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SWISS LAUNCH MEANS BOAR TAINT VACCINE IS NOW LICENSED IN 23 COUNTRIES

Swiss pig farmers are the first in Europe to use a vaccine to prevent boar taint. The new technology, now approved by the country's licensing authority, offers a commercially viable alternative to the physical castration of piglets.

The launch of Improvac® from Pfizer Animal Health comes as the country prepares to ban the current practice of physical castration without anaesthesia. Legislation is due to take effect in January 2010. Although Switzerland is the first market in Europe to approve the new product, Improvac has already received approval for use in a *23 countries around the world.

"Studies conducted under commercial conditions show that pigs given Improvac, rather than being physically castrated, demonstrate an improved feed conversion and so typically have a leaner carcass," explained Jim Allison, Technical Director, New Products Marketing, for Pfizer Animal Health. "Physical castration takes place within the first week of the animal's life. Replacing this with a vaccination given a few weeks before slaughter allows vaccinated pigs to benefit from the natural high performance characteristics of intact boars."

Improvac uses the pig's own immune system to temporarily block the function of the testes, and thus reduce the level of boar taint compounds. With the reduction of testosterone, male aggressive and sexual behaviour lessens during the late fattening period – making boars easier to manage and less likely to injure each other as a result of fighting, or mounting.

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Pfizer Animal Health

European launch for boar taint vaccine / page 2

Consumer taste panels conducted in a number of different countries have confirmed that the meat from pigs raised using Improvac is devoid of taint and has an eating quality equivalent to that of physical castrates and gilts.

The introduction of Improvac is likely to be welcomed on both animal welfare and environmental grounds as a practical, humane and environmentally responsible alternative to the physical castration of piglets, as a method of controlling boar taint.

"Switching to immunological control of boar taint also offers producers the added benefit of eradicating losses caused by infections contracted after castration," added Dr Allison.

Like other vaccines used in swine production, Improvac has a zero meat withdrawal period and has no safety issues for consumers. In 10 years of commercial use in Australia and shorter periods in other countries, consumers have readily accepted pork from Improvac vaccinated animals.

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*Improvac has been licensed for use in the following countries
Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Korea, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Russia, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand and Venezuela

Improvac is a registered trademark of Pfizer Inc.
Improvac contains a protein antigen that stimulates production of antibodies to endogenous GnRF which leads to a temporary immunological castration. Improvac is a boar taint management tool developed for use in entire male pigs as an animal-welfare and environmentally friendly alternative to physical castration.

Pfizer Animal Health, a business of Pfizer Inc, is a world leader in animal health, committed to providing high-quality, innovative health products, including pharmaceuticals and biologicals for livestock and companion animals. Pfizer Inc, a research-based pharmaceutical company with global operations, discovers, develops, manufactures and markets leading prescription medicines for humans and animals.