



## Better techniques facilitate observation of more pigs

**18th world congress of pig veterinarians presents the “glass laboratory” /  
Increase in number of labs with European seal of approval / Growing number of pigs  
subject to observation / Impending diseases identified more quickly**

2004-06-29 (Hamburg) – Pig health is constantly improving. “Today we are capable of monitoring and implementing specific improvements in health by means of systematic observation and testing.” This is the conclusion of **Dr. Katrin Strutzberg-Minder**, Director of the Company for Innovative Veterinary Diagnostics Ltd (IVD), in the “glass laboratory” at the 18th world congress of pig veterinarians in Hamburg. Laboratory tests today have less to do with confirming a diagnosis and are more about monitoring animals’ health.

**Congress Piglet Freddy** was tested for demonstration purposes: a laboratory technician used a swab to take a sample from Freddy’s nose to run a test for potential infectious agents. If required, a blood sample would also be tested for antibodies. The lab is supported by a robot that performs the tests automatically.

The number of pigs being tested in this manner is constantly increasing. Two years ago the IVD, which is affiliated to the Hanover School of Veterinary Medicine, tested 4,900 samples per year; today the current figure is nearer 6,000, reports Dr. Strutzberg-Minder. The number of samples roughly corresponds to the number of pigs tested. The quality of the tests is also constantly improving. A European Union norm defines laboratory requirements, the testers’ skills, test methods and the devices used, explained **Dr. Astrid Tschentscher** from the IVD. Laboratories that fulfil these requirements receive a seal of approval. A further increase can be noted in the number of labs being inspected.

The availability of data is another area that is constantly improving. Measures being implemented by the Hanover School of Veterinary Medicine and the Gesellschaft für individuelle Qualitätssicherung mbH (Company for Individual Quality Assurance, or i.Q.) include the setting up of data networks in which laboratories – depending on their authorisations – can access all data recorded for herds, or even a specific pig, enabling them to keep abreast of the latest developments. Experts term this process the “glass pig.”

On Monday pig veterinarians themselves underwent tests, the results of which are due to be published on Thursday. The “glass laboratory” can be viewed up to and including Thursday.

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