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.

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Chairman: Local Organising Committee: IPVS 2008
EFFICACY OF ACIDIFYING DRINKING WATER 
TO PREVENT SALMONELLA INFECTIONS IN FATTENING PIGS

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Introduction
Salmonella enterica subspecies enterica is a zoonotic agent which can cause outbreaks of gastro-enteritis in humans after the consumption of contaminated products. 9,543 human Salmonella isolates were obtained in 2004 of which S. Enteritidis (63.7%) and S. Typhimurium (25.7%) were the most prevalent serotypes (1). Reduction of Salmonella infections in pigs may contribute to a reduction of the number of human outbreaks (2). In this study acidification of the drinking water during the entire fattening period (from weaning to slaughtering) was examined for its effect on Salmonella prevalence in fattening pigs.

Materials and Methods
A farrow-to-finish unit was selected based on a high Salmonella seroprevalence. Prior to the trial the mean S/P-ratio of twenty blood samples taken from pigs at the end of the fattening period was 1.10 (Idexx) and the pH of the drinking water was 8.3 (Animal Health Services). An electronic water pump was installed for precise dosage of the acid during the entire fattening period from 7 to 115 kg. In practice, the water supply of the post-weaning and fattening units was acidified during a six month period with Agrocid Super (CID-LINES, Belgium), a commercially available product which is a combination of lactic acid, acetic acid, propionic acid and formic acid. Before the trial a titration was carried out in order to optimise the pH of the drinking water. During the experiment, the pH of the water was checked every two months by the Animal Health Services. Twenty serum samples were taken from pigs at the end of the fattening period (> 80kg) before and every 2 months during the trial period. Samples were examined for Salmonella antibodies with the HerdCheck Swine Salmonella (Idexx Laboratories, USA). This ELISA enables detection of LPS specific antibodies for most common serogroups including B, C1 and D. Results are reported as S/P-ratio’s: S/P = (ODsample – ODneg control)/(ODpos control – ODneg control); OD = optical density.

Results
The pH of the water during the trial was 5.8. Fig. 1 shows the distribution of S/P-ratio’s before and after acidification of the water.

The mean S/P-ratio (standard deviation) of 20 blood samples from pigs at the end of the fattening period prior to the trial was 1.10 (0.75) with a minimum of 0.21 and a maximum of 2.52. After six months of acidification of the drinking water the mean S/P-ratio (standard deviation) was 0.27 (0.14) with a minimum of 0.09 and a maximum of 0.57.

Discussion
The number of Salmonella infections in finishing pigs can be reduced by the addition of organic acids to their drinking water. Their effectiveness is a result of different ways of action and the mechanism is still subject of a lot of scientific research.

The pH of the drinking water during the trial is not as low as generally recommended, i.e. 3.5 – 4.1 (3). The relatively high pH has a better effect on the taste of the drinking water, is less corrosive for the water pipes, and moreover such pH is in accordance with official advises concerning quality norms for drinking water.

References
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