

## **Zoetis Awards PRRS Innovation Research Grant to Iowa State University**

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**US - Zoetis has awarded a \$100,000 PRRS Innovation Research Grant to Kyoungjin Yoon, DVM, PhD, and Jianqiang Zhang, MD, PhD, investigators at Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine, to conduct research into virus characterisation and the immunobiology of porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome (PRRS).**

The research project will explore the incorporation of functional genomic knowledge into sequencing practice in order to better characterize the PRRS virus and ultimately improve decision-making for intervention. The research grant will contribute to an Iowa State University team's study, 'Better Understanding of Genetic and Antigenic Relationship among PRRS Viruses and Application of Next-Generation Sequencing Technology to Characterization of PRRSV'.

Since the discovery of the PRRS virus more than 20 years ago, the disease has cost the US swine industry more than \$664 million annually, according to a 2011 study conducted by Iowa State University and funded by the Pork Checkoff. A lack of clear understanding of the immunobiology and epidemiology of PRRS has contributed to sub-optimum prevention and control of the virus.

"Zoetis is committed to collaboration with external research partners who share our vision for innovation," says Michelle Haven, DVM, PhD, senior vice president, corporate development, alliances and solutions, Zoetis. "Bringing together different research perspectives is a key in helping develop new products and technologies for our customers, addressing unmet needs in the veterinary profession and understanding important issues in the pork industry."

The investigators aim to develop a procedure to sequence the complete genome of the PRRS virus, adding to what is currently known about the virus, and provide better insight into viral evolution, emergence, transmission and clinical significance.

"Our goal for this research project is to increase our understanding of the PRRS virus," said Dr Yoon, professor of veterinary diagnostic and production animal medicine at Iowa State University. "This generous grant from Zoetis allows us to expedite our research and will contribute to the development of the next generation of PRRS vaccines and intervention strategies."

Research proposals for the PRRS Innovation Research Grant were reviewed and evaluated by a qualified Zoetis committee including PhD virologists and PRRS technical experts. Applications were accepted from university staff, advanced study students at universities and practicing doctors of veterinary medicine conducting research in the United States.

For information on how Fosterer<sup>TM</sup> PRRS can aid in the prevention of PRRS, visit [www.ZoetisPork.com](http://www.ZoetisPork.com).

*ThePigSite News Desk*