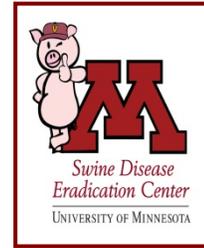


Pork Checkoff Report
Newsletter Article 11/12
Submitted by Dave Wright, D.V.M.



BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR-- PROTECT AREA SOW HERDS

All producers suffer when a PRRS infection strikes, but sow herds are particularly vulnerable to economic hardship. An acute infection with a hot strain of PRRS virus can cost a farrowing producer up to \$350 per sow. Non-filtered farrowing units in swine dense, high-prevalence regions often experience a new break every 13 months.

Since the PRRS virus can spread by aerosol up to six miles, one of the best ways to reduce the risk of re-infection is to be surrounded by negative or non-shedding pigs. Nursery and finishing sites that stock PRRS positive pigs are particularly problematic to nearby sow sites when there is not a cooperative effort to manage risk in an area.

What can be done?

1. Participate in regional PRRS control and elimination projects in your area.
2. Talk to your neighbors and discuss ways to help each other reduce the risk of new PRRS infections. Finishing sites have much to gain by reducing the prevalence of PRRS in an area as well, since 50% of negative pigs placed in swine dense areas may become infected.
3. Purchase and place negative pigs in finishing units if possible. There is a \$7 to \$15 advantage to finishing PRRS negative pigs over those that are infected.
4. Talk to your veterinarian and discuss the potential value of vaccinating:
 - a. Vaccination of naïve pigs four weeks prior to exposure to field virus can improve average daily gain 6 lbs/pig and reduce feed conversion by 18 lb of feed.
 - b. Vaccination of infected pigs can reduce the duration and amount of virus shed.
 - c. Although modified live vaccine can travel by aerosol up to one mile, the amount and duration of viral spread is low, making the risk relatively low.
5. Respect a neighbor's willingness to share a positive herd status. Cooperate and communicate in arranging feed delivery and transport biosecurity so that all parties continue to receive service while minimizing risk to negative producers.

By helping area sow farms become PRRS negative and stay negative, more negative pigs are produced to fill nurseries and finishers in an area. This is a benefit to all swine producers.