

OAHN (Ontario Animal Health Network) Expert Networks  
**Swine producer notice December 2014- SAMPLE**

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*This information is a professional communication for swine producers. It is the intent of this program to improve the health of the Ontario herd. If you have an urgent issue or any questions, please contact your veterinarian.*

**SEASONAL INFERTILITY (AUTUMN/WINTER ABORTION SYNDROME)**

Despite domestication, female pigs may still exhibit seasonal trends in reproductive performance. Since wild pigs typically only produce one litter per year, with farrowings during early spring, there is an in-built tendency for sows and gilts to not maintain a pregnancy during the summer and autumn. **This can result in more non-infectious abortions in autumn and winter.**



**Cold stress can also cause abortions in late-term sows.** Usually this is related to inadequate energy intake and increased body heat loss if barns are too cool in the colder months. In sows housed in stalls, **abortions may be seen in animals in the rows next to the outside walls or near doors with inadequate weather-stripping.** Water leaks or overflowing troughs can also contribute to chilling. If the metabolism of sows is allowed to progress to a negative energy state so that they have to use their body fat to maintain their energy levels, then

individual susceptible animals may abort. Raising diet energy levels and the amount of feed and increasing barn temperature are recommended to prevent such abortions.

Decreasing daylight length is another contributing factor to seasonal infertility. **To maintain pregnancy, daylight length should be 12-16 hours per day.** A simple tip is to make sure that you can read a newspaper in the darkest parts of the building at sow eye level. If not, then you may have problems. Cleaning light bulbs and windows and painting ceilings and interior walls white to increase the reflection of light is one way of improving the environment.

An important feature of these non-infectious abortions is that the sows remain normal, often eating feed in the morning, and aborting their litters in the afternoon. **The aborted fetuses are perfectly normal and the sows show no signs of illness.**

If your herd is experiencing an increase in abortions at any time of the year, you should contact your veterinarian for assistance.

**More information on seasonal infertility can be found on the following sites:**

<http://www.thepigsite.com/diseaseinfo/137/seasonal-infertility>

[http://www.pig333.com/what\\_the\\_experts\\_say/seasonal-infertility-in-swine\\_1322/](http://www.pig333.com/what_the_experts_say/seasonal-infertility-in-swine_1322/)