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## **Live attenuated influenza vaccine provides superior protection from heterologous infection in pigs with maternal antibodies without inducing vaccine associated enhanced respiratory disease**

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1 **Live attenuated influenza vaccine provides superior protection from**  
2 **heterologous infection in pigs with maternal antibodies without**  
3 **inducing vaccine associated enhanced respiratory disease**

4  
5 **Running title: Vaccine efficacy in pigs with maternal immunity**  
6

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## 22 **Abstract**

23 Control of swine influenza A virus (IAV) in the US is hindered since inactivated vaccines do not  
24 provide robust cross-protection against the multiple antigenic variants co-circulating in the field.  
25 Vaccine efficacy can be further limited when administered to young pigs that possess  
26 maternally derived immunity. We previously demonstrated a recombinant A/sw/Texas/4199-  
27 2/1998 (TX98) (H3N2) expressing a truncated NS1 protein is attenuated in swine and has  
28 potential for use as an intranasal live attenuated influenza virus (LAIV) vaccine. In the present  
29 study, we compared 1 dose of intranasal LAIV with 2 intramuscular doses of TX98 whole  
30 inactivated virus (WIV) with adjuvant in weanling pigs with and without TX98-specific  
31 maternally-derived antibodies (MDA). Pigs were subsequently challenged with wild type  
32 homologous TX98 H3N2 virus or with an antigenic variant A/sw/Colorado/23619/1999 (CO99)  
33 (H3N2). In the absence of MDA, both vaccines protected against homologous TX98 and  
34 heterologous CO99 shedding, although the LAIV elicited lower hemagglutination inhibiting (HI)  
35 antibody titers in serum. The efficacy of both vaccines was reduced by the presence of MDA;  
36 however, WIV vaccination of MDA-positive pigs led to dramatically enhanced pneumonia  
37 following heterologous challenge, a phenomenon known as vaccine-associated enhanced  
38 respiratory disease (VAERD). A single-dose of LAIV to MDA-positive pigs still provided partial  
39 protection from CO99 and may be a safer vaccine for young pigs in field conditions where dams  
40 are routinely vaccinated and diverse IAV strains are in circulation. These results have  
41 implications not only to pigs but to other influenza virus host species.

## 42 **Introduction**

43 The speed and complexity of swine influenza A virus (IAV) evolution has sharply increased since  
44 1998, when a new reassortant lineage with the “triple reassortant internal gene” (TRIG)  
45 constellation of internal genes began to circulate and eventually predominate in the North  
46 American pig population (29). As a result, many antigenic variants continue to emerge and  
47 diminish the field efficacy of IAV vaccines (11, 16, 27). Fully licensed influenza vaccines for use  
48 in swine in North America and Europe consist of whole inactivated virus, which may not be an  
49 optimal form of antigen for inducing cross-reactive cellular and mucosal immunity against  
50 antigenic variants (12). Live attenuated influenza virus (LAIV) vaccines represent an approach  
51 that could potentially prime pigs for broader cross-protective immunity. Rational design of  
52 attenuated IAV vaccine strains by molecular engineering has been explored in recent studies  
53 (14, 18, 23). One method is truncation of the NS1 gene, which encodes an immune modulating  
54 interferon antagonist (23, 24). It was previously shown that an H3N2 IAV with a truncated NS1  
55 (NS1 $\Delta$ 126 TX98) replicated poorly in pigs after intranasal inoculation, but elicited neutralizing  
56 serum antibodies as well as mucosal antibodies and provided robust protection against  
57 homologous challenge in naïve pigs with a single intranasal application (26). There was a  
58 comparable level of cross-protection against a serologically distinct H3N2 strain in NS1 $\Delta$ 126  
59 TX98-vaccinated pigs, which was likely mediated in part by cross-reactive mucosal IgA. The  
60 vaccine offered less but still substantial protection against challenge with an H1N1 virus, to  
61 which the antibodies failed to cross-react. T-cell priming was not analyzed, but may have  
62 contributed to heterologous and heterosubtypic protection. We hypothesize that replicating  
63 attenuated virus delivered intranasally (IN), such as NS1 $\Delta$ 126 TX98, primes a more robust

64 cellular and mucosal immunity than an inactivated virus vaccine delivered intramuscularly (IM),  
65 therefore providing greater cross-protection against variant strains.

66 A concern with inactivated adjuvanted IAV vaccines is the phenomenon of vaccine-  
67 associated enhanced respiratory disease (VAERD) (4, 5, 8, 25). This phenomenon is associated  
68 with the use of vaccines containing a virus of the same HA subtype as the subsequent challenge  
69 strain, but with substantial antigenic drift. Our group recently described VAERD in association  
70 with the use of a vaccine containing a human-like delta cluster H1N2 antigen followed by  
71 challenge with 2009 pandemic H1N1 (5). A consistent predisposing factor for VAERD is the  
72 presence of IgG antibodies that cross-react to the heterologous virus but lack the ability to  
73 neutralize infectivity. Distinguishing pathologic features of VAERD include severe  
74 bronchointerstitial pneumonia with necrotizing bronchiolitis, interlobular and alveolar edema  
75 and hemorrhage (4). These pulmonary changes were accompanied by significant elevation of  
76 proinflammatory cytokines.

