

Sow Farm PRRS status classification survey

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Key points

- The majority of veterinarians consider it important to classify sow herd PRRS status. Our survey showed that 8/21 follow AASV guidelines, with the others using alternative criteria
- Half of the surveyed veterinarians use processing fluids as part of their testing protocol for determining sow herd PRRS status
- Most of the respondents mentioned that AASV PRRS classification guidelines should be re-visited

Holtkamp et al. (2011) proposed a classification terminology for sow herd PRRS status. A sow herd can be classified into one of four main categories based on RT-PCR and serology testing results. Sow herds should meet specific criteria to progress from one category to the next. However, systems may choose to follow these guidelines but can also modify them to fit their needs or simply use system specific classification criteria. Recently, new testing methodologies have been developed (i.e. processing fluids, family oral fluids) and are currently being used for sow farm classification. However, there is no standard testing protocol. Therefore, with the aim of describing sampling strategies currently used to classify sow herds as stable, a pilot survey was conducted among veterinarians from participating and non-participating MSHMP systems.

Twenty-one veterinarians from 12 participant systems and 1 non participant group completed the questionnaire accounting approximately for 1.5 million sows. When asked how important it was to classify sow farm PRRS status, 12/21 (57%) answered very important, 8/21 (38%) answered important and 1/21 (5%) answered not important. The main reason to establish the status of a sow herd was to commingle sources downstream (58%), followed by timing depopulation/repopulation of continuous flow growing sites (53%) and to define gilt vaccination protocol for PRRS (47%) (Table 1).

| Why it is important? | Number | % |
|---|--------|-----|
| Commingle sources downstream | 11 | 58% |
| Timing Depop/repop of continuous flow growing pig sites | 10 | 53% |
| Define gilt vaccination protocol for PRRS | 9 | 47% |
| Define gilt introduction procedures | 8 | 42% |
| Define sow herd vaccination protocol for PRRS | 6 | 32% |
| Define piglet vaccination protocol for PRRS | 6 | 32% |
| Define transportation flow | 5 | 26% |
| Start/stop McRebel | 2 | 11% |

Table 1: Main reasons why it is important to establish sow herd PRRS status (n=19).

Eight out of 21 respondents (38%) follow AASV guidelines to classify herd status, seven (33%) use a company specific system, four (19%) use a practice specific system and two (9%) use their own individual way of classifying herd status.

The testing protocol to classify a farm as stable varied across and within systems. However, the most frequent sample collected was due-to-wean blood sampling (17/21, 81%) followed by processing fluids (11/21, 52%). Some combination between processing fluids and due-to-wean piglet blood samples was the most frequently used method (8/21, 38%), followed by the use of due-to-wean piglet blood samples solely (7/21, 33%).

Finally, 15/19 (79%) people responded that the current AASV PRRS classification methodology should be re-visited.

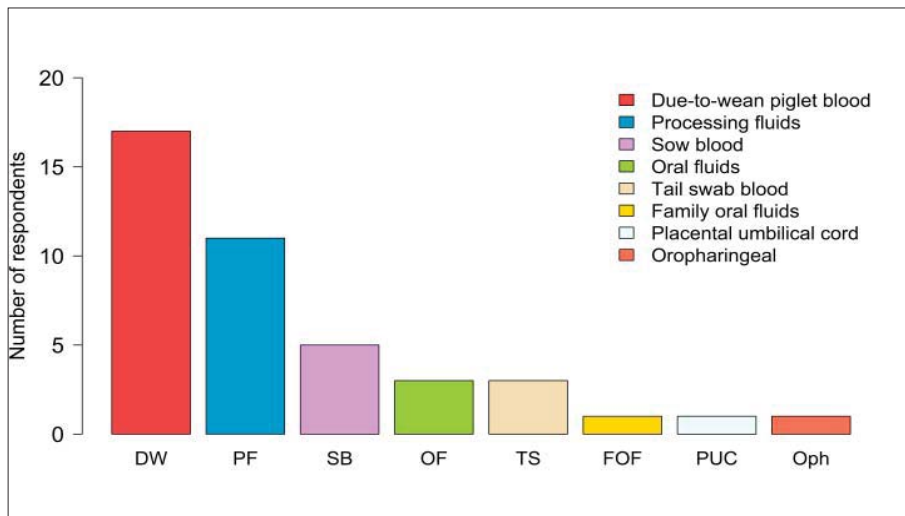


Figure 1: Samples collected for classifying sow herds as PRRS stable.

Reference: Holtkamp, D.J., Polson, D.D., Torremorell, M., 2011. Terminology for classifying swine herds by porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome virus status. JSHAP 19, 44-56.

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