

1 Cell mediated and innate immune responses in pigs following vaccination and challenge with  
2 *Toxoplasma* parasites

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16

17 Abstract

18 *Toxoplasma gondii* has a worldwide distribution and can infect almost all warm blooded animals  
19 including pigs and humans. This study aims to examine the immune responses induced in pigs  
20 following vaccination (live S48 tachyzoites) and/or challenge with *T. gondii* oocysts, through the  
21 examination of changes in levels of transcription in CD4, CD8 $\alpha$ , IFN- $\gamma$ , IL-12p35, CXCR3, MyD88.  
22 The experiment involved four groups of animals; pigs in group 1 (Challenged) (Chal) were  
23 challenged orally with ( $1 \times 10^3$  oocysts) on day 28 of the experiment. Pigs in group 2 (Vaccinated  
24 /Challenged) (Vac/Chal) were vaccinated (S48 isolate tachyzoites) on day 0, then challenged on  
25 day 28. The group 3 (Vaccinated) (Vac) animals were vaccinated (S48 isolate tachyzoites) on day  
26 0 of the experiment. Finally the group 4 (control) pigs remained non-vaccinated and non-  
27 challenged. All animals were culled 6 weeks post challenge. At post mortem samples of  
28 retropharyngeal lymph node (RLN), mesenteric LN (MLN) and spleen were collected, RNA was  
29 extracted and cDNA synthesised. The results showed significant increases in IFN- $\gamma$  expression in  
30 samples from groups 1 (Chal) and 2 (Vac/Chal) (RLN) and groups 1, 2 and 3 (Vac) (spleen) and in  
31 MyD88 expression (RLN) in samples from groups 1, 2 and 3 compared to the group 4 (control)  
32 animals. Significant increases were also observed in CD8 $\alpha$  expression in group 1 (Chal) (RLN) and  
33 groups 1 and 2 (Vac/Chal) (RLN and MLN) compared against group 4 (control) and group 3 (Vac)  
34 respectively. Conversely, significant down regulation of CD4 and/or IL-12p35 transcription was  
35 found in at least one sample from groups 1 (Chal), 2 (Vac/Chal) and 3 (Vac) compared to group 4  
36 (control) pigs. This study demonstrates that cell mediated and innate immune responses are  
37 generated in pigs following exposure to *T. gondii* parasites (oocysts or tachyzoites), key amongst  
38 them appear to be IFN- $\gamma$ , MyD88 and CD8 $\alpha$ .

39

40 Key words

41 *Toxoplasma gondii*, porcine, vaccination, cell mediated immunity

## 42 1. Introduction

43 *Toxoplasma gondii* (the causative agent of toxoplasmosis) has a worldwide distribution and is  
44 capable of infecting almost all warm blooded animals, including humans, cattle, sheep and pigs  
45 (Dubey, 2008). Humans can become infected with sporulated *Toxoplasma* oocysts through the  
46 ingestion of contaminated food, water and soil (Frenkel et al., 1970). However, the ingestion of  
47 viable tissue cysts in raw or undercooked meats is also considered a major route of infection  
48 (Dubey, 1994). Should a primary human *Toxoplasma* infection occur during pregnancy, the  
49 parasite can be transplacentally transmitted from mother to foetus, which can result either in a  
50 miscarriage (Cook et al., 2000) or in neurological lesions in surviving foetuses, which can have  
51 severe lifelong consequences for the child (Jones et al., 2001).

52 A commercial anti-*T. gondii* vaccine (S48 Toxovax®) is available for use in sheep to protect  
53 against abortion. This vaccine has been shown in experimentally vaccinated and subsequently  
54 challenged animals not only to protect against abortion but also to reduce the numbers of  
55 parasites detectable in host tissues (Burrells et al., 2015; Katzer et al., 2014). A vaccine that could  
56 reduce the parasite burdens in pig tissues would be highly desirable, as undercooked infected  
57 pork is considered a major route of infection in humans (Dubey, 2008). However, there are  
58 currently no commercially available anti-*Toxoplasma* vaccines for use in pigs. A number of  
59 experimental vaccine approaches have been tried, these include the use of temperature  
60 sensitive mutant tachyzoites (TS-4) and tachyzoite rhoptry proteins incorporated into  
61 immunostimulating complexes (ISCOM) adjuvant, both of these vaccines significantly reduced,  
62 but did not completely prevent tissue cyst formation (Garcia et al., 2005; Pinckney et al., 1994),  
63 indicating that a vaccine could reduce the parasite burden in tissues, resulting in safer meat for  
64 human consumption.

