**Swine Health Information Center call for Swine Disease Matrix research proposals**

The mission of the Swine Health Information Center is to protect and enhance the health of the US swine herd through coordinated global disease monitoring, analysis of swine health data and targeted research investments that minimize the impact of future disease threats.

In collaboration with the American Association of Swine Veterinarians, the National Pork Board and the National Pork Producers Council, the Swine Health Information Center has developed and prioritized a list of endemic and foreign swine pathogens. Known as the Swine Disease Matrix, the list includes an assessment of the diagnostic capabilities for selected pathogens, based on a review of available literature.

Organizing and funding the research needed for diagnostic and informational preparedness for the prioritized, potential production diseases of the Swine Disease Matrix is a core activity of the Center. In 2016 SHIC Matrix research focuses on the ability to detect the Matrix pathogens via antigen detection using platforms that are commonly available the U.S. major veterinary diagnostic laboratories, for example PCR testing. Given that there may be these antigen detection assays already produced and available in other countries, the research will include an assessment of the fitness for use of these tests. And, since some of the pathogens in the Swine Disease Matrix are not currently in the U.S., research may have to be conducted in collaboration with a foreign laboratory or in another manner to ensure that the pathogen will not be introduced to the U.S.

**The Swine Health Information Center is asking for preliminary proposal(s), in a standardized form provided by the Center, from laboratories interested in performing this research. The Center is asking for laboratories to identify up to five of the pathogens on the Swine Disease Matrix for which the laboratory has the interest and capacity to conduct the research and then to submit a one-page SHIC preliminary proposal form for each of the pathogens of interest.**

**Also included in the preliminary proposal(s) for each pathogen should be a brief description of the laboratory’s plan for ensuring that the pathogen will not be introduced into the U.S. if it is not currently endemic. That description could include plans for international collaborations, biosecurity/biocontainment facilities or other methods. The important criteria for selection are the lab’s interest, capacity and biocontainment plan. There is no need to try to select “high priority” viruses for the project.**

The Swine Health Information Center will review the preliminary proposals and assess the coverage of the pathogens on the Matrix and the plans to address introduction. When a laboratory is selected to address a pathogen or a set of pathogens, it will be asked to develop a detailed proposal for each pathogen that will include:

1. An assessment of the fitness for use of antigen detection tests that may currently be available. That assessment should include whether or not the literature indicates the tests are appropriately validated for use in U.S. veterinary diagnostic laboratories.
2. If the assessment indicates that the tests are not appropriately validated, a proposal for improving them or creating something new.
3. The materials and methods for either improving an existing or creating a new test, including a detailed description of the standard operating procedures for conducting the test.
4. A detailed three column budget showing SHIC, laboratory and total contribution and costs for the project.

Preliminary proposals need to be submitted to research@swinehealth.org by midnight, June 7, 2016. For questions, please contact Dr. Paul Sundberg, SHIC Executive Director, at psundberg@swinehealth.org.