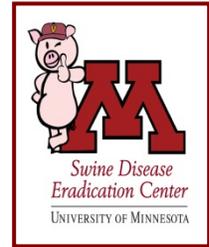


Pork Checkoff Report
Newsletter Article 5/12
Submitted by Dave Wright, D.V.M.



WHY NOT PARTICIPATE?

One of the main obstacles to the N212 Voluntary Regional PRRS Elimination Project is non-participation. Reluctance to participate originates from a number of producer attitudes: 1) Ignorance of the project, 2) Apathy, 3) Inconvenience, 4) Perception of limited value, 5) Cost of time and testing, 6) Fear of a negative response to the disclosure of a positive herd test, or 7) Hostility due to a previous bad experience. Although we may never get full participation, we can strive to dismantle these areas of resistance to encourage participation.

Ignorance: The Minnesota N212 Voluntary Regional PRRS Elimination Project originated in Stevens County in 2004. Since then this producer-driven project has expanded to include all of Minnesota north of Hwy 212 and all of Renville County. The goals are to identify all swine herds in the area, determine the PRRS status of all participating herds, encourage elimination when feasible, and eventually eliminate PRRS virus from the area.

Apathy: The U.S. swine industry loses \$1.8 million per day because of PRRS. A hot outbreak in a farrowing facility can cost a producer up to \$350 per sow. It will cost between \$5 and \$15 more to feed out a pig infected with PRRS virus than its negative counterpart.

Inconvenience: A phone call to your veterinarian explaining your wish to participate is all that is necessary. If your veterinarian is unfamiliar with the project, contact Dave Wright, project coordinator at 763-242-7535 or at wright2us@aol.com. He can provide you with a participation agreement and explain options for testing your herd.

Perception of Limited Value: Although PRRS is still a problem in areas with regional control projects, the prevalence of disease can be lowered and the incidence of new infections can be reduced when producers agree to share herd status and cooperate with fellow producers, veterinarians and members of the agribusiness community to manage outbreaks.

Cost of Time and Testing: New participants are eligible to have a veterinarian of their choice collect samples and submit them to the University of Minnesota diagnostic laboratory free of charge. Producers can also collect oral fluids with a rope test kit and submit samples on their own. A participation agreement allowing disclosure of their herd's PRRS status must be signed prior to sample collection.

Fear of a Negative Response: The goal of the project is to eliminate PRRS virus from the area, *not* to eliminate producers. No one can control the behavior of others, but open

communication and proactive preparation for managing an outbreak can minimize negative consequences.

Hostility from a Bad Experience: It is always difficult to change attitudes if someone has already been offended by a negative experience. Apologies, when appropriate, and respectful, meaningful dialogue with these producers may eventually open the door to participation.

Encouragement from fellow participating swine producers is critical to continued progress in regional PRRS elimination programs. When asked why a producer may not want to participate, the preferred response is, “Why not?”