65 Interferon gamma (IFN- $\gamma$ ) is known to be involved in protection against many intracellular  
66 pathogens, including *T. gondii* (Kringel et al., 2004). Cellular responses involving CD8+ T-cells and  
67 IFN- $\gamma$  (Solano Aguilar et al., 2001), along with innate immunity and humoral responses have also  
68 been shown to be involved in protection against *T. gondii* tissue cyst formation in pigs (Wang et  
69 al., 2013).

70 The present experiment aims to examine the immune responses generated in spleen,  
71 mesenteric lymph node (MLN) and retropharyngeal lymph node (RLN) samples collected from  
72 pigs following a vaccination with live S48 tachyzoites and a challenge with *T. gondii* oocysts (M4  
73 isolate) as part of an experiment to determine whether vaccination is able to reduce tissue cyst  
74 formation in vaccinated animals. Differences in levels of gene transcription of CD4, CD8 $\alpha$ , IFN- $\gamma$ ,  
75 IL-12p35, CXCR3, MyD88 were analysed comparing vaccinated, challenged and control animals.  
76 The markers and cytokines were chosen as they represented an overview of key cell types (CD4,  
77 CD8 $\alpha$  (T-cells) and NK) (Mair et al., 2013) and cytokines (IFN- $\gamma$  and IL-12) (Solano Aguilar et al.,  
78 2001) as well as the innate immune response (MyD88) (Dendritic cells) (Scanga et al., 2002)  
79 which are known to be important in protection against *Toxoplasma*, however there is currently  
80 little information available about their roles in pigs following vaccination and challenge with the  
81 parasite.

82

## 83 2. Materials and Methods

### 84 2.1. Animals, vaccination and challenge

85 A total of 18 mixed gender pigs (*Sus scrofa*) (Large White/Landrace cross bred) were divided into  
86 4 experimental groups. All samples were collected from the same animals as previously  
87 described by Burrells et al., (2015). In brief animals in group 2 (Vac/Chal) (n = 5 each) were

88 vaccinated with  $1.2 \times 10^5$  S48 *T. gondii* tachyzoites on day 0 of the experiment. Four weeks later  
89 (day 28 of the experiment) the animals in groups 1 (Chal) and 2 (n = 5 each) were orally  
90 challenged with  $10^3$  M4 isolate sporulated *T. gondii* oocysts (Burrells et al., 2015). The group 3  
91 (Vac) (n = 5) animals were vaccinated (S48 isolate tachyzoites) on day 0 of the experiment.  
92 Finally the group 4 (n = 3) (control) animals were left unvaccinated and unchallenged. All animals  
93 were culled 6 weeks post challenge (day 70 of the experiment). At post mortem examination  
94 samples of spleen, MLN and RLN were collected and snap frozen on Dry ice, then stored at  $-80^\circ\text{C}$   
95 until processing for RNA extraction and cDNA synthesis.

96 The samples were selected as they are effective in different parts of the body, the spleen filters  
97 large quantities of blood so will collect parasites/parasite antigens in the circulatory system, the  
98 MLN drains the intestines, while the RLN is one of the lymph nodes that drains the brain/CNS, so  
99 is a good indicator for parasite dissemination.

100

## 101 2.2. RNA extraction and cDNA synthesis

102 Frozen samples of spleen, RLN and MLN (approx 1 g each) were processed for RNA extraction as  
103 previously described (Bartley et al., 2013). Briefly; following homogenisation, the samples were  
104 processed through phenol/chloroform phase separation to RNA. The final RNA pellet was  
105 resuspended in 200  $\mu\text{l}$  of RNase free water. The concentration of RNA was determined by  
106 spectrophotometry (Nanodrop ND1000). Samples were then stored at  $-80^\circ\text{C}$  prior to cDNA  
107 synthesis and SYBR green qPCR.

