

## **Update on OPIC PRRS Project**

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Starting in the fall of 2004, there was a marked increase in the numbers of clinical outbreaks of PRRS in Ontario swine herds. Swine veterinarians recognized this and at their regular meeting in January 2005, formed a committee to look into the disease, with the ultimate goal of working towards eradication. Realizing the enormity of this task, the Ontario Pork Industry Council (OPIC) was approached, and they assumed leadership of this project.

### **Industry Impact**

Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS) continues to cause major financial losses in the Ontario swine industry and across North America, estimated to cost Canadian producers upwards of \$100 million annually. Its impact reaches beyond the production sector, affecting the viability of all sectors of the pork industry from transport to processing, feed to genetics. It is clear that a concentrated and co-ordinated industry effort is required to control, and ultimately eliminate, PRRS virus.

### **Mandate**

OPIC brought together a group of individuals with broad industry representation to form the OPIC Swine Health Advisory Board (OSHAB). The mandate of this committee is to carry out a comprehensive and intensive PRRS Project over approximately three years with the ultimate purpose of:

*“understanding how PRRS is moving and changing among herds in Ontario, in order to develop effective control and elimination strategies”.*

### **Objectives**

- To identify factors associated with the spread of PRRS virus in Ontario
- To recommend strategies that will reduce the spread of PRRS virus among farms and that may be used in a PRRS virus elimination program
- To improve communication within and between sectors of the Ontario pork industry by sharing knowledge and resources
- To develop a template for addressing other industry health issues
- To set up a feedback mechanism to evaluate and adjust the course of action

### **Activities**

- *A study to identify the mechanisms and patterns of spread of the PRRS virus in Ontario* – This study has a timeframe of September 2005 through May 2007 and is being funded by Ontario Pork.
- *A study to identify the impact of maternal PRRS immunity* – This project proposal covers a timeframe of January 2006 through June 2007. This proposal has been submitted to Ontario Pork for consideration.

- *A communications initiative* – A communications project has been submitted to the CanAdvance program for funding consideration. This initiative has several components and a proposed timeframe of three years.
  - *Sector meetings* – Meetings that bring together members of individual industry sectors including, but not limited to, genetics, transport, and AI will be on-going over the entire project timeframe. These meetings seek to identify the needs of the sectors as well as to develop minimum standards and best management practices for PRRS prevention, control, and reporting.
  - *Stakeholder meetings* – These broader industry meetings will focus on updating the industry on current research, OSHAB project findings, available technologies, etc.

#### **Pre-requisites for PRRS Project Success**

- A willingness by all sectors to address and support this issue co-operatively and collaboratively

#### **PRRS Project Budget & Funding**

The OSHAB PRRS “Project” is, in fact, a series of projects that will collectively seek to achieve the larger goal of PRRS control and elimination in Ontario.

It is anticipated that as the projects listed above proceed, other needs will be identified, and additional projects developed. As new projects and budgets are determined, OSHAB will communicate funding requirements to industry stakeholders.