77 Another obstacle for efficacious vaccination of pigs against IAV is interference from  
78 maternally-derived immunity (MDI), particularly maternally-derived antibodies (MDA), acquired  
79 through colostrum. Provided there are still sufficient antibody titers in the serum when pigs are  
80 infected, MDA can reduce clinical disease (21), but the passive antibodies are less effective in  
81 blocking viral shedding from the upper respiratory tract (2, 10), probably because the  
82 predominant antibody isotype received in colostrum is IgG. Pigs with significant IAV-specific  
83 MDA titers typically have suppressed adaptive antibody responses to homologous infection or  
84 vaccination (21). This interference affects IgM, IgG, and hemagglutination inhibition (HI)  
85 antibody titers in serum, as well as nasal IgA (10). T-cell proliferation assays have indicated that

86 the cellular immune response to IAV is less susceptible to MDA inhibition (8, 10). Analyses of  
87 pigs' immune responses to pseudorabies virus, an alpha herpesvirus, have shown a similar  
88 pattern, where MDA blocks the humoral but not the cellular immune response following piglet  
89 vaccination or infection (19, 28). One perceived advantage of vaccination with LAIV is that  
90 circulating MDA (mainly IgG) is less likely to interfere with intranasally-delivered antigen than  
91 with inactivated antigen delivered by a parenteral route. In the present study we tested the  
92 immunogenicity and protective efficacy of intranasal NS1 $\Delta$ 126 TX98 vaccine versus an  
93 inactivated, adjuvanted TX98 administered intramuscularly. These vaccine strategies were  
94 tested in naïve and MDA-positive weanling pigs subsequently challenged with homologous or  
95 heterologous strains of H3N2 IAV.

## 96 **Methods**

### 97 ***Viruses and vaccine preparation***

98 Antigen for the whole inactivated virus (WIV) vaccine was A/sw/Texas/4199-2/1998 (wt TX98),  
99 grown in Madin-Darby canine kidney (MDCK) cells. Clarified virus from infected culture was  
100 inactivated by UV irradiation, using the sterilize setting in an ultraviolet cross-linking chamber  
101 (GS Gene Linker, Bio-Rad, Hercules, CA). Inactivation of the virus was confirmed by failure to  
102 replicate in 2 serial passages on MDCK cells. A commercial adjuvant was added at a 1:5 ratio  
103 (Emulsigen D, MVP Laboratories, Inc., Ralston, NE). Each dose of WIV contained approximately  
104 128 HA units of virus. Attenuated virus for the LAIV was generated via reverse genetics as  
105 previously described (24). The attenuated vaccine virus contained an NS1 gene with a 3'  
106 premature termination plus the insertion of four stop codons in the three frames after,  
107 producing a protein 126 amino acids in length with a carboxy-terminal truncation (TX98-

108 NS1Δ126). The remaining seven gene segments were from wild type TX98. The challenge  
109 viruses included wild-type TX98 H3N2 and a heterologous A/SW/CO/23619/99 H3N2 (CO99).  
110 The TX98 and CO99 were shown previously to have limited serologic cross-reactivity (22).  
111 Vaccine and challenge viruses were grown in MDCK cells.

### 112 ***Experimental design***

113 Eight sows obtained from a high-health herd free of IAV and porcine reproductive and  
114 respiratory syndrome virus (PRRSV) were vaccinated with the TX98 WIV. Each vaccinated sow  
115 received 3 doses at 2 week intervals beginning in mid-gestation. Six sows from the same high-  
116 health source were not vaccinated for IAV. All sows delivered their pigs without surgical  
117 intervention and pigs suckled their own dams. Pigs were bled for evaluation of transfer of MDA  
118 at 1 week of age and were weaned at 2 weeks of age. They were treated with ceftiofur  
119 crystalline free acid (Pfizer, New York, NY) at weaning to reduce respiratory bacterial  
120 contaminants. Pigs were demonstrated to be free of influenza virus by nasal swab sampling,  
121 and those born to non-vaccinated sows were shown by serum HI assay to be free of anti-  
122 influenza antibody prior to piglet vaccination.

123 To evaluate both vaccines when given in the presence or absence of H3N2 IAV-specific  
124 MDA, 51 pigs with MDA were divided into 7 groups and 52 pigs without MDA were divided into  
125 7 groups (Table 1). Pigs in the LAIV groups were vaccinated with 2 mL of TX98-NS1Δ126 at 1 X  
126  $10^6$  50% tissue culture infective doses (TCID<sub>50</sub>) per ml by slowly dripping vaccine in the nose.  
127 LAIV was administered once at weaning, approximately 14 days of age. Pigs in the WIV groups  
128 were vaccinated intramuscularly with 1 ml of the formulation described above, at  
129 approximately 14 and 28 days of age. At 8 weeks of age non-vaccinated pigs with MDA were

130 determined to have HI titers below 1:40, indicating waning of MDA prior to challenge. Pigs in  
131 each challenge group were inoculated with 2 ml ( $1 \times 10^5$  TCID<sub>50</sub>/ml) of the indicated virus.  
132 Challenge viruses were given intratracheally while the pigs were anesthetized following an  
133 intramuscular injection of a cocktail of ketamine (8 mg/kg), xylazine (4 mg/kg), and Telazol (6  
134 mg/kg, Fort Dodge Animal Health, Fort Dodge, IA). Challenge groups were housed in individual  
135 isolation rooms and cared for in compliance with the Institutional Animal Care and Use  
136 Committee of the National Animal Disease Center.

