THE VALUE OF CLINICAL SYMPTOMS OF LEG WEAKNESS IN RELATION TO OSTEOCHONDROSIS IN SWINE.

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Introduction
In previous papers (1,2) preliminary results of a study on the value of clinical symptoms of leg weakness in relation to the pathological findings have been presented. At that time it was already shown that an acceptable high percentage of agreement was found between the clinical and pathological evaluation of the severity of leg weakness. In this paper further information on the influence of the age of the pig, housing and the value of individual symptoms presented.

Materials and Methods
187 pigs were examined clinically every 4 weeks during fattening. If the pigs were kept for breeding they were then examined every 3 months. After slaughter all long bones were examined pathologically. A scoring system of 5 classes of increasing leg weakness was used to evaluate the relation between the clinical and pathological findings. The clinical and pathological scoring systems have been published previously (1,3).

Results and Discussion
Between the clinical and pathological findings an overall agreement was found for the leg weakness of the pigs as a whole, for the hind legs the percentage of agreement was 58% and for the fore legs it was 69%. For pigs slaughtered between the age of 150 and 174 days the percentage of agreement for the hind legs was 52% and for the fore legs 59%. For pigs between 175 and 199 days old the figures were 55% and 71%. Between 200 and 224 days old percentages of 42% and 70% for respectively fore and hind legs were found. For pigs between 225 and 299 days old percentages of 42% and 70% were found, similarly for pigs more than 300 days old 60% and 75% was found. It seems that the mistake made in the clinical evaluation of leg weakness becomes less if the pig gets older. Even then clinical symptoms appear to be less severe than the pathological findings. In the hind legs this increase in agreement is seen in much later than in the fore legs. Only in pigs of more than 300 days old a steady increase is seen to about 90%. An explanation for this might be the difficulty to assign a score of increasing leg weakness because of the age at which the animal is killed. In pigs more than 300 days old, the leg weakness is usually assessed on the basis of the normal long steps: 56 and 64% respectively. From these results it can be concluded that in the hind legs no significant improvement of agreement is of great value as a possible indication for the severity of the pathological lesions.

References

showed a 69% agreement with the pathological lesion score. A slight knock-knee proved to be not right on left and a slight buck-knee in 69%. Both a severe knock-knee and a severe buck-knee were not seen often. As expected they showed 100% agreement between the leg weakness and the osteochondral lesion score. Other rare symptoms in young legs also strongly indicated the presence of severe pathological lesions. The percentage for this symptom was 92. All other symptoms associated with the fore legs during movement and burning on the clow were of hardly any value. The percentage of agreement varied between 40 and 65. In general it is concluded that in cases of disagreement the clinical score was too favourable.

In the hind legs lameness did not always indicate the presence of severe pathological lesions. The percentage of agreement was 78, which means that although all these pigs were considered to have severe leg weakness, this was not confirmed by the pathological findings. Perhaps the amount of pain, which cannot be included in the pathological lesion score, is the reason for this finding. Most of the pigs at 42% had their leg worst far forward and a 42% agreement was found in these animals between the leg weakness and the osteochondral lesion score. The percentage of agreement for this symptom was 78. Weak posture in the hind legs are a common finding. A 42% agreement was found between the leg weakness and the osteochondral lesion score. The same percentage was found for a distinct difference in movement of the hind legs, straight towards and backwards without sideways and turning on the clow was rarely seen. In these few cases the pigs showed only minor pathological lesions. Surgery and turning on the clow was seen in most pigs. They showed the whole range of pathological lesions. The percentage of agreement was 58. For too much staying in the hind quarters while walking a 42% agreement between the osteochondral lesion score was found. A shortening of step and goose-step showed no higher percentage. A normal long step: 56 and 64% respectively. From these results it can be concluded that in the hind legs no significant improvement of agreement is of great value as a possible indication for the severity of the pathological lesions.