

## *Oh, What a Boar – Part 2*

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First, a clarification of a statement in the first “O What a Boar” article. Near the bottom of the article what was written: “Of these, the accessory glands are the largest, often reaching lengths of 10 cm. “should have read that the seminal vesicles can reach lengths of 10 cm, not the accessory glands. They ARE an accessory gland, but the way it was initially worded it did not make it clear which anatomical structure was being commented on.

Seminal vesicles may play a role in some of the reproductive failure seen that is attributable to the boar and frankly may be a means of spread of bacteria via the ejaculate to infect some sows. There are two independent verbal reports of boars that either died or were euthanized who had large pus-filled seminal vesicles. One boar had signs of simply being ill and didn’t recover and the second animal’s signs have been forgotten (by me). Infected seminal vesicles can certainly play a role in a boar’s overall health and probably his reproductive health as well.

Some fairly common issues seen in our boars are impaction and prolapsed penises. Impaction is fairly straightforward. The buildup of secretions and other debris in the perineal sac can cause quite an accumulation- which may grow to assume rather prodigious proportions. The debris needs to be removed down to the surface of the perineal sac. Sometimes this debris comes out easily and intact and then there are the occasions when you have to work at getting all the stuff out. Using exam gloves will encourage a more thorough cleanout and cotton swabs can be employed to wipe out a lot of the excess glandular secretion. This area seems to get stretched out and loose in some boars so those who suffer impaction need to be looked at on a regular basis. Impaction is a disqualification on the show table (page 233 SOP).

Prolapsed penises are seen in different situations. A boar may prolapse his penis to varying degrees when housed with sows in a breeding situation (or just because he is doing his thing). Sometimes the penis can get quite dirty and the boar cannot retract the penis into the prepuce, but once cleaned up and replaced, the boar seems to have no further problems. Then there is the case of the boar you find who has had his penis prolapsed for an extended period of time. The penis is dried up and dragging in the cage litter. After cleaning and replacing, the next time you look- the penis is out again. The boar seems unable to retract his penis into the prepuce. It is unclear whether the boar is getting an erection and then unable to bring his penis back into the prepuce or if there is an underlying neurologic reason why the penis remains exposed (the retractor penis muscle is innervated by sacral nerves so any condition affecting these nerves may be reflected in an inability to retract the penis). Generally, the boars in the first instance are younger animals whose breeding ability is not impaired. In the case of the chronically prolapsed animal, the future reproductive capability would have to be questioned. In both

cases, the boars seem to be able to urinate just fine and often the prolapse is just a serendipitous finding.

Some boars will develop an inflamed prepuce/penis (balanoposthitis) that the owner may be unaware of except upon close examination. There is a buildup of smegma-like material in the sheath and penis and the outside of the penis is raw and sore. The prepuce and penis both can be swollen and may bleed. These fellows need cleaned up- please work gently. If you have some lidocaine or some sort of topical anesthetic, put this on the penis before you get down to the job. This condition is exquisitely painful for them. Once cleaned up gently with water and a Qtip you can then apply an over the counter vaginitis medication on the penis before replacing it. The good news is that these boars heal up quickly and generally need only a treatment or two. Why some very few boars get this condition is a mystery. Maybe they aren't cleaning themselves as they should. These boars retain their reproductive capabilities without a hitch once they are healed. When they are sore, they are NOT going to be interested in breeding a sow.

A condition that I have seen only once is a persistent frenulum which is a membranous attachment of the underside of the glans of the penis to the prepuce. When the boar gets an erection, his penis is pulled downward in a curved fashion because it is literally tied down. Again, this is a very easy fix. With the penis extended and the membrane visualized, you cut the MEMBRANE- little snip, no worries- maybe a small drop of blood (if it bleeds a lot, you have cut where you shouldn't!). Do NOT cut the prepuce and do NOT cut the penis. If you don't know what you are cutting forget about it and take the animal to a veterinarian. If you do know what you are doing, your boar will thank you and your sows may thank you. Boars cannot achieve intromission with a penis that is not in proper alignment. Again, you will probably never see this.

Lastly, the location of the boar's testicles needs to be ascertained before he put into breeding. Both testicles should be in the scrotum or at least very nearly so. Since the inguinal rings remain open in boars it is possible for them to be held up higher, but any boar that has testicles which cannot be palpated and in the right location should be suspect as a breeding animal. If retained abdominally, the animal may be infertile. If one testicle has dropped and the other hasn't, this animal probably should not be used as a breeding animal. I cannot say with certainty in cavies, but at least in other animals it is quite clear that cryptorchidism is an inherited problem. A boar with only one testicle present in his scrotum is likely to be DQ'd on the show table (page 233 SOP). Strangely, and without any explanation being offered by me, sometimes one of the testicles will relocate to a spot between the inguinal canal and the umbilicus outside the body wall. I would likewise consider these boars unacceptable as breeding animals (one of these animals was a recent query and one of these animals was presented at a show and DQ'd several years ago as a lump until it was massaged back into proper place).

In conclusion, if you are having reproductive issues with your boar(s) at least give them the courtesy of a visual inspection of the involved parts before you assume his interests lie elsewhere. They can have problems which are very treatable and some which are not. Hopefully this article has offered a few

ideas on how to deal with boarish issues. Again, your experience and ideas may be at odds with what you see here. That's fine too.

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