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 the 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.

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EFFICACY EVALUATION OF COLISTIN FOR THE TREATMENT OF COLIBACILLOSIS IN WEANED PIGLETS

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Introduction
Escherichia coli (E. Coli) infections are frequent in pig production. The clinical forms of E. coli infections are different (enteric problems, oedemas disease, etc.) according to the E. coli strain and to the physiological stage of the animals.
In post-weaning unit, enteric disorders are most of the time associated with E. coli. Antibiotics are often required during this risky period.
The objective of this well-controlled clinical study (GCP study), was to assess the efficacy and safety of colistin (COLIVET®) for the treatment of colibacillosis in weaned piglets in an infected environment.

Materials and Methods
The selected farm had a history of post-weaning diarrhoea caused by Escherichia coli. Piglets were weaned between 21 and 28 days regardless of breed and sex. They presented a clinical picture including severe diarrhoea or moderate diarrhoea and slight to clear depression. Diagnosis of colibacillosis was confirmed by laboratory analyses at Day 0.
When at least 10 % of the piglets showed signs of colibacillosis, the treatments started.
In the treated group, 87 piglets were treated with colistin in drinking water at a posology of 50,000 IU / kg (0.25 ml / 10 kg BW) twice a day, morning and evening, on a pulse medication over a period of 6 hours, for 5 days.
In the placebo group, 89 piglets received a non medicated drinking water (0.25 ml / 10 kg BW) on the same pulse medication, for 5 days. Treatments were randomly allocated under blind conditions.
A total number of 176 weaned piglets were included in the trial:
- 84 piglets showed diarrhoea caused by E. coli: 39 piglets were allocated at Day 0 to the colistin group and 45 piglets to the placebo group.
- 92 exposed piglets had no signs of diarrhoea: 48 were allocated at Day 0 to the colistin group and 44 piglets to the placebo group.
The follow-up criteria were: rectal temperature, general condition, faeces scores, medicated water consumption, weight, necropsy, complementary analyses (bacteriology), adverse events.
The main criterion was the clinical cure rate 24 hours after the last administration. The secondary criteria were the individual ADG (Average Daily Gain) between Day 0 and the last follow-up visit and the bacteriological analyses.

Results
The clinical cure rate in the colistin group (71.8 %) was significantly higher than in the placebo group (46.7 %) (p = 0.020).

Discussion
Regarding the bacteriological analyses, all samples were salmonella-free and coccidia-free at Day 0 and Day 6. At Day 0, profiles of E. coli population in both groups were comparable: counts ≥ 107 CFU/g represented 88.6% of the samples in the colistin group vs 82.1% in the placebo group; 52.6% of E. coli strains were haemolytic in the colistin group vs 53.3% in the placebo group.
At Day 6, the analyses showed differences between both groups: counts ≤ 106 CFU/g represented 69.7% of the samples in the colistin group vs 43.6% in the placebo group; no strains isolated in the colistin group showed a haemolytic activity vs 47.7% in the placebo group. All strains of E. coli were susceptible to colistin at Day 0 and Day 6.
This trial showed the efficacy of colistin (COLIVET®) at the dose rate of 50,000 IU/kg (0.25ml / 10 kg BW) twice a day for the treatment of post-weaning colibacillosis.

References