### 137 ***Clinical observation and sampling***

138 To compare the efficacies of WIV and LAIV against infection with homologous and heterologous  
139 viruses, infected pigs were observed daily for clinical signs. Nasal swabs were taken on 0, 3, and  
140 5 days post-infection (dpi), placed in 2 ml minimal essential media (MEM) and frozen at -80°C  
141 until study completion. All animals were humanely euthanized 5 dpi with a lethal dose of  
142 pentobarbital (Sleepaway, Fort Dodge Animal Health, Fort Dodge, IA). After euthanasia, each  
143 lung was lavaged with 50 ml MEM to obtain bronchoalveolar lavage fluid (BALF). Nasal swab  
144 specimens were filtered (0.45 mm), and a 200 µl aliquot of each was plated onto confluent  
145 phosphate buffered saline (PBS) washed MDCK cells in 24-well plates. After 1 hour incubation  
146 at 37°C, 200 µl serum-free MEM supplemented with 1 µg/ml TPCK trypsin and antibiotics was  
147 added per well. All wells were evaluated for cytopathic effect (CPE) between 48-72 hours. Ten-  
148 fold serial dilutions in serum-free MEM supplemented with TPCK trypsin and antibiotics were  
149 made with each BALF sample and virus isolation positive nasal swab filtrate sample. Each  
150 dilution was plated in triplicate in 100 µl volumes onto PBS-washed confluent MDCK cells in 96-  
151 well plates. Plates were evaluated for CPE between 48-72 hours post infection. At 72 hours,



152 plates were fixed with 4% phosphate-buffered formalin and stained using  
153 immunocytochemistry with an anti-influenza A nucleoprotein monoclonal antibody as  
154 previously described (8). A TCID<sub>50</sub> titer was calculated for each sample using the standard  
155 method (20).

### 156 ***Pathologic examination of lungs***

157 At necropsy, lungs were removed and evaluated for the percentage of the lung affected with  
158 purple-red consolidation typical of IAV infection. The percentage of the surface affected with  
159 pneumonia was visually estimated for each lung lobe, and a total percentage for the entire lung  
160 was calculated based on weighted proportions of each lobe to the total lung volume (6). Tissue  
161 samples from the trachea and right middle or affected lung lobe were fixed in 10% buffered  
162 formalin for histopathologic examination. Tissues were processed by routine histopathologic  
163 procedures and slides stained with hematoxylin and eosin. Microscopic lesions were evaluated  
164 by a veterinary pathologist blinded to treatment groups. Individual scores were assigned to  
165 each of three parameters: percent of intrapulmonary airways demonstrating epithelial necrosis  
166 or proliferation, percent of bronchi and bronchioles demonstrating peribronchiolar lymphocytic  
167 cuffing (PBLC) and magnitude of neutrophil exudation in bronchioles and alveoli. The  
168 intrapulmonary airway epithelium was scored according to the following criteria: (0.0) no  
169 significant lesions; (1.0) a few airways affected with bronchiolar epithelial damage; (1.5) more  
170 than a few airways affected (up to 25%); (2.0) 50% airways affected often with interstitial  
171 pneumonia; (2.5) approximately 75% airways affected, usually with significant interstitial  
172 pneumonia; (3.0) greater than 75% airways affected, usually with significant interstitial  
173 pneumonia. Peribronchiolar lymphocytic cuffing was scored according to the following criteria:

174 (0.0) no significant lesions; (1.0) a few airways with light PBLC; (1.5) more than a few airways  
175 with PBLC (up to 25%); (2.0) 50% airways with PBLC; (2.5) approximately 75% airways with  
176 PBLC; (3.0) greater than 75% airways with PBLC. Neutrophil (PMN) exudation in bronchioles and  
177 alveoli were scored according to the following criteria: (0.0) none to minimal presence of  
178 neutrophils; (1.0) small clusters of PMNs present in occasional airways; (2.0) Prominent small to  
179 large aggregates of PMNs in bronchiolar lumens, minimally in alveoli. A composite score was  
180 computed using the sum of the three individual scores. The average group composite score  
181 was used for statistical analysis.

182 The trachea was evaluated with a single score based on the magnitude of epithelial  
183 attenuation or necrosis. Trachea scores were based on the following criteria: (0.0) normal  
184 epithelium the entire circumference; (1.0) focal epithelial attenuation; (2.0) Extensive epithelial  
185 attenuation or necrosis.

#### 186 ***Serologic and mucosal antibody assays***

187 Serum samples were collected by anterior vena cava or jugular venipuncture at the following  
188 points: pre-weaning (-7 dpv), primary vaccination (0 dpv), WIV secondary vaccination (14 dpv),  
189 2 weeks post-secondary vaccination (28 dpv), challenge inoculation (49 dpv / 0 dpi), and  
190 necropsy (5 dpi). For use in the HI assay, sera were heat inactivated at 56°C and treated to  
191 remove non-specific agglutinators with a 20% suspension of Kaolin (Sigma Aldrich, St. Louis,  
192 MO) followed by adsorption with 0.5% turkey red blood cells (RBC). HI assays were done using  
193 TX98 and CO99 viral antigens and turkey RBC using standard techniques and with a maximum  
194 titer of 1:640 (17).

195 Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assays (ELISA) to detect total IgG and IgA antibodies  
196 against whole virus preparations of TX98 and CO99 present in serum and BALF were performed  
197 as previously described (Gauger et al., 2011) with the following modifications. Serum samples  
198 were diluted to 1:2000 for the IgG ELISA. BALF samples were diluted to 1:4 for IgG and IgA  
199 ELISAs. Samples were diluted in bovine serum albumen (Fraction V BSA, Life Technologies) and  
200 PBS with a final concentration of 5% BSA to block non-specific antibodies. Independent assays  
201 were conducted using 50  $\mu$ L of whole virus TX98 or CO99 at 100 HA units per well as ELISA  
202 antigen and coated plates were blocked with 150  $\mu$ L of a commercial blocking buffer (Starting  
203 Block, Thermo Fisher). Anti-swine IgG (Kirkegaard and Perry) and anti-swine IgA (Bethyl  
204 Laboratories) were used at a 1:1500 dilutions in blocking buffer. Each sample was analyzed in  
205 duplicate. The optical density (O.D.) was measured at 405 nm wavelength with an automated  
206 ELISA reader. Antibody levels were reported as the mean O.D. for each sample and the means  
207 for each treatment group were compared.

