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
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EFFICACY OF FEBANTEL (RINTAL) AGAINST INFESTATIONS BY ASCARIS SUUM ON A CLOSED BELGIAN PIG FARM

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Introduction
Ascaris suum in pigs is commonly associated with liver white spots at slaughter, and may cause major economic losses due to liver condemnations, reduced growth rate and lowered feed conversion in growing pigs (1).

Slaughterhouses increasingly inform farmers about the percentage rejected livers due to white spots and lungs. In France, the incidence of white spots discovered in the slaughterhouse has been reported between 15% and 42%. Losses have been estimated up to 9.6 euro per fattening pig (2). Especially for swine producers working for a label these rejections are penalized. A good deworming scheme using an effective dewormer with monitoring for the efficacy for a longer period of time is mandatory for keeping the worm burden low. Such a program using the probenzimidazole febantel (Rintal® 1.9%, Bayer) was tested under field conditions on a farm with a high percentage of rejected livers due to Ascaris suum infestation.

Materials and Methods
The participating swine farm was a closed herd with a standing population of 160 sows and 900 fattening pigs. The previously used deworming program using levamisole in the drinking water resulted in unsatisfactory results of more than 10% of rejected livers in the slaughter house.

Between May 2004 and January 2005, the following deworming program was strictly adhered to: sows were once dewormed all at the same time at the start of the trial and later on, 7 days prior to farrowing. Fattening piglets were dewormed every 5 weeks up to slaughter. Deworming took place using febantel (Rintal® 1.9% pellets, Bayer) at the registered dose of 5 mg febantel per kg bodyweight.

The following parameters were chosen to monitor the efficacy of the installed deworming program: rejected livers and lungs as stated in the documents from the slaughterhouse, the treatment cost of respiratory disorders, mortality and growth using the farm bookkeeping program. The results from the trial period were compared to historical data from the farm when levamisole was used in the drinking water for routine deworming.

Results
The analysis of the feedback data from the slaughterhouse revealed that within 9 months after onset of the trial, the percentage of livers, rejected because of white spots, decreased from 12% to 8%. Moreover, during the same period, the percent of lungs showing lesions due to larval migration decreased from 6% to 3%.

The analysis from the farm accounting program showed that the fattening pigs reached their slaughter weight 5 days sooner than under the previous deworming program. This resulted in an economic benefit of 0.12 euro per animal. The deworming and the monitoring costed 0.58 euro per animal.

Discussion
Despite decades of treatment, A. suum infestations remain an important parasite on many farms. A well designed deworming program using an efficacious dewormer, followed by an critical analysis of the slaughterhouse data and accounting data makes it possible to reduce the damage caused by this parasite. Critical points in the program are the correct dosing and the strict adherence to the program. Once a program is installed, it must be maintained unaltered for at least 9 months in order to assess its efficacy including the slaughterhouse results.

References