



BPEX Limited launch Porcine Circovirus Vaccine Research Programme

BPEX Limited is pleased to announce the launch of a £1.5 million PCV2 vaccine research programme on the 1st of April, 2008. The scheme will provide vouchers for PCV2 vaccines and is open to all pig levy-payers in England. Farms that produce only weaner pigs will be eligible to make joint applications with a unit to which they supply pigs for finishing. The project is open to producers already using a Circovirus vaccine as well as to new users. Vouchers will be supplied monthly and will **ONLY** be valid for one month. The first voucher will be valid until the end of May for vaccine purchased in April 2008.

The value of the voucher will be £2.20 per dose of sow vaccine and 40p per dose of piglet vaccine. Vouchers will be sent to producers following approval of their application. Vouchers must then be returned with veterinary receipt for that month's PCV2 vaccine. The receipt must clearly state the veterinary surgeon, veterinary practice, month, vaccine used, number of doses supplied and the unit involved.

The BPEX board is supporting this project because PMWS and PDNS remain the greatest health challenge to the English pig industry leading to poor physical performance and increased production costs. In tackling this challenge the aim is to build a more sustainable and competitive industry for the future. The objective of the research project is to measure the effects of PCV2 vaccination of sows or piglets on herd health, welfare, mortality and physical performance by unit, region and on a national scale. BPEX, veterinary practices and the pharmaceutical companies involved will then be able to offer clear scientifically-based advice on the cost benefits of using Circovirus vaccines.

This is a research project and, in return for providing vouchers, BPEX will require information from producers on pre- and post-vaccination performance. Summary details of the previous month's breeding and feeding herd key performance indicators will have to be supplied with the application for each voucher. The pre-vaccination performance details will be collected by questionnaire at a later date.

This BPEX project will work closely with the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) BBSRC-funded project on wasting diseases of pigs. The BPEX project will require collection of blood samples at either the first quarterly veterinary visit after registration on the project or by arrangement with veterinarians from the RVC if the quarterly visit has just taken place. The blood samples will be analysed free of charge for evidence of exposure to a range of health challenges and results will be returned rapidly to producers. Please see the RVC note for veterinary surgeons – blood testing equipment, vacutainers etc can be obtained from the RVC. Following discussions with the appropriate authorities it has been confirmed that no additional licences are required for this blood testing as it is regarded as being for routine diagnostic purposes.

The application form for the project is being posted to all assured farms. Further copies can be downloaded from the BPEX website, www.bpex.org.uk and applications can also be made online through this website. The online application route is preferred. EWA Bespoke Communications will manage the logistics of the voucher scheme on behalf of BPEX and EWA will be processing all of the application forms. Further information and updates, including a list of Frequently Asked Questions, will be available on the BPEX website www.bpex.org.uk

The funding allocated to this project from levy reserves is limited to £1.5 million. Depending on the uptake this might last for up to nine months but it may be far shorter! Please encourage early uptake. Please get in touch with the BPEX Knowledge Transfer managers for further information or clarification, if required. Contact details are available on the BPEX website.

Please contact the project leader Mark Wilson (Mark_Wilson@bpex.org.uk; 01908 844256), Derek Armstrong (derek_armstrong@mlc.org.uk; 01908 844216) or Andrew Knowles (Andrew_Knowles@bpex.org.uk; 01908 844708) if you wish to discuss further this exciting and innovative research project.