### 208 ***Statistical analysis***

209 Macroscopic and microscopic pneumonia scores,  $\log_{10}$  transformed BALF and nasal swab virus  
210 titers,  $\log_2$  transformations of HI reciprocal titers, and mean O.D. for ELISA assays were  
211 analyzed using analysis of variance (ANOVA) with a p-value  $\leq 0.05$  considered significant  
212 (GraphPad Prism software, La Jolla, CA). Data from treatment groups infected with different  
213 virus strains (TX98 versus CO99) were analyzed separately. Response variables shown to have a  
214 significant effect by treatment group were subjected to pair-wise mean comparisons using the  
215 Tukey-Kramer test.

### 216 **Results**

217 **Serology**

218 Serum antibody responses to the vaccines displayed different profiles compared between  
219 MDA-negative and MDA-positive pigs. In MDA-negative pigs, WIV induced high HI responses in  
220 sera against TX98 with a geometric mean reciprocal titer of 556 at 49 dpv, whereas LAIV  
221 induced TX98-specific HI titers only marginally above the limit of detection (Fig. 1A). Similarly,  
222 WIV induced greater levels of TX98-specific serum IgG in MDA-negative pigs (Fig. 1C). WIV  
223 vaccination induced a modest level of cross-reacting HI titers in sera against CO99 in MDA-  
224 negative pigs, with a geometric mean reciprocal titer of 61 at 0 dpi (Fig. 1B), and there was a  
225 corresponding increase in CO99 serum IgG (Fig. 1D). In contrast, LAIV induced no detectable HI  
226 or total IgG cross-reactivity against CO99, even in MDA-negative pigs (Fig. 1B and 1D,  
227 respectively).

228 Pigs that suckled immunized dams acquired MDA, as measured by serum HI titers  
229 against the vaccine strain TX98 at seven days before vaccination (-7 dpv) with a geometric  
230 mean reciprocal titer of 312 and a range between 40 and  $\geq 640$ ; however, pigs in the MDA-  
231 positive groups did not respond to LAIV or WIV vaccination with increases in HI antibody titers  
232 to TX98 (Fig. 1A). In these MDA-positive pigs, weakly cross-reactive HI titers against CO99 were  
233 detectable at -7 dpv (Fig. 1B). Homologous HI titers in the MDA-positive pigs declined by the  
234 day of challenge (49 dpv) to levels below or near the lower limit of detection ( $\leq 40$ ). However,  
235 prior to challenge maternally-derived serum IgG specific to TX98 was still detectable by ELISA in  
236 non-vaccinated controls (Fig. 1C) but not against the heterologous CO99 (Fig. 1D). Although IgG  
237 levels in the WIV-vaccinated MDA-positive group were significantly higher than in the non-  
238 vaccinated MDA-positive group, WIV vaccination resulted in significantly higher IgG levels in the

239 MDA-negative pigs against both the TX98 and CO99 viruses (Fig. 1C and 1D, respectively). LAIV  
240 given to MDA positive pigs failed to induce an increase in the pre-existing total IgG in sera  
241 against TX98 or CO99 (Fig. 1C and 1D), similar to the HI response. Serum IgG responses after  
242 experimental challenge with TX98 or CO99 (5 dpi) displayed a similar pattern to the pre-  
243 challenge results (Fig. 1E and 1F), with the notable exception of a boost in IgG antibodies  
244 binding to CO99 in the pigs given LAIV in the absence of MDA and challenged with CO99 (Fig.  
245 1F).

#### 246 ***Mucosal Antibody Responses***

247 After TX98 challenge (5 dpi), there were significant levels of TX98-specific IgG in lungs of WIV  
248 vaccinates, whether vaccinated in the presence or absence of MDA (Fig. 2A). LAIV vaccinates  
249 had significant levels of TX98-specific IgG in lungs only if the vaccine was administered in the  
250 absence of MDA (Fig. 2A). This was consistent in pigs challenged with CO99 as well (Fig. 2B). In  
251 sharp contrast, statistically significant IgA levels were only detected in the lungs of pigs  
252 vaccinated with LAIV in the absence of MDA. Results were similar in pigs challenged with either  
253 virus and in both the TX98 and CO99 ELISA assays (Fig. 2C and 2D, respectively). Thus, similar to  
254 the serum antibody profiles, mucosal antibody responses also differed between vaccine types  
255 and were impacted by the presence of MDA at the time of vaccination.

#### 256 ***Replication of challenge viruses***

257 Distinct differences were detected in replication of challenge virus based on MDA and vaccine  
258 status. Nasal replication of TX98 and CO99 challenge viruses was monitored by virus isolation  
259 and titration of virus in nasal swabs. As expected, no virus was detected in any of the pigs on  
260 the day of challenge (data not shown). In MDA-negative, non-vaccinated (NV) animals the two

261 viruses reached similar nasal titers at 3 and 5 dpi, between  $10^4$  and  $10^5$  TCID<sub>50</sub>/ml (Fig 3). Non-  
262 vaccinated pigs that received TX98-specific MDA shed 10- to 100-fold less TX98 virus 3 and 5 dpi  
263 (Fig 3), even though their passive serum HI titers were near the lower limit of detection at the  
264 time of challenge (Fig 1A). In contrast, nasal shedding of CO99 was not significantly inhibited by  
265 the presence of residual TX98-specific MDA (Fig 3B). In MDA-negative pigs vaccinated with WIV  
266 or LAIV, both vaccines provided effective protection against the nasal shedding of TX98 and  
267 CO99, as almost no virus was detected 3 or 5 dpi in these treatment groups. Pigs that had been  
268 vaccinated with WIV in the face of MDA demonstrated reduced TX98 virus shedding at both  
269 samplings, but not complete prevention as in the MDA-negative, WIV-vaccinated pigs. The  
270 single dose of LAIV vaccine in the face of MDA also did not prevent shedding of TX98 at 3 dpi,  
271 but it led to a statistically significant reduction in nasal titers by 5 dpi, when compared with NV  
272 pigs with MDA. Finally, when administered in the face of MDA, both vaccines failed to protect  
273 against nasal replication of heterologous CO99, although statistically significant reductions in  
274 group mean titers were detected at both time points in the LAIV-vaccinated MDA pigs.