108

## 109 2.3. Synthesis of cDNA from RNA samples

110 The method used to reverse transcribe cDNA from RNA has been previously described (Bartley et  
111 al., 2013). Briefly, following the manufactures instructions, a commercially available high  
112 capacity cDNA reverse transcription kit (Applied Biosystems, Carlsbad, CA, USA) was used.  
113 Following reverse transcription the cDNA was diluted to 5 ng/μl (400 μl) in DNase/RNase free  
114 water and stored at 4°C prior to SYBR green qPCR analysis.

115

#### 116 2.4. SYBR green qPCR analysis of cellular immune responses of pigs following vaccination and 117 challenge with *T. gondii*.

118 To examine changes in levels of transcription that occur during a *T. gondii* infection in pigs,  
119 primers were designed against a number of cell surface markers and cytokines involved in the  
120 immune response. These included the T-cell cell surface markers CD4 and CD8α, the Th1 type  
121 cytokines IFN-γ and IL-12, the NK cell marker CXCR3 and the adaptor protein MyD88, which is  
122 involved in TLR function (Table 1). All samples were analysed by SYBR green PCR (Bartley et al.,  
123 2013) in triplicate using Fast SYBR green master mix (Applied Biosystems, Carlsbad, CA, USA).  
124 Analysis was performed using the standard reaction conditions suggested by the manufacturer (2  
125 min at 50 °C, 10 min at 95 °C, 40 cycles at 95 °C for 15 s, and 60 °C for 1 min). The melt curves of the  
126 PCR products was acquired through a step wise increase in temperatures from 55 to 95 °C (ABI  
127 prism 7500 using sequence detection software (SDS) (v1.2.3) (Applied Biosystems, Carlsbad, CA,  
128 USA).

129 To determine changes in the levels of transcription the  $\Delta C_t$  of each of the analytes was  
130 determined, the data was normalised against the  $\Delta C_t$  value for the HPRT (Hypoxanthine  
131 Phosphoribosyltransferase) gene, creating a  $\Delta\Delta C_t$ . This allowed for variations in sample quality.  
132 The mean data illustrated in Figs. 1A-F are the differences between the level of transcription of

133 the genes of interest and the level of HPRT transcription, so for genes where there are high  
134 levels of transcription (lower Ct values) may result in a potentially negative value being  
135 displayed, as the level of transcription for the genes of interest is greater than the level of  
136 transcription of HPRT.

137

## 138 2.5. Statistical analysis

139 The mean differences in normalised  $\Delta\Delta C_t$  values from each analyte for each tissue were  
140 compared using a one way analysis of variance (ANOVA). All calculations were performed using  
141 the minitab software (v17.1.0).



### 142 3. Results

143 The aim of this study was to examine changes in the levels of transcription for a number of  
144 components of the immune response in pigs following vaccination and/or challenge with *T.*  
145 *gondii* parasites, to help understand some of the immune mechanisms involved in controlling  
146 tissue cyst formation in vaccinated animals. The components investigated included the Th1 type  
147 cytokines IFN- $\gamma$  and IL-12 (p35), the T-cell surface markers CD4 and CD8 $\alpha$ , CXCR3 which is  
148 associated with NK cells and myeloid differentiation primary response gene 88 (MyD88) an  
149 adaptor protein, which is involved in TLR responses.

150 A Ct value was not always available for all samples, as for some of the analytes examined the  
151 levels of transcription were below the detection threshold of the PCR.

