

# Researchers hope new tests will prevent enteric disease in pork industry

April 15 2014, by Lindsey Elliott

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Pork products cost about 10 percent more than they did last year, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, and economists expect the prices to continue rising because of diarrhea viruses currently devastating the pork industry.

That's why researchers at the Kansas State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory at Kansas State University have developed new tests they hope will mitigate the spread of these viruses.

"Enteric disease in pigs has turned into a huge, huge problem and we're developing all kinds of new tests to address the old problems but also to address the new diseases that are just destroying everything," said Dick Hesse, director of diagnostic virology at the lab and professor of diagnostic medicine and pathobiology.

Hesse says there are at least three viruses with similar symptoms affecting pigs, two of which have entered the United States for the first time—porcine epidemic diarrhea virus and delta coronavirus. Swine specialists and molecular diagnosticians at the Kansas State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory have developed tests to detect which virus is infecting the pigs.

"If you know what they've been exposed to and how high the immunity is, you can make adjustments on how you treat the virus," Hesse said.

Porcine epidemic diarrhea [virus](#) has already killed an estimated 6 million

pigs. The Kansas State University laboratory is one of only four in the United States with the new tests to identify these diseases. The researchers hope the tests will stop the spread of these diseases before they become endemic.

"They're management tools," Hesse said. "With enough information, you can make informed decisions and minimize the impact of the disease."

Provided by Kansas State University

Citation: Researchers hope new tests will prevent enteric disease in pork industry (2014, April 15) retrieved 6 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-04-disease-pork-industry.html>

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