275 Virus titers were also measured in BALF specimens collected at necropsy, 5 dpi (Fig 4A).  
276 BALF collected from NV pigs had mean titers of  $10^5$ - $10^6$  TCID<sub>50</sub>/ml. Residual MDA appeared to  
277 provide a very limited amount of protection against TX98 replication in the lung –  
278 approximately a 10-fold reduction in titer – but not against CO99 (Fig 4A). These results are  
279 similar to what was observed for nasal titers at 5 dpi, though reductions due to MDA were  
280 greater in the nose compared to the lung. BALF samples from MDA-negative WIV and LAIV  
281 vaccinees contained no detectable TX98 or CO99, which closely followed the prevention of  
282 nasal shedding in these vaccinated groups. Even in the face of MDA, both vaccines significantly

283 reduced the TX98 virus loads in BALF (Fig. 3A). However, CO99 BALF viral loads were not  
284 reduced in WIV vaccinates when the vaccine was administered in the face of MDA. MDA also  
285 interfered with the efficacy of LAIV against CO99 although less dramatically than for WIV, as  
286 LAIV provided for a significant reduction in BALF CO99 titers.

### 287 ***Lung pathology***

288 Challenge with either H3N2 strain caused mild lung pathology in pigs lacking maternal or  
289 vaccine-induced immunity, consistent with previous reports (22, 26). MDA-positive pigs  
290 vaccinated with WIV subsequently developed enhanced macroscopic pneumonia when  
291 challenged with either homologous TX98 or heterologous CO99 (Fig 4B and 5C) as compared to  
292 their respective MDA-negative counterparts. This WIV-associated enhancement was  
293 particularly evident after CO99 challenge, with a group mean of 35% of the lung area affected  
294 with pneumonia. Importantly, no enhancement in macroscopic pneumonia was seen with LAIV  
295 under either MDA condition with either challenge virus and there was a general trend for  
296 reduction in pneumonia. Non-vaccinated and LAIV groups challenged with CO99 had average  
297 pneumonia percentages of 4.2% and 2.2%, respectively. Likewise the LAIV vaccine significantly  
298 reduced the percentage of macroscopic lung pathology in MDA-negative animals challenged  
299 with TX98. In pigs lacking MDA, both of the vaccines were associated with significantly reduced  
300 macroscopic lung pathology following heterologous CO99 challenge. Although TX98-specific  
301 serum HI titers from MDA had largely waned in non-vaccinated pigs by the time of challenge,  
302 macroscopic pneumonia was less extensive in non-vaccinated pigs that had received MDA than  
303 in those without MDA (Fig 3B). This difference in severity of macroscopic lesions corresponded  
304 with a similar trend in BALF viral titer 5 dpi (Fig. 4A).

305           When administered to MDA-negative animals, both vaccines showed protective effects  
306 against both challenge viruses with respect to microscopic lung lesion scores (Fig 4C). The  
307 protective effects of LAIV against both challenge viruses, which did not reach statistical  
308 significance, appeared to be maintained when the vaccine was given to MDA-positive animals.  
309 However, as with macroscopic pneumonia, there were distinctly different outcomes when  
310 MDA-positive, WIV-vaccinated pigs were challenged with homologous TX98 versus  
311 heterologous CO99. Those vaccinated with WIV in the face of MDA, then challenged with TX98,  
312 had microscopic lesion scores not different from the non-vaccinated MDA-positive group. In  
313 contrast, WIV vaccination of MDA-positive pigs not only failed to provide protection against  
314 heterologous CO99, but a significant enhancement in lesion severity was demonstrated  
315 microscopically, paralleling the dramatic difference that was seen macroscopically. Importantly,  
316 LAIV did not contribute to enhanced microscopic lesion severity with either challenge virus.

317 ***Tracheal pathology***

318 Regardless of MDA status, TX98 tended to induce more tracheal lesions than CO99 (Fig. 4D). In  
319 MDA negative pigs, both vaccines provided statistically significant reduction of these TX98  
320 lesions, and in MDA positive pigs, LAIV still significantly reduced TX98-induced tracheal damage.  
321 However, tracheal damage was sharply higher in pigs that received WIV vaccine in the face of  
322 MDA and then were challenged with CO99. Thus, the overall enhanced respiratory disease from  
323 heterologous infection of the MDA-positive WIV vaccinates was clearly evident in the trachea as  
324 well as in the lung.



