



Circumvent™ PCV Vaccine Pays Off Big for PFFJ

BRINGING MORE POUNDS OF PORK TO MARKET FOR THE same investment is the goal of most pork producers, and Pigs for Farmer John (PFFJ) was able to do just that with the help of Intervet's porcine circovirus vaccine.

Don Davidson, DVM, MS, Director of Production Operations for Clougherty Packing LLC Farm Operations, is responsible for the production, herd health and nutritional needs of PFFJ operations in California, Arizona, Wyoming and Colorado. Dr. Davidson says that since PFFJ started using Circumvent™ PCV, market weights have increased 3 pounds per pig and days-to-market has decreased by almost two weeks.

"We reach our target weights sooner and we're selling more pigs and more pounds of pork each week. We're more efficient," says Dr. Davidson. "In this market environment, being more efficient is critical. We attribute this improvement to use

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of the vaccine which has improved the overall health and performance of our pigs."

PFFJ struggled with a disease complex that eventually was identified as porcine circovirus type-2. Outbreaks resulted in double-digit death losses in the finisher. In 2006, PFFJ began vaccinating, which led to a remarkable reduction in death loss, says Dr. Davidson.

"I didn't have a lot of faith in any vaccines at that time, but Circumvent PCV has been a miracle. It's a real winner for the swine industry," says Dr. Davidson. "This is my first experience with a vaccine that I consider to work very well."

One reason for that outstanding performance is the exclusive two-dose vaccination regimen, with vaccinations given intramuscularly three weeks apart. PFFJ vaccinates at 4 to 5 weeks old and again 3 weeks later, which is consistent with label indications of initial vaccination at 3 weeks of age or older, followed by revaccination 3 weeks later.

"The two-dose vaccine is economically viable, and we are not willing to give up the results we have received to this point," says Dr. Davidson.

The economic advantage delivered by the vaccine included



Circovirus Vaccine Analysis PFFJ Finishing Close-Out Data

Category	May 2006	January 2008
Market Weight	293 lbs/ pig	296 lbs/ pig
Days to Market	129	117
Avg. Daily Gain	1.74 lbs/ day	1.99 lbs/ day
Mortality	13.6 %	4.5%
Feed conversion	2.85	2.75

a 7-to-1 return on investment (ROI) for PFFJ, according to Dr. Davidson. That ROI is easy to understand when you compare the performance of May 2006, when PFFJ began vaccinating, with the performance of January 2008 (see chart).

Average daily gain jumped from 1.74 lbs/ day in 2006 to 1.99 lbs/ day in 2008, with feed conversion improving from 2.85 to 2.75. The mortality rate was dramatically improved, falling from 13.6 percent in 2006 to 4.5 percent in 2008. PFFJ also did side-by-side trials in the finisher, and the differences between vaccinated pigs and control groups were noticeable, says Davidson.

Vaccinated barrows and gilts had mortality rates of 6.6 percent and 4.4 percent respectively. The non-vaccinated control groups, however, showed the severe presence of circovirus with barrow and gilt mortality rates of 17.76 percent and 12.61 percent respectively. Growth data was not kept for this comparison, but it was noticeable.

"You could visually identify the vaccinated pigs," says Dr. Davidson. "It was not just the mortality improvements, but the overall health of the pigs that stood out."