The primary site of PRRS virus infection is the lung, not blood. Sampling blood or oral fluids is therefore not a direct measure of virus replication.
Since challenge studies are impractical for most producers, the best indicator of vaccine efficacy in the field is how pigs perform — mortality, growth rate, feed conversion, days to market…

Q: Without dependable test results, what assurance is there that Fostera PRRS is effective?

JA: The gold standard for measuring protection after PRRS vaccination is the respiratory challenge model. Fostera PRRS has been tested this way in numerous studies, providing clear evidence the vaccine confers cross-protection against genetically diverse wild-type PRRS viruses. In field trials, pigs vaccinated at processing with Fostera PRRS have performed better than unvaccinated controls. Furthermore, clinical studies with naïve pigs have consistently shown positive ELISA and PCR responses after vaccination with Fostera PRRS. Since challenge studies are impractical for most producers, the best indicator of vaccine efficacy in the field is how pigs perform — mortality, growth rate, feed conversion, days to market, etc. — in the face of PRRS infection. Zoetis can also objectively help evaluate the vaccine’s efficacy using statistical process-control charts.

Q: Is Fostera PRRS unique in any way?

JA: It is. In 2004, Zoetis scientists discovered that CD163 — the primary receptor for all PRRS viruses — confers susceptibility to PRRS. Fostera PRRS is attenuated by passage on pig and hamster cells that express the porcine CD163 receptor. This attenuation method enables Fostera PRRS to readily infect pulmonary alveolar macrophages. The vaccine initiates protection quickly but is cleared by the immune system after inducing robust immunity.

Q: What can producers do to ensure best results with Fostera PRRS?

JA: Timing is critical. Piglets need time to generate a robust immune response. Having a label claim of 1 day of age provides the benefit of early vaccination. If wild-type PRRS virus circulation in the nursery is a problem, we advise vaccinating at processing with Fostera PRRS, which is safe as well as effective. Last but not least, remember that a vaccine is only effective if it’s stored, handled and administered correctly. Make sure vaccination crews are properly trained and use the correct dose. There’s no room for error when vaccinating, especially for PRRS.

For more information on Fostera PRRS, contact Dr. Angulo (jose.angulo@zoetis.com) or your Zoetis representative.