## 325 **Discussion**

326 The antigenic diversity of contemporary and emerging IAV strains is a major obstacle to  
327 effective and reliable vaccines for swine (16). IAV vaccines currently licensed around the world  
328 contain inactivated viral antigens representing H1N1, H3N2, H1N2, and 2009 pandemic H1N1  
329 strains (12). Inactivated IAV vaccines elicit systemic neutralizing antibodies and protection  
330 against homologous challenge, but their efficacy against antigenically distinct strains is often  
331 diminished (1, 9). Intranasal vaccination with an attenuated virus is considered likely to elicit  
332 more cross-reactive T cells and mucosal antibodies against antigenically variant strains (12).  
333 Several attenuated viral constructs made by targeted genetic mutations have been tested in  
334 recent years (13, 18, 24). We previously reported the immunogenicity and protective efficacy of  
335 TX98 virus attenuated by truncation of the NS1 gene, which encodes a type I interferon  
336 antagonist protein (23, 26). This virus (identical to LAIV in the present report) was shown to  
337 have attenuated replication in the upper respiratory tract. When administered as an intranasal  
338 vaccine to young seronegative pigs, the TX98 LAIV elicited a mucosal IgA response, modest  
339 titers of serum HI antibodies, and antigen-specific T cells, while conferring protection against  
340 homologous challenge and a degree of cross-protection against variant strains with a single or  
341 two-dose regimen (7, 26). Our previous work indicated that two intranasal applications of the  
342 LAIV did not confer any benefit against homologous challenge compared to one dose (26) and  
343 one dose would be highly preferred for use in the swine population. Here we show that a single  
344 dose was highly efficacious against the homologous TX98 and heterologous CO99 in MDA-  
345 negative pigs. Although future studies are necessary to investigate whether two doses would

346 improve efficacy in the presence of MDA, the impact of the findings of this study come from the  
347 differences between WIV and LAIV in the face of MDA with heterologous challenge.

348         One aim of the present study was to compare the efficacy of intranasal LAIV versus  
349 intramuscular WIV vaccination in seronegative pigs. WIV vaccination induced high serum HI  
350 titers to the homologous antigen, while HI responses following LAIV vaccination were weak or  
351 below detection limits. Even before the WIV vaccinees were boosted with a second dose, they  
352 achieved higher HI titers than LAIV vaccinees (Fig. 1A). Cross-reactive HI antibody titers against  
353 heterologous CO99 tended to be 4- to 16-fold lower than homologous titers, and these were  
354 only detectable in WIV vaccinees. Despite the marked differences in serological responses, both  
355 vaccines supplied significant protection in the absence of MDA against the replication of not  
356 only homologous TX98 but also heterologous CO99. Based on these data, protective immunity  
357 induced by LAIV vaccination was likely mediated by T cells and/or mucosal antibodies, and here  
358 we demonstrate a robust IgA response in the lower respiratory tract when the LAIV was  
359 administered in the absence of MDA. Higher levels of IgG in the serum were also detected at 5  
360 dpi, indicating a cross-reacting boost of antibody to the CO99 virus exposure. It is not clear if  
361 the higher levels of serum (and mucosal) antibodies to CO99 at 5 dpi in the MDA-negative pigs  
362 were specific only to the CO99 challenge virus or if the CO99 challenge boosted the TX98  
363 primed response, particularly against epitopes that are shared between TX98 and CO99. While  
364 there was no evidence of virus replication, the immune system had likely formed prior  
365 immunity against common epitopes contained in the LAIV vaccine virus that may have been  
366 boosted upon exposure to the CO99 virus. The protection provided by WIV vaccine against  
367 CO99 in the non-MDA pigs was surprising, since previous studies reported limited HI cross-

368 reactivity between TX98 and CO99 (22) and the geometric mean cross-reactive HI titer at the  
369 time of challenge in this study was 61, about ten-fold lower than the geometric mean  
370 homologous HI titer to TX98. The cross-reacting HI antibodies and mucosal IgG antibodies  
371 detected at 5 dpi are likely to have played a role in the heterologous protection, perhaps  
372 enabled by the magnitude of the systemic antibody response to WIV. Cross-reactive T-cells  
373 primed by the WIV may have also contributed to the protective effect against the heterologous  
374 CO99 infection. Consistent with this, a similarly formulated H1N2 WIV vaccine was shown to  
375 prime T cells in antibody-negative young pigs (7).

376 IAV vaccination of sows is a widespread practice in North American swine herds (3). This  
377 presents a second practical problem concerning IAV vaccines in the swine industry: antibodies  
378 transferred in colostrum from sows to their litters can interfere with subsequent vaccination of  
379 the piglets (8) and are often poorly matched to viruses circulating on the sow farm or in down-  
380 stream production stages. Colostrum-borne maternal antibodies, which are predominantly IgG,  
381 are not expected to infiltrate the nasal mucosa of the upper respiratory tract, so we  
382 hypothesized that the LAIV vaccine would be less sensitive to inhibition by MDA. Our serological  
383 results demonstrated that MDA indeed prevented pigs from mounting active HI antibody  
384 responses to WIV vaccine (Fig. 1A). Despite this, WIV vaccine administered in the face of MDA  
385 still provided significant protection against homologous TX98 challenge, including decreased  
386 nasal shedding (Fig. 3) and replication in the lung (Fig. 4A), but did not prevent damage to the  
387 lower respiratory tract (Fig. 4B-D). This pointed again to the possibility that the adjuvanted WIV  
388 in the face of MDA primed a cellular immune response that contributed to protection against

389 homologous virus. Moderate T-cell priming was demonstrated in pigs vaccinated with a similar  
390 formulation of inactivated H1N2 IAV (7).

