

## HHM-PP-58

### TITLE

CASE REPORT: ECONOMIC IMPROVEMENT AFTER CHANGING FEEDING STRATEGY AND TIMING OF VACCINATION IN IMPROVAC® MANAGED BOARS.

Tom Meyns<sup>1</sup>, Dirk Van Damme<sup>1</sup>, Niels Wuyts<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ZOETIS Benelux, Mercuriusstraat 20, 1930 Zaventem, Belgium

### CONTENT

#### Background and Objectives

Vaccination against GnRF with Improvac® allows producers to benefit from superior growth performance and carcass characteristics of non-castrated boars without risk of boar taint. Vaccinated pigs spend most of their lives as boars, but transition to castrate physiology after the second Improvac dose, the timing of which relative to slaughter can be changed to optimize results relative to production objectives. This report assesses the impact of extending the time after second dose, and of changing the feeding strategy, on technical and economic performance in finishing pigs.

#### Material and methods

Belgian farm with 4000 fattening pigs already using Improvac. The first dose of Improvac (no physiological effect) was administered at around 10 weeks of age; the second dose was originally administered 4 weeks pre-harvest, but was moved forward in the new program to 6 weeks pre-harvest, extending the castrate phase. Additionally, pigs were left longer on the richer starter feed to optimize an early growth spurt in the boar phase, and switched to a lower protein formulation in the last castrate phase, when they eat significantly more but can be fed a more diluted and cheaper diet. Weekly results (MBI-Meat Building Index, ADWG, slaughter live weight and feed cost) were compared between 57 batches before and 39 batches after the changes.

#### Results

Vaccinated boars in the new program reached the desired carcass weight (average 92 kg) approximately one week earlier than before the changes. The MBI improved from 3.62 to 3.48, ( $P < 0.01$ ) feed cost was reduced by 0.63€ per pig, and ADWG increased by 25g/day resulting in an estimated additional net profit, additional to the initial profit obtained from Improvac versus physically castrated estimated 2.12€/pig.

#### Conclusions

Optimization of feeding strategy and timing of the second dose of Improvac can positively influence the technical and economic performance of fatteners.