

## MEDIA RELEASE

Reducing surveillance costs for *Trichinella* testing in pigs:

### Prionics launches highly sensitive test for Trichinellosis

**Zurich, July 11, 2007 – Prionics, a world leader in farm animal diagnostics, introduces a highly sensitive and specific test for the detection of *Trichinella* spp. in pigs. The disease places among the most significant parasitic zoonoses worldwide which can cause severe illness in humans. Currently, new surveillance programs are being discussed within the European Union. Through its superior sensitivity the PrioCHECK® *Trichinella* Ab enables cost efficient testing to improve the monitoring of pigs for this disease. The ELISA assay detects antibodies in serum and meat juice samples of infected pigs with larval loads as low as 0.02 larvae/g.**

Trichinellosis is a zoonosis with a worldwide prevalence that can affect humans through the consumption of raw or undercooked pork or wild game products. The disease is listed in the European Commission (EC) Zoonoses Directive, which requires that the meat of millions of pigs, horses and game undergo mandatory inspection. Accordingly, national reference laboratories and other bodies across Europe are currently looking for new and more cost-effective ways to control Trichinellosis as specified in the new EC Reg. 2075/2005.

#### Unmatched sensitivity and no cross-reactivity

The current method of routinely performing post-slaughter testing of each carcass at the slaughterhouse by artificial digestion is costly and relatively insensitive. The new PrioCHECK® *Trichinella* Ab ELISA test has proven significantly more reliable and highly sensitive as well as specific for the detection of antibodies against *Trichinella* in serum and meat juice samples of pigs. The assay detects *Trichinella* spp. in infected pigs with a larval load of 0.02 larva/g pig meat. The PrioCHECK® *Trichinella* Ab is highly specific as it shows no cross-reactivity with other commonly found pig parasites such as *Ascaris*, *Trichuris*, *Hyostrongylus*, or *Strongyloides*.

#### Cutting testing costs

Within the European Union (EU), the total cost of carcass testing of pigs for Trichinellosis at slaughter is approximately EUR 500 Million annually. Consequently, reducing testing costs while at the same time increasing the sensitivity of *Trichinella* detection, achieved by an alternative risk-based surveillance system for Trichinellosis in domestic pigs, is currently under discussion.

Experts believe that the cost of carcass testing could be drastically reduced by implementing risk-based monitoring programs, where regular testing of blood or meat juice samples of only a random sample of pigs would need to be carried out. The new Prionics PrioCHECK® *Trichinella* Ab is the ideal diagnostic tool for this type of testing scenario as it detects disease-specific antibodies in serum or meat juice and is faster, more sensitive, and less laborious than currently used methods. Overall, this innovative new ELISA test will contribute to improving farm management techniques and hygiene while reducing costs for the monitoring of pig herds.

As the world leader in the BSE business, Prionics has today succeeded in broadening its focus to other major farm animal diseases which can cause massive commercial losses for food producers and that are potentially transferable to humans. Prionics recognizes the potential for establishing diagnostic tests for the early detection of diseases in the food chain and offers solutions which contribute to increased food safety.

Further information regarding Trichinellosis is available on the official website of the International Commission on Trichinellosis (<http://monsie.wanadoo.fr/intcomtrichinellosis/>) or on the homepage of the American Trichinella Herd Certification Pilot Program (<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/trichinae/>).

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#### **About Prionics**

Prionics AG, based in Zurich, is one of the world's leading providers of farm animal diagnostics and a recognized center of expertise in BSE and prion diseases. Founded in 1997 as a spin-off from Zurich University, Prionics researches and markets innovative diagnostic solutions for major farm animal diseases, thereby making a major contribution to the protection of consumer health. In 2005, Prionics acquired Pfizer Animal Health's diagnostic portfolio and, in 2006, entered into a strategic partnership with the Animal Science Group of the University of Wageningen (Netherlands). Winner of the Swiss Economic Award for "Company of the year" (2002) and the European Biotech Award for "Excellence in Biotech Business" (2004), in 2006 Prionics was nominated as the world's best animal health company.

**For more information please visit [www.prionics.com/media](http://www.prionics.com/media) or contact:**

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