

VLA is awarded over £100,000 for proofs of concepts

VLA has been successful in winning over £100k from InterAct for the following proof of concepts.

1. Application of lenticule technology to Campylobacter species to use in proficiency testing schemes with the Health Protection Agency (HPA) supplying the lenticules (£19,239)

Providing quality proficiency testing (PT) schemes for campylobacter is extremely difficult as the organisms are fragile and do not transport well. Many die during transport and this gives unacceptably unpredictable results in PT schemes.

Lenticules provide a matrix that helps protect and stabilise bacteria and offer a potential way of preserving the viability of campylobacter while in normal temperature transport.

HPA have developed the lenticule technology and already use them for a single campylobacter PT scheme in the human field. VLA will assess whether the technology is applicable to strains isolated in veterinary laboratories.

As well as being useful for quality assurance in VLA labs it is anticipated that there will be substantial demand from other veterinary laboratories around the world for a commercially offered scheme.

2. Identibac antimicrobial resistance array (£50,000)

This project will be run jointly with HPA and will explore the usefulness of a new array to detect antimicrobial resistance genes in gram negative organisms isolated from humans and animals. The existing product has been updated with a further 72 detection probes to cover a wider range of organisms and host species.

The project will also explore the use of the arrays in a strip format (row of eight wells) rather than the single tube format used to date. The array offers a low cost and reliable method to screen large numbers of bacteria for approximately 150 antimicrobial resistance genes.

3. The development of a vaccine against ovine Mycoplasma (£20,000)

Mycoplasma pneumonia in sheep is a growing problem in the UK and in other countries. This project will conduct the first tests on a strain of mycoplasma that could be a vaccine candidate for future use in a commercially available combination vaccine.

Notes for Editors

InterAct is funded by the Department for Innovation, Universities & Skills (DIUS). It is a partnership between Fera, Dstl, HPA, CEFAS, HSL and VLA. It builds value for the partner institutions by enhancing their commercial technology projects.

http://www.defra.gov.uk/vla/vla/vla_interact.htm

Proficiency testing (PT) is used to check whether laboratories are performing tests to a high standard. It looks at the accuracy of results, quality control and methodology. Results of tests are compared with other laboratories.

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/vla/eqa/eqa-home.htm>