



“LOCAL CHAMPIONS” FACILITATE COMMUNICATIONS IN REGIONAL PRRS ELIMINATION EFFORTS

Producers who participate in the N212 Voluntary Regional PRRS Elimination Project expect timely communication when the PRRS status of a nearby farm changes. Dr. JeanPaul Cano of Boehringer Ingelheim uses a “sow farm cluster” model in their larger ARC&E projects to facilitate communication with the project coordinator. They recruit “local champions” who solicit and report PRRS status changes in sites surrounding their sow farms. The project coordinator relays the information to other participants.

The ideal “local champion” is an advocate for the project, networks with area producers, and is a conscientious communicator. He or she has a vested interest in the PRRS status of the area because they are responsible for a farrowing or breeding site and the implications of flow from that site. An owner or farm manager would be a likely candidate, but a trusted employee who understands the dynamics of the operation may have more time to manage the expectations of frequent communication.

Effective “local champions” contact producers in a five-mile radius around their farms. They encourage participation in the project and request that their PRRS status be shared with others (by signing a consent letter). They encourage producers to report health changes that would trigger diagnostic tests and they update the project coordinator regularly.

With more than 800 sites in the N212 area, we hope to implement this communication model in the coming year. Please consider becoming a “local champion” for your neighborhood.