the possibilities of buying the systems to be combined with Calm and thereby terminate any further payments to operate Calm.

Then APPF president Geoff Baker said that the delegates who would negotiate the deal would have to make certain it was supported by Calm.

Peter Brechin said SA had virtually become a tender sale, with all pigs sold after the sale.

Alan King from Queensland said Calm was pretty close to breaking even and it

just needed a bit of "oomph" and they would get it right.

Fred Hellier pointed out that the beef people in Queensland went out of Calm because there was more money for producers to sell on the grid system to the works.

Alex Taylor said if "we got this system going Calm would have enough pigs a week to make it economical".

Mr Cliff Harvey, of Partridge & Harvey, said he knew nothing about an offer to buy out his company and expressed surprise at the suggested figure of

\$60,000. "Is that all they think we are worth?" he said. "They asked us to join Calm and I said it was a bit like the tail wagging the dog and why didn't they join forces with us."

"Between SA and ourselves we would be selling 2.5 times as much as Calm. We are selling under the Marketing Livestock Study Group terms and conditions, which Geoff Baker helped set up. SA was the first State to have sale by description and we copied them."

Mr Harvey said he would not consider joining Calm because he did not recognise it as a true auction system "because once the reserve price is set you are not open to any variances at the time."

He said he was scheduled to have a meeting with APPF representatives on June 12, but had not been told it concerned an offer to buy out his company.

More cases of wobbly pigs

Wobbly pigs, alias cerebellar cortical abiotrophy (CCA), is a condition that was first diagnosed in Queensland in 1985, and has recently been recognised in NSW and Tasmania.

by **BELINDA WALKER***

It is an inherited condition that can be traced to an imported Canadian Yorkshire boar.

Piglets are born normal, but at five to six weeks of age become unsteady on their hind legs. Balance gets progressively worse until front legs are also affected, and some may end up lying on their sides unable to rise. Others can manage a dog sitting position and continue to eat. Feet are placed wider apart to help maintain balance.

Some of these pigs can be raised to market weight if raised away from the competition of others. A few will develop pneumonia from lying on one side for long periods. The condition is caused by a brain malfunction, where some of the nerve cells in the cerebellum, which controls balance, die.

Some cases previously sent to veterinary laboratories as suspect meningitis due to Strep. suis bacterial infection have been re-examined for the microscopic brain damage seen in this disease, and are now thought to be cases of CCA that previously went unrecognised.

This disease is not common, but should be considered if a pig has problems with its balance, and has Canadian Yorkshire bloodlines.

* Belinda Walker is a NSW Agriculture & Fisheries veterinary officer (pig health) at Gunnedah.

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