20th International Pig Veterinary Society Congress

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We are delighted that the International Pig Veterinary Society Congress 2004, decided to select South Africa as the host country for the 20th IPVS Congress. The Pig Veterinarians of South Africa will ensure that this congress lives up to the best traditions of previous congresses; incorporating an interesting and topical scientific programme, fascinating accompanying persons tours and an excellent social programme, allowing delegates the opportunity to network with their overseas colleagues.

This, the first IPVS congress on the African continent, will undoubtedly be of enormous benefit in generating solutions to the emerging pig veterinary challenges, especially those related to exotic and changing viral diseases, decreased use of antimicrobials and nutritional advances. The congress is important to further pig veterinary science in South Africa, to encourage younger veterinarians to join the pig industry, as a vehicle to generate funds for research and to improve the pig industry in Southern Africa.

South Africa is a magnificent and beautiful country, and offers tourists value for money. Thus, pre and post congress tours will be a major attraction for delegates to come to South Africa. Durban, in KwaZulu Natal, is a vibrant multi-cultured city with magnificent beaches, easily accessible game parks, theme villages and a moderate winter climate making it an ideal tourist destination. We urge our colleagues throughout the world to use this opportunity to get a glimpse of the continent’s rich and fascinating wonders and to enjoy the hospitality of their African friends.

Dr Peter Evans
Chairman: Local Organising Committee: IPVS 2008
NEONATAL DIARRHEAS: A PARADIGMATIC CHANGE

R Goillandeau¹, T Vila², GP Martineau¹
¹National Veterinary School, TOULOUSE CEDEX 3, France
²Schering Plough, LEVALLOIS-PERRET, France

Introduction
The porcine neonatal diarrheas belong to the common but also banalized diseases. They are doubly common in the sense that the producer knows them and that he is generally not caught off guard when they occur, at least sporadically. They are also banalized in the sense that they no longer are subject to numerous clinical descriptions (and this on the contrary to descriptions of physiopathogenic mechanisms and microbiological researches) and that they are reduced for the producer to a micro-organism (like *Escherichia coli*, *Clostridium perfringens* A, *Clostridium difficile* or a rotavirus), and to a "simple" problem of colostrum quality (with vaccinal consequences and/or classical quality distribution amongst parity distribution, gilts being more affected) and of colostral intake (Post-Partum Dysgalactia Syndrome).

Materials and Methods
We started from ten (10) concrete cases of enzootic problems of neonatal diarrheas in ten breedings with excellent zootechnical performances, all followed by different vets and related to different producer groups. One among us (RG) stayed one week in the breeding, from the day of the first parturition of the considered batch until the Monday following the week of parturition. The objective was first of all to compare the information provided by the producer to the vet to those actually recorded in case of a non stop presence, and also to carry out bacteriological and histopathological examinations on four piglets from two different litters that had been showing diarrhea for less than 12 hours. These piglets were euthanized in the breeding and the samples were performed in the breeding as well, so that the producer could follow all the stages and then "take part" in the reading of the laboratory results.

Results and Discussion
It arises from the recordings carried out in the breedings that the hypothesis of an insufficient early colostral intake affects 9 out of the 10 breedings. This colostral intake is at the same time a source of immunoglobulines and also an essential source of energy for piglet survival.

Nine out of the 10 cases of enzootic diarrheas that do not respond to traditional prophylactic methods, are not exclusively related to traditional agents, and begin with no important histopathologic lesions. When no traditional etiologic agent was present, producers and vets alike doubted the veracity of the results of the analyses and negative examinations.

We put forth the assumption that these cases should be handled as “Antibiotic Associated Diarrheas”, which are classically described in human medicine, even though the relation to antibiotics is not immediate. Indeed, there is an important medicalisation during the neonatal period which occurs one day or the other in all the breedings, and particularly in these breedings confronted batch after batch with a recurrent enzootic pathology.

Consequently, we make the hypothesis that the piglets are indeed born in a hospital environment and are hospitalised with all arising consequences. This is even more important that in order to try to control these cases, the producers like the vets set up prophylactic strategies based on the use of antibiotics, in sows as well as in piglets. These cases of diarrheas would thus belong to a nosocomial approach.

In porcine medicine, these hyper-medicalized enzootic cases, which occur in breedings with excellent performances and where breeding management is well controlled, should be manage thru another approach.

All praticians know well about breedings confronted with recurrent problems of neonatal diarrheas in spite of many prophylactic measures and which occur in very good breedings with equally excellent zootechnical performances. The plethora of these measures makes it difficult to identify the one which would mainly improve the situation. As a matter of fact, the producer is usually reluctant to remove some measures in the name of the precautionary principle.

All the cases which we analysed showed the downside of “doing it too well”, which means we should change the perception that the producers have of their cases: taken in the spiral of their problem they do not perceive any more the real origin of these diarrheas and the harmful effect of some utmost practices (e.g.: adoptions to homogenise the litter weights and size, hygiene, hyper interventionism on sows during parturition…). We do not have enough feedback from the field at this time to establish if the followed producers changed behaviour, especially as our investigation was focused on the root cause of the problem and not on its correction.

Conclusion: In summary, the management of enzootic neonatal digestive affections in breedings with excellent zootechnical performances should take into account both the nosocomial affections and the Syndrome of Doing It Too Well (Too Well Done Job Syndrome, TWDJS).

References