

Pork Prose

(Continued from Page D2)

• Step 2. Stabilize the breeding herd. The objective is to get all animals to the same level of immunity. That means introduction of gilt and boar replacements must stop for 4-5 months. Plan ahead and bring in all replacements that are needed to cover the 4-5 month interval. During that time, monitor the blood titers of specific sows each month. (Dr. Graybill believes that vaccination of the sows will enhance the stabilization of immunity.)

• Step 3. Determine the herd profile. Test 30 sows (be sure to include replacement gilts) and 10 animals from each of the following groups: recently weaned (4 weeks), late nursery (8 weeks), and late finishing (5-6 months). If the herd profile matches the guideline below, you're ready for nursery depopulation: Breeding herd: negative* 4-week-old pigs: negative* 8-10 week-old pigs: 60-100% positive* 5-6 month-old pigs: 25-50 percent positive.

• Step 4. Depopulate the nursery. Once you're certain there is no virus shedding in the breeding herd, the nursery is ready for

depopulation. Move all pigs off-site to be finished.

• Step 5. Clean up. Pump the pits and clean nursery with hot water (180 to 200 degrees F). Disinfect with formaldehyde-based product. Allow the wash and disinfectant water to remain in pits overnight. On day 2, pump the pits and repeat the washing and disinfection (this time with phenol-based products). Allow the facility to sit empty from day 3 to 11. On day 12, pump the pits a third time, repeat washing and disinfection (with formaldehyde products). The nursery can be re-filled on day 14. For producers who can't tolerate the 14-day down time, shorter layovers have worked.

In a field study on 34 farms involving 16,000 sows, Dr. Dee has documented improvements in both average daily gain and mortality in the nursery stage. Of the 31 farms with weight gain records, only four showed no improvement in growth rate. Mortality was recorded on all 34 farms, and only two showed no improvement.

Other suggestions, with or without cleanup, that are important when dealing with PRRS:

• Move no pigs between farrowing or nursery rooms. Maintain all-in-all-out at all costs.

• During an outbreak, euthanize all weak newborn pigs and any poor-doing pigs that appear in the farrowing house or nursery. After the outbreak has passed, this practice is questionable.

• Periodically evaluate antibiotic therapy for secondary infections. These treatments may be ineffective.

Vaccine

• Overview — RespPRRS (Trademark) is currently the only commercial vaccine marketed in the U.S. It is produced by NOBL Labs and protects pigs up to 18 weeks of age against the respiratory form of the disease. While the vaccine is used extralabel on sows in some farms, such use must be under veterinary supervision.

Dr. Scott Dee also emphasizes that because diseases such as swine influenza mimic PRRS, a positive diagnosis should be made before vaccine is used. Also, it is not known how well the vaccine will protect pigs against various strains of the virus.

• Safety — Company Tests — The vaccine has been demonstrated safe at vaccine doses far

exceeding those listed on the label. In tests conducted by NOBL, previously unexposed pigs that are vaccinated did not transmit the virus to non-infected, non-vaccinated pigs in the same pen. Also, the vaccine virus did not revert to virulence in either colostrum-deprived pigs, or pregnant sows in their third trimester. However, the company states that pregnant gilts and sows should not be vaccinated.

• Effectiveness — Company Tests — In preliminary tests of the product, it was shown that vaccination reduces the level and duration of viremia (virus in the blood) following challenge with field virus. All test-pigs showed an immune response against PRRS within 21 days following vaccination, with most pigs developing antibodies between 8 and 14 days post vaccination. The same tests demonstrated that vaccinated pigs, after challenged with the virus, maintained normal weight gains, body temperatures and white blood counts. In contrast, non-vaccinated pigs had fevers exceeding 104 degrees F for several days, experienced a decrease in white blood count, and had weight gains that were slower than either vacci-

nates or non-challenged controls.

• Effectiveness — Field Study Results — Two hundred pigs from a 500-sow farm were included in the study. Half the pigs were vaccinated (2 ml IM in the neck at 4 weeks of age, following weaning at 3 weeks of age), while the other half were injected with a sterile diluent. Average daily gain was improved in vaccinated pigs (.73 vs .63 lb/day) as was mortality (0 percent vs 5 percent).

Summary

1. PRRS is a viral disease that causes reproductive problems in sows and respiratory disease in growing pigs.

2. The best strategy for reducing losses associated with PRRS is to stop the transmission from positive to negative pigs.

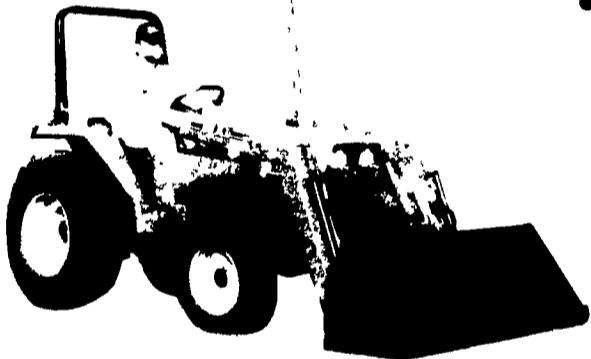
3. The first step is to be sure that replacement gilts are immunized against the disease before entering the herd so that the immune status is stabilized in the breeding animals. This will improve the likelihood of negative animals entering the farrowing house and improve the chances of producing negative pigs. Once that is accomplished,

(Turn to Page D4)

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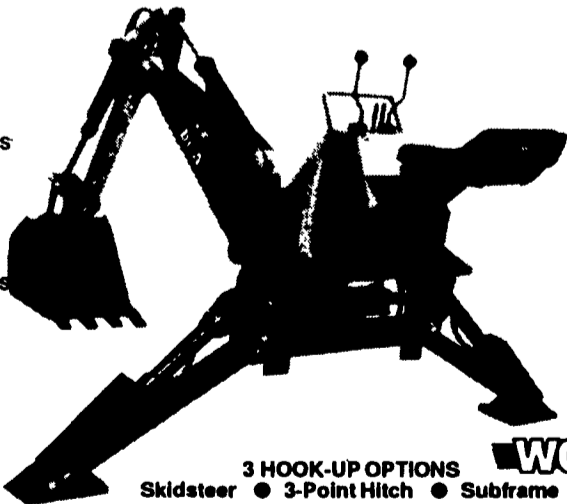
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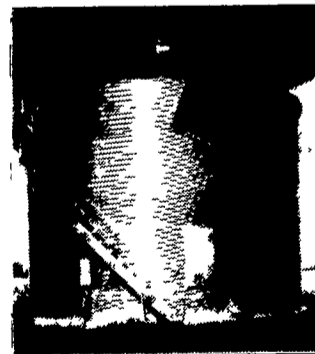
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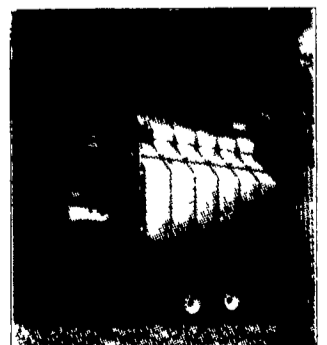
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