



## SWINE EXHIBITIONS AND PRRS RISK

It has been estimated that new PRRS virus infections last fall and winter in the Stevens County area cost producers between \$2 and \$4 million in lost production, lost sales, and medical costs associated with the outbreaks. Nationally PRRS costs the swine industry \$640 million to \$1 billion annually. All individuals exhibiting swine need to understand the importance of reducing the risk of introducing a new PRRS virus into their herds and region.

Although most pigs infected with PRRS virus recover, some pigs can carry the virus for six months or more without showing any signs of disease. These pigs can only be identified by laboratory tests. If you show pigs that carry the PRRS virus, you risk infecting other pigs in the show ring and increase the chance of sending the virus home on the boots, clothing or vehicle of a visitor. PRRS virus can be spread in many ways, including aerosol, so the PRRS status of even one show pig can impact the biosecurity of an entire region.

It is best to purchase show pigs from farms that test negative for PRRS. Many swine producers have eliminated the disease or are free of the disease and conduct regular laboratory tests to insure that their farm stays negative. If you don't know the PRRS status of your farm or the pigs you plan to show, call your veterinarian and request a simple blood test for PRRS.

Vaccination can be a useful tool in controlling the disease, but unfortunately commercial vaccines do not protect against infection. Furthermore, once a pig is vaccinated, it is difficult to differentiate between vaccine strain and field strain infection.

There is no way that you will be able to tell if the pigs showing next to you are infected or not. There is also no law requiring pigs to be tested prior to showing, so you must take precautions to prevent bringing the virus home with you.

- Clean, disinfect and dry all clothing, equipment and transport vehicles associated with the swine exhibit *before and after* the show.
- Isolate your show pigs from the "home herd" for one month after the show and test for PRRS prior to re-introducing them to the herd.

Go to <http://www.aasv.org/aasv/BiosecurityforYouthSwineProjects> or [www.prrs.org](http://www.prrs.org) for more information.