Immunity raised by recent European subtype 1 PRRSV strains allows better replication of East European subtype 3 PRRSV strain Lena than that raised by an older strain

Stable spatial distribution of porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome (PRRSV)-1 subtypes in Europe is accompanied by a strong population immunity induced by local PRRSV strains. In the present study, it was examined if the immunity induced by three West European subtype 1 PRRSV strains (2007 isolate 07V063 and 2013 isolates 13V091 and 13V117) offers protection against the highly virulent East European subtype 3 PRRSV strain Lena. The number of fever days was greater (p < 0.05) in the control group (7.6 ± 1.7 days) compared to the immune groups (07V063-immune: 4.0 ± 1.2 days, 13V091-immune: 4.6 ± 1.1 days, 13V117-immune: 4.0 ± 2.9 days). In all groups, protection was characterized by reduction (p < 0.05) of AUC values of nasal shedding (control: 14.6, 07V063-immune: 3.4, 13V091-immune: 8.9, 13V117-immune: 8.0) and viremia (control: 28.1, 07V063-immune: 5.4, 13V091-immune: 9.0, 13V117-immune: 8.3). Reduction of respiratory disease, nasal shedding (mean AUC and mean peak values) and viremia (mean AUC and mean peak values) was more pronounced in 07V063-immune (p < 0.05) than in 13V091-immune and 13V117-immune animals. Inoculation with subtype 1 PRRSV strains caused priming of the Lena-specific virus neutralization antibody response. Upon challenge with Lena, we observed a very strong serological booster effect for neutralizing antibodies against strains used for the first inoculation. Our results indicate that inoculation with subtype 1 PRRSV strains can partially protect against antigenically divergent subtype 3 strains. The lower protection level elicited by recently isolated subtype 1 PRRSV strains may impair the outcome of the spatial expansion of subtype 3 strains from East Europe to West Europe.

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