



## Uniferon Best Practice Recommendation

### Herd level anaemia assessment

The study protocol *Prevalence and effect of anaemia and iron deficiency in piglets from intensive sow herds* describes a field investigation of iron deficiency anaemia occurrence in piglets at weaning.

#### Why perform a herd level assessment

Iron supplementation regimes for piglets are most often very standardized with little focus on variations in birth weight, growth rate or weaning age in individual herds.

The dosing regimens are most often a standard dose of 200 mg iron, which is given to all piglets by parenteral route within four days after birth. However, even despite piglets may have access to additional iron during the lactation period the prevalence of iron deficiency anaemia in piglets at weaning can be as high as 25%.

A key reason shown in different contexts is that some pigs need more than 200 mg iron to reach full weight potential at weaning (full value pack). Equally important, when iron deficiency causes haemoglobins to fall below standard, haemoglobins are likely to “catch up” over time as piglets enter next stage production, or if iron is supplemented at a later time. However, a pre-weaning period of substandard haemoglobin will cause a shortfall of weight gain that cannot subsequently be obtained (no catch-up).

#### Key assumptions for herd level anaemia assessment

- Fast growing pigs may need more than 200 mg iron during lactation to reach their full growth potential. Growth retardation due to insufficient iron-supplementation in the suckling period may persist all the way to slaughter
- A critical time for iron deficiency anaemia development is immediately before weaning, when the iron stores from the initial dosing has been depleted and the uptake through feed is still of minor importance

#### Key objectives for herd level anaemia assessment

- To determine the within-herd prevalence of anaemia and iron deficiency among piglets immediately before weaning in representative sow herds from different countries
- To compare prevalence of iron deficiency anaemia among small, random and large sized piglets at weaning
- To determine the effect of iron related haematological values at weaning on post weaning growth in piglet

Sincerely  
The Uniferon Team

