

KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Return on investment:
Where is the money?

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WHAT ARE THE COSTS OF PIG DISEASES IN THE FIELD?

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The rising cost of raw materials, which began at the end of 2006, and the globalization of markets have generated strong fluctuations in the prices of commodities. This the reason why exists significant financial tensions in the livestock sectors.

This complex situation requires that pig production companies focus on obtaining a product of: 1) the highest quality (food safety, animal welfare, respect for the environment, meat quality) and 2) at the minimum cost (productive efficiency).

SIP offers a specialized service to help farmers to improve their level of efficiency and competitiveness. Thus, we collect technical and economic information, we prepare monthly monitoring reports and we carry out periodic meetings with more than 200 companies, which manage over one million sows. The majority of these companies are located in Spain, but we also work in Italy, Portugal and recently in Mexico.

During our professional experience, we have observed that producers who maintain a good control of diseases are able to keep better levels of efficiency in a sustained manner. Moreover, these farms have some characteristics in common: they are located in areas of low animal density and they are managed by producers who are disciplined and rigorous with biosecurity measures (maintenance of physical barriers of the farm, sanitary control of animals who have to enter, staff and visitors checked entrance, exhaustive execution of animals vaccination, systematic protocol of sanitary vacuum and hygiene and disinfection of facilities).

Occasionally there are errors or accidents that cause the appearance of some diseases which unfortunately may end up in great economic losses. In these cases, during our monthly monitoring reports, we notice strong alterations in the technical parameters that allow us to quantify their economic repercussion.

Disease cost will depend on the affected factors, severity of the alteration and duration of the process.

Economic impact changes depending on the disease. However even a single disease may have different economic impacts depending on the virulence of the microorganism, the resilience of the animals and the effectiveness of treatments implanted.

The most frequent case we face with is porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome (PRRS). Fortunately, since we can control porcine circovirus 2 infections due to vaccination, PRRS does not usually affect severely the fattening, but it generates important losses in sows and nurseries. Abortions, premature farrowing, appearance of secondary infectious agents are the responsible of these losses. In these acute cases, economic losses can range between 75 and 150 € per sow and year, depending on the farm.

Currently, the most frequent diseases that have the greatest economic impact are PRRS, dysentery, *Actinobacillus pleuropneumoniae* and colibacillary enteric processes.