been described in a number of publications (WO 92/21375, WO 93/06211, WO93/03760, WO 93/07898, WO 96/36356, EP 0 676 467, EP 0 732 340, EP 0 835 930).

[0008] Vaccination is the key method for alleviating the burden of PRRS as pigs that recover from a PRRS infection will develop an immune response, which under normal circumstances will protect them from being infected again by the same virus strain. However, PRRS virus has the ability to change (by mutation or recombination); and therefore, new viral strains may arise. In such cases, cross protection between strains may not exist, and new outbreaks may be observed in farms that had been infected previously. Thus there is a continuing need for additional vaccines.

BRIEF SUMMARY ~~OF THE INVENTION~~

[0009] The present ~~invention~~disclosure is related to improved modified live PRRS vaccines of European genotype and new PRRSV strains which can be used for the manufacture of such vaccines. In particular, the ~~invention~~disclosure provides improved PRRS virus strains that have been deposited with the European Collection of Cell Cultures (ECACC) under the Accession Numbers ECACC 11012501 and ECACC 11012502 each deposited on January 25, 2011 in accordance with the provisions of the Budapest Treaty, or any descendant or progeny of one of the aforementioned strains.

[0010] In a first aspect, there is provided~~particular embodiments, the present invention describes~~ a Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome Virus (PRRSV) of a European type, which is of the strain deposited with European Collection of Cell Cultures (ECACC) under the Accession Numbers ECACC 11012501~~ or Accession Numbers ECACC 11012502~~. In a second aspect, there is provided a Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome Virus (PRRSV) of a European type, which is of the strain deposited with European Collection of Cell Cultures (ECACC) under the Accession Numbers ECACC 11012502.

[0011] The PRRSV is characterized in that the virus is attenuated by passaging at least 36 times in cell culture such that when the modified virus is administered to a swine or other mammal prone to PRRSV, it fails to cause clinical

signs of PRRSV disease but is capable of inducing an immune response that immunizes the mammal against pathogenic forms of PRRSV.

[0012] Also contemplated is a method for the preparation of the live attenuated PRRSV deposited with European Collection of Cell Cultures (ECACC) under the Accession Numbers ECACC 11012502 or one attenuated from a parental strain deposited at Accession Numbers ECACC 11012501, comprising adapting an MA 104-grown PRRSV of a European type to non-MA 104 mammalian cells. Hence, in a third aspect, there is provided a method for the preparation of the live attenuated PRRSV according to the second aspect, comprising adapting an MA 104-grown PRRSV of a European type according to the first aspect to non-MA 104 mammalian cells.

[0013] TAnother aspect of the inventiondisclosure also contemplates a vaccine for the protection of pigs against PRRSV infection, comprising the live attenuated PRRSV deposited with European Collection of Cell Cultures (ECACC) under the Accession Numbers ECACC 11012502 or one attenuated from a parental strain deposited at Accession Numbers ECACC 11012501 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

Hence, in a fourth aspect, there is provided a vaccine for the protection of pigs against PRRSV infection, comprising the live attenuated PRRSV according to the second aspect and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

Such a vaccine may advantageously further comprise one or more non-PRRSV attenuated or inactivated pathogens or antigenic material thereof. For example, the non-PRRSV pathogens may be selected from Pseudorabies virus, Porcine influenza virus, Porcine parvovirus, Transmissible gastroenteritis virus, Escherichia coli, Erysipelo rhusiopathiae, Bordetella bronchiseptica, Salmonella cholerasuis, Haemophilus parasuis, Pasteurella multocida, Streptococcus suis, Mycoplasma hyopneumoniae and Actinobacillus pleuropneumoniae.

[0014] In other embodiments, the vaccine may further comprise one or more additional European PRRSV strains selected from the group consisting of a PRRSV strain deposited under the Accession Numbers Lelystad virus strain (Lelystad Agent (CDI-NL-2.91), or other strains such as those deposited under the Accession Numbers ECACC 04102703, ECACC 04102702, ECACC 04102704, CNCM Accession No. I-1140, CNCM Accession No I-1387, CNCM Accession No I-1388, ATCC VR 2332, VR 2385, VR 2386, VR 2429, VR 2474, and VR 2402; CNCM I-1102, CNCM I-1140, CNCM I-1387, CNCM I-1388, or ECACC V93070108 or indeed may be a U.S. strain such as North American PRRS virus, pT7P129A; ATCC deposit VR-2332, ATCC deposit VR-2368; ATCC VR-2495;

ATCC VR 2385, ATCC VR 2386, ATCC VR 2429, ATCC VR 2474, and ATCC VR 2402.

[0015] It is contemplated that the vaccine may comprise a carrier that is suitable for intradermal or intramuscular application. In some embodiments, the vaccine is in freeze-dried form. In specific embodiments, the vaccine comprises at least about 10^7 virus particles.

[0016] TAnother aspect of the inventiondisclosure also relates to a method for the preparation of a live attenuated vaccine for combating PRRS, comprising admixing a live attenuated PRRSV virus deposited with European Collection of Cell Cultures (ECACC) under the Accession Number ECACC 11012502 or one attenuated from a parental strain deposited at Accession Numbers ECACC 11012501 with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier. Hence, in a fifth aspect, there is provided a method for the preparation of a live attenuated vaccine for combating PRRS, comprising admixing a live attenuated PRRSV according to the second aspect with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier. In such methods the live attenuated PRRSV may preferably further comprise one or more additional European PRRSV strains selected from the group consisting of a PRRSV strain deposited under the Accession Numbers ECACC 04102703, ECACC 04102702, ECACC 04102704, CNCM Accession No. I-1140, CNCM Accession No I-1387, and CNCM Accession No I-1388.