391           Critically, though, there was a pronounced failure of WIV vaccination in MDA-positive  
392 pigs that were challenged with heterologous CO99. In this group, the vaccine failed to reduce  
393 viral replication in nasal passages and the viral load in BALF (Fig. 3 and 4A). Strikingly,  
394 macroscopic lung lesions were exacerbated (Fig. 4B and 5C) in a manner similar to another  
395 VAERD model (4, 5, 25). Composite microscopic lung and tracheal lesions (Fig. 4 C-D) were  
396 enhanced and similar in character to VAERD lesions previously reported (4). In sharp contrast,  
397 there was no enhancement of pathologic lung changes in the MDA-positive group vaccinated  
398 with LAIV; in fact, LAIV was partially protective against CO99 in terms of reducing lung damage  
399 and viral load on 5 dpi (Fig. 4 and Fig. 5). Thus, although WIV and LAIV had similar efficacy in  
400 naïve pigs, the presence of MDA titers at the time of vaccination followed with heterologous  
401 viral challenge produced sharply different outcomes between the two vaccines. The abrogation  
402 of the LAIV-induced IgA response in the lower respiratory tract (Fig. 2D) may explain the  
403 reduction in efficacy in the MDA-positive pigs compared to LAIV given to MDA-negative pigs.  
404 Evaluation of the antibody profile in the upper respiratory tract (nasal mucosa) was not  
405 conducted in this study but should be considered in future studies to understand how MDA  
406 interferes with the LAIV-induced mucosal antibody response and if the inhibition is limited to  
407 the lower respiratory tract. We speculate that the cellular immune response to LAIV in MDA-  
408 positive pigs was a key factor in cross-protection, since no lung IgA or cross-reacting serum HI  
409 antibodies were evident above the limits of detection. It is also unclear if there was a role for  
410 the presumably non-neutralizing IgG in the lungs of MDA-positive WIV vaccinates with VAERD

411 following heterologous challenge with CO99 in comparison to the absence of IgG in the lungs of  
412 MDA-positive LAIV vaccinates without VAERD.

413         In a previous study, MDA-positive pigs that received a bivalent IAV vaccine containing  
414 inactivated classical H1N1 were primed for enhanced pneumonia upon heterologous H1N1  
415 challenge, whereas vaccination of MDA-negative pigs provided cross-protection (8). This  
416 detrimental interaction between passive immunity and WIV vaccination parallels what we  
417 observed in the present study with H3N2 viruses. Although the earlier study did not include an  
418 LAIV treatment group for comparison, it did show evidence that intramuscular vaccination with  
419 an inactivated virus administered in the face of MDA was ineffective at priming protective T-cell  
420 memory. The mechanism(s) responsible for the enhancement of respiratory disease in our  
421 model is not completely clear. It can be hypothesized that MDA's bind to vaccine antigen and  
422 the method of antigen processing and presentation is different than when vaccine antigen is  
423 not bound to antibody (seronegative pig). This change in antigen uptake and subsequent  
424 presentation may alter the adaptive immune response (both humoral and cell-mediated) in the  
425 piglet, possibly directing it away from neutralizing epitopes to conserved, albeit non-  
426 neutralizing epitopes shared between the vaccine virus and challenge virus. After 2 doses of  
427 WIV, HI antibodies against neither TX98 nor CO99 were detected in MDA-positive pigs, whereas  
428 HI antibodies against both were detected in MDA-negative pigs. Although there was no HI  
429 antibody response in MDA-positive pigs receiving WIV, there appeared to be a modest increase  
430 in total IgG specific to TX98 in the serum prior to challenge (Fig. 1C). Total IgG was also present  
431 in the lung at 5 dpi (Fig. 2 A and B) when there was still no detectable HI response in the serum  
432 in this group (data not shown). This indicates that MDA interfered with the induction of

433 neutralizing HI antibodies by WIV. Upon challenge with the heterologous virus, immune  
434 complexes may form between non-neutralizing antibodies and challenge virus that trigger  
435 inflammatory responses such as those implicated in vaccine-enhanced respiratory syncytial  
436 virus (RSV) infection of infants (3). The involvement of antibody in generating immune  
437 complexes associated with severe respiratory disease and pulmonary damage has also been  
438 described for 2009 pandemic H1N1 influenza disease (15). Roles for specific IgG subclasses have  
439 not been clearly defined in the pig; thus, this type of analysis is not available for further  
440 interrogation of within type differences in antibody responses induced by WIV vaccination in  
441 the face of MDA. However, functional or qualitative differences in the antibodies produced in  
442 response to WIV and LAIV in the presence or absence of MDA appear likely to have a critical  
443 role in the clinical outcome after infection.

444 Another hypothesis, though not mutually exclusive, is that differences in antigen  
445 processing and presentation of WIV vaccine antigen in MDA-positive pigs may alter the kinetics  
446 of the response or may prime a qualitatively different T cell response and these T cells play a  
447 role in immunopathology. A different subset of memory T cells may develop in MDA-positive,  
448 WIV vaccinated pigs that upon heterologous challenge, when cross-neutralizing antibody is not  
449 present, are activated and contribute to pathology, possibly through granzyme release and  
450 killing of infected cells. Additional studies are needed to further characterize differences in the  
451 antibody and T cell responses that develop following WIV vaccination of MDA-positive and  
452 MDA-negative pigs and elucidate the immunopathogenic mechanism of enhanced disease  
453 following heterologous challenge.

454 Collectively, the results of this experiment demonstrate very distinct outcomes of IAV  
455 vaccination and infection with heterologous virus, with pivotal factors including the format and  
456 route of administration of vaccines, the presence or absence of MDA, and the antigenic  
457 similarity of challenge virus to the vaccine strain. The differences go beyond protection versus  
458 non-protection, and point to realistic scenarios in the field where vaccinating sows and their  
459 piglets could potentiate more severe respiratory disease. This underscores the need to re-  
460 evaluate the way in which efficacy studies are designed for swine influenza vaccine licensure for  
461 use in pigs in the United States. Methods of IAV vaccine evaluation that focus simply on  
462 protection against homologous challenge in seronegative pigs would be unlikely to identify this  
463 problem. Determining the immune correlates of protection versus disease exacerbation would  
464 significantly aid the improvement of vaccine safety and efficacy under field conditions.