152

#### 153 3.1. IFN- $\gamma$

154 Significant increases in mean levels of transcription of IFN- $\gamma$  were seen in the RLN (P = 0.005 and  
155 P = 0.006) from group 1 (Chal) and group 2 (Vac/Chal) and spleen (P <0.001, P <0.001, P <0.001)  
156 from group 1, group 2 and group 3 (Vac) respectively, when compared against the mean of  
157 group 4 (control) animals (Fig. 1A). The levels of IFN- $\gamma$  transcription in MLN are comparable for  
158 groups 1, 2 and 3, to those seen in the RLN and spleen. Unfortunately, no statistical comparisons  
159 could be made for the MLN as the level of IFN- $\gamma$  transcription of the group 4 animals was below  
160 the detection threshold of the PCR. No other statistical differences were observed in the levels of  
161 transcription when comparing the IFN- $\gamma$  data from groups 1, 2 and 3.

162

#### 163 3.2. CD8 $\alpha$

164 When the mean levels of CD8 $\alpha$  transcription were compared, the pigs in group 1 (Chal),  
165 demonstrated significantly increased transcription of CD8 $\alpha$  in RLN (P = 0.017) compared to the  
166 group 4 (control) animals (Fig. 1B). Group 1 (Chal) also demonstrated increased transcription of  
167 CD8 $\alpha$  in the MLN compared to the group 4 (control) animals but these differences were not  
168 statistically significant

169 Groups 1 (Chal) and group 2 (Vac/Chal) demonstrated higher levels of CD8 $\alpha$  transcription in all  
170 samples than group 3 (Vac). These differences were statistically significant in RLN (P = 0.001, P =  
171 0.05), MLN (P = 0.015, P = 0.012) respectively. For the spleen, group 1 produced significantly  
172 higher levels of CD8 $\alpha$  transcription than group 3 (P = 0.038).

173

174

### 175 3.3. MyD88

176 Significantly increased mean levels of transcription of MyD88 were seen in RLN (P = 0.011, P =  
177 0.025 and P = 0.021) samples from group 1 (Chal), group 2 (Vac/Chal) and group 3 (Vac) and in  
178 MLN (P = 0.031 and P = 0.05) for group 2 and 3 compared to the mean of the group 4 (control)  
179 animals (Fig. 1C). Groups 1, 2 and 3 also produced higher mean levels of transcription of MyD88  
180 from the spleen compared to group 4; however these differences were not statistically  
181 significant. There were no statistical differences observed when comparing the levels of MyD88  
182 transcription (RLN, spleen and MLN) from groups 1, 2 and 3.

183

### 184 3.4. CXCR3

185 The levels of transcription CXCR3 were higher in the RLN, spleen and MLN samples from the  
186 animals in group 1 (Chal) and group 2 (Vac/Chal) compared to the group 4 (control) animals (Fig.  
187 1D). However, the differences observed were only statistically significant ( $P = 0.009$ ) when  
188 comparing the data from group 2 MLN against the group 4 control animals. When the levels of  
189 CXCR3 transcription in groups 1, 2 and 3 were compared, significantly increased levels of CXCR3  
190 transcription were observed in the RLN from group 2 ( $P = 0.045$ ) and the MLN from group 1 ( $P =$   
191  $0.037$ ) compared to group 3.. The results show that levels of transcription of CXCR3 are generally  
192 increased in pigs that received a challenge with parasites suggesting a role for NK cells in a  
193 protective immune response against *T. gondii* in pigs

194

### 195 3.5. IL-12 (p35)

196 The RLN samples from the group 4 (control) animals produced significantly higher mean levels ( $P$   
197  $<0.001$ ) of IL-12 (p35) transcription than group 1 (Chal) (Fig. 1E), while the MLN samples from  
198 group 4 also produced significantly higher levels of transcription of IL-12 than group 2 (Vac/Chal)  
199 and group 3 (Vac) animals ( $P = 0.034$ ,  $P = 0.025$  respectively) (Figure 1E). When comparing the IL-  
200 12 data from groups 1, 2 and 3, group 1 was seen to produce significantly ( $P = 0.014$ ) higher  
201 levels of IL-12 than group 2 in MLN. Levels of transcription of IL-12 (p35) are generally lower  
202 following exposure to *T. gondii* parasites and appear to be significantly down regulated in some  
203 instances.

