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CHINESE RESEARCH WINS APVS AWARD

A team of researchers from the China Agricultural University in Beijing have won an award for their evaluation of the performance of the boar taint vaccine Improvac[®] (Pfizer Animal Health) under Chinese production conditions.

They decided to study the differences in feed efficiency and carcass quality between castrates and vaccinated boars raised in commercial swine units. Their results were presented as a poster at the recent Asian Pig Veterinary Society (APVS) Congress in Tsukuba, Japan, and earned them an award from the organising committee for “Best Poster”.

The poster was chosen as the best in its category because “the results were clear and positive and their impact was high for the industry”. The committee also found the study to be a “carefully executed experiment delivering positive, clear results”.

The study confirmed that the vaccine was effective in controlling boar taint and enabled the pigs to show the superior feed efficiency, reduced back fat and increased lean meat yield associated with non-castrated boars.

Commenting on the award, Professor Yang Hanchun, who led the research team, said: “We are honoured to receive this fine award by the organising committee. The research is important for the Chinese pig industry. We demonstrated that vaccination with Improvac effectively controlled boar taint and resulted in significant production benefits.”

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The expected increase in demand from Chinese consumers for high quality, lean, safe pork will drive the need for more efficient production which respects the environment and animal welfare, say the researchers. This makes the raising of intact boars an attractive possibility as long as the risk of boar taint can be reduced.

Professor Yang also said: “Improvac provides significant economic benefits for Chinese farmers and slaughterhouses as well as having tremendous social benefits by reducing the greenhouse gas emissions associated with pig production and improving animal well-being.”

The research was conducted in collaboration with boar taint vaccine manufacturer, Pfizer Animal Health. Pfizer has applied to the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture for a license to sell the product in China and hopes to launch in 2010.

Improvac is a 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 environmentally responsible and animal-welfare friendly alternative to surgical 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.

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For more information contact:

Garnett Keeler Public Relations
mk@garnett-keeler.com
+44 (0)20 8647 4467

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