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568 **Table 1.** Study design for comparison of LAIV and WIV vaccines

<b>Treatment Group</b>	<b>MDA Status<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Piglet Vaccine</b>	<b>Piglet Challenge</b>	<b>N</b>
MDA / NV / NC	+	None	Sham	4
MDA / NV / TX	+	None	wt TX98	8
MDA / NV / CO	+	None	wt CO99	8
MDA / WIV / TX	+	TX98 WIV	wt TX98	8
MDA / WIV / CO	+	TX98 WIV	wt CO99	8
MDA / LAIV / TX	+	TX98 LAIV	wt TX98	8
MDA / LAIV / CO	+	TX98 LAIV	wt CO99	7
no MDA / NV / NC	-	None	Sham	4
no MDA / NV / TX	-	None	wt TX98	8
no MDA / NV / CO	-	None	wt CO99	8
no MDA / WIV / TX	-	TX98 WIV	wt TX98	8
no MDA / WIV / CO	-	TX98 WIV	wt CO99	8
no MDA / LAIV / TX	-	TX98 LAIV	wt TX98	8
no MDA / LAIV / CO	-	TX98 LAIV	wt CO99	8

569 <sup>1</sup> MDA(+) pigs suckled sows which were previously vaccinated with three doses of TX98 WIV.

570 MDA(-) pigs suckled sows which were not vaccinated against IAV.

571 **Figure 1.** Serum antibody levels due to maternal derived antibody and/or response to vaccine.  
572 Reciprocal geometric mean hemagglutination inhibition (HI) titers at multiple time points prior  
573 to challenge against TX98 H3N2 antigen (A) and against CO99 antigen (B). MDA designates  
574 groups with maternally-derived antibody induced by immunizing dams with TX98 vaccine.  
575 Treatment groups were non-vaccinated (NV), vaccinated at 0 days post-vaccination (dpv) and  
576 14 dpv with TX98 whole inactivated virus (WIV), or vaccinated intranasally with TX98 live-  
577 attenuated influenza virus (LAIV) at 0 dpv only. Mean optical density (O.D.) of serum IgG in  
578 whole virus ELISA assays against TX98 antigen (C) and against CO99 antigen (D) at 49 dpv (0  
579 days post infection). Mean optical density (O.D.) of IgG in whole virus ELISA assays at 5 days  
580 post challenge against TX98 antigen for groups challenged with TX98 (E) and against CO99  
581 antigen for groups challenged with CO99 (F). Open bars designate groups without MDA and  
582 solid bars designate groups with MDA. Statistically significant differences between MDA  
583 statuses within a vaccine group are marked with asterisks and differences between vaccine  
584 treatment groups with matched MDA status are identified by connecting lines ( $P < 0.05$ ).

585 **Figure 2.** Antibody levels in broncho-alveolar lavage fluid at five days post infection. Mean  
586 optical density (O.D.) of IgG in whole virus ELISA assays against TX98 antigen (A) and against  
587 CO99 antigen (B) and of IgA against TX98 antigen (C) and against CO99 antigen (D). Groups  
588 challenged with TX98 are represented in panels A and C whereas groups challenged with CO99  
589 are represented in panels B and D. Open bars designate groups without MDA and solid bars  
590 designate groups with MDA. Statistically significant differences between MDA statuses within a  
591 vaccine group are marked with asterisks and differences between vaccine treatment groups

592 with matched MDA status and challenge virus strains are identified by connecting lines ( $P <$   
593 0.05).

594 **Figure 3.** A. Nasal shedding of challenge virus at 3 (A) and 5 (B) dpi in nasal swabs (NS). Piglets  
595 were vaccinated in the presence or absence of circulating MDA against TX98. At vaccination,  
596 piglets received no vaccine (NV), two intramuscular doses of TX98 WIV, or one intranasal dose  
597 of TX98 LAIV. Forty-nine days after the initial vaccine dose, piglets were challenged by intra-  
598 tracheal inoculation with TX98 or CO99. Nasal swab specimens were collected from 3 and 5  
599 days post-infection (dpi), and titrated by TCID<sub>50</sub> assay on MDCK cells. Statistically significant  
600 differences between MDA statuses within a vaccine group are marked with asterisks and  
601 differences between vaccine treatment groups with matched MDA status and challenge virus  
602 strains are identified by connecting lines ( $P < 0.05$ ).

603 **Figure 4.** Adjuvanted TX98 WIV administered to MDA-positive piglets enhances the severity of  
604 subsequent infection with heterologous H3N2 strain CO99, whereas TX98 LAIV vaccine partially  
605 cross-protects. MDA-positive pigs suckled colostrum from TX98-vaccinated sows and MDA-  
606 negative pigs suckled from naïve sows. WIV was delivered intramuscularly at 2 and 4 weeks of  
607 age, while LAIV was delivered intranasally only at 2 weeks of age. At 8 weeks of age (49 dpv)  
608 pigs were challenged intratracheally with TX98 or CO99. At 5 days post-infection (dpi), pigs  
609 were euthanized, BALF samples were collected, and necropsy was conducted. BALF samples  
610 were titrated by TCID<sub>50</sub> assay on MDCK cells (A). Macroscopic lesions were scored as the  
611 percentage of total lung surface area involved (B). Microscopic pneumonia (C) and tracheal  
612 damage (D) were scored as described in Materials and Methods. Statistically significant  
613 differences between MDA statuses within a vaccine group are marked with asterisks and

614 differences between vaccine treatment groups with matched MDA status and challenge virus  
615 strains are identified by connecting lines ( $P < 0.05$ ).

616 **Figure 5.** Photographs of macroscopic lung pathology in pigs positive for MDA at the time of  
617 vaccination, shown 5 days after heterologous challenge with CO99. Photographs of ventral  
618 surfaces of lungs are representative of three vaccine treatment groups: non-vaccinated  
619 challenge controls (A); TX98 LAIV-vaccinated pigs (B); and TX98 WIV-vaccinated pigs (C).