[0017] In some embodiments, the live attenuated PRRSV may further comprise an adjuvant.

[0018] Also contemplated is a method of immunizing swine against porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome (PRRS), the method comprising the step of administering to swine a vaccine composition including a live porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome virus mixed with a pharmacologically compatible carrier agent, the virus comprising PRRS 94881 virus passaged at least 36 times in cell culture to modify the virus such that when the modified virus is administered to a swine or other mammal prone to PRRS, it fails to cause clinical signs of PRRS disease but is capable of inducing an immune response that immunizes the mammal against pathogenic forms of PRRS.

[0019] In some embodiments, the method is performed wherein the swine presents no lung lesions after vaccination. In other embodiments, the swine presents fewer lung lesions after vaccination as compared to vaccination with Porcilis vaccine. In a sixth aspect, there is provided a vaccine as defined above, for use in a method of immunizing swine against porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome (PRRS).

[0020] ~~Another~~ seventh aspect of the ~~invention~~disclosure relates to a PRRS virus having a nucleotide sequence that is at least 95% homologous with the sequence set forth in either SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:10.

[0021] Also contemplated is a PRRS virus that comprises at least one ORF that encodes a protein that is at least 98% identical to any of the sequences set forth in SEQ ID NO: 2 to 9 or SEQ ID NO:11 to SEQ ID NO:18.

[0022] Also contemplated is a PRRS virus that has a nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:10 or a fragment of either SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:2 wherein the fragment encodes an ORF selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:2, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:4, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:6, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:11, SEQ ID NO:12, SEQ ID NO:13, SEQ ID NO:14, SEQ ID NO:15, SEQ ID NO:16, SEQ ID NO:17, and SEQ ID NO:18.

[0023] The ~~invention~~disclosure further relates to a subunit vaccine for vaccination of a porcine animal wherein the vaccine comprises one or more nucleotides selected from the group consisting of a nucleotide that encodes an ORF selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:2, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:4, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:6, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:11, SEQ ID NO:12, SEQ ID NO:13, SEQ ID NO:14, SEQ ID NO:15, SEQ ID NO:16, SEQ ID NO:17, and SEQ ID NO:18.

[0024] TAnother aspect of the inventiondisclosure also relates to a subunit vaccine for vaccination of a porcine animal wherein the vaccine comprises one or more nucleotides selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:19; SEQ ID NO:20; SEQ ID NO:21; SEQ ID NO:22; SEQ ID NO:23; SEQ ID NO:24; SEQ ID NO:25;

SEQ ID NO:26; SEQ ID NO:27; SEQ ID NO:28; SEQ ID NO:29; SEQ ID NO:30; SEQ ID NO:31; SEQ ID NO:32; SEQ ID NO:33; and SEQ ID NO:34.

[0025] Also contemplated is a composition comprising one or more proteins selected from the group consisting of a protein having the sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:4, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:6, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:11, SEQ ID NO:12, SEQ ID NO:13, SEQ ID NO:14, SEQ ID NO:15, SEQ ID NO:16, SEQ ID NO:17, and SEQ ID NO:18.

[0026] Also contemplated is an isolated nucleic acid comprising a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:19; SEQ ID NO:20; SEQ ID NO:21; SEQ ID NO:22; SEQ ID NO:23; SEQ ID NO:24; SEQ ID NO:25; SEQ ID NO:26; SEQ ID NO:27; SEQ ID NO:28; SEQ ID NO:29; SEQ ID NO:30; SEQ ID NO:31; SEQ ID NO:32; SEQ ID NO:33; SEQ ID NO:34.

[0027] The ~~invention~~disclosure further relates to a recombinant expression vector and/or vaccine comprising such expression vectors, wherein said vectors comprise a nucleic acid sequence that encodes one or more PRRSV ORFs selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:2, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:4, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:6, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:11, SEQ ID NO:12, SEQ ID NO:13, SEQ ID NO:14, SEQ ID NO:15, SEQ ID NO:16, SEQ ID NO:17, and SEQ ID NO:18 operably linked to a promoter. In such embodiments, the nucleic acid encoding the ORFs may preferably be selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:19; SEQ ID NO:20; SEQ ID NO:21; SEQ ID NO:22; SEQ ID NO:23; SEQ ID NO:24; SEQ ID NO:25; SEQ ID NO:26; SEQ ID NO:27; SEQ ID NO:28; SEQ ID NO:29; SEQ ID NO:30; SEQ ID NO:31; SEQ ID NO:32; SEQ ID NO:33; and SEQ ID NO:34. In an eighth aspect, there is provided a vaccine for the protection of pigs against PRRSV infection, comprising a PRRS virus as defined above and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, wherein said PRRS virus has a nucleotide sequence that is set forth in SEQ ID NO: 1, or is an attenuated PRRS virus that has a nucleotide sequence that is at least 95% homologous with the sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO: 1.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

[0028] Figure 1A: Clinical observation of cough score in respiratory challenge model using European challenge strain.

[0029] Figure 1B: Clinical observation of total clinical score in respiratory challenge model using a European challenge strain.