204

### 205 3.6. CD4 T cells

206 The group 4 (control) animals demonstrated significantly higher mean levels of CD4 gene  
207 transcription in RLN compared to group 3 (Vac) (P = 0.035) as well as in the spleen (P = 0.022, P =  
208 0.004 respectively) and MLN (P = 0.05 and P = 0.015 respectively) when compared to group 2  
209 (Vac/Chal) and group 3 (Vac). Interestingly significant differences were also observed when the  
210 levels of transcription of CD4 from the samples of groups 1, 2 and 3 were compared. Levels of  
211 CD4 transcription in the spleen of group 1 (Chal) and group 2 (Vac/Chal) were significantly higher  
212 (P = 0.003 and P = 0.031, respectively) than group 3 (Vac). While CD4 transcription in the MLN  
213 sample from group 2 was also significantly higher (P = 0.02) than group 3.

214

#### 215 4. Discussion

216 The main purpose of this study was to examine the immune responses in pigs that were  
217 vaccinated and/or challenged with *T. gondii*. This was done by examining changes in the levels of  
218 transcription of a number of immunological analytes in pigs following exposure to *T. gondii*  
219 parasites. The data from this study has shown that following either vaccination and/or challenge  
220 with *T. gondii* parasites (groups 1, 2 and 3) lymph nodes (RLN and MLN) and spleen samples from  
221 pigs demonstrate increases in transcription of the T-cell surface marker CD8 $\alpha$ , the natural killer  
222 (NK) cell marker CXCR3, the Th1 type cytokine interferon- $\gamma$  (IFN- $\gamma$ ) and the adaptor protein  
223 MyD88, which is involved in toll like receptor (TLR) function. These data, combined with the  
224 previously described humoral response data (anti-*Toxoplasma* IgG) in these pigs (Burrells et al.,  
225 2015) demonstrate the production of cellular, humoral and innate immune responses in pigs  
226 following exposure to *Toxoplasma* parasites.

227 It has been well established that a cell mediated response involving cytotoxic CD8<sup>+</sup> T cells  
228 (Dawson et al., 2004; Solano Aguilar et al., 2001) and innate immune responses involving NK cells

229 (Dotiwala et al., 2016) are important in protection against intracellular parasites (Dawson et al.,  
230 2005). During our study we demonstrated increases in CD8 $\alpha$  transcription in RLN and MLN  
231 samples in group 1 (Chal) and group 2 (Vac/Chal), six weeks after they received an oocyst  
232 challenge, compared to the control pigs. The only significant increase in CD8 $\alpha$  transcription was  
233 seen in the RLN from group 1 (Chal) pigs compared to the controls. This increase in immune  
234 activity also coincided with significant increases in IFN- $\gamma$  and MyD88 as well as well as increased  
235 CXCR3 transcription. These increases may have been elicited by large numbers of disseminating  
236 parasites, as Burrells et al., (2015) demonstrated positive ITS1 and qPCR results from the brains  
237 of 4/5 pigs in this group. The variable levels of transcription seen in the group 2 (Vac/Chal) pigs  
238 may have been as a consequence of the lack of circulating/disseminating parasites, as evidenced  
239 by negative (0/5) ITS1 and qPCR results seen in any tissue by Burrells et al., (2015). During this  
240 current study we also demonstrate consistent increases in the transcription of CXCR3, a  
241 chemokine receptor found on porcine NK cells, with transcription of CXCR3 having been  
242 demonstrated on NKp46<sup>high</sup> NK cells (Mair et al., 2013). These porcine NKp46<sup>+</sup> NK cells have also  
243 been associated with high levels of production of IFN- $\gamma$  (Mair et al., 2012).

244 Levels of transcription of IFN- $\gamma$  were significantly increased in the challenged and vaccinated  
245 animals (groups 1, 2 and 3), compared to the group 4 (control) pigs. Increased production of IFN-  
246  $\gamma$  has been previously documented in PBMC samples collected from pigs infected with *T. gondii*  
247 oocysts (Solano Aguilar et al., 2001), however this current study demonstrates that increased  
248 IFN- $\gamma$  transcription is also being observed in the lymph nodes and spleen 6-10 weeks following  
249 vaccination and/or challenge. All of the experimental groups were comprised of both male and  
250 female pigs and there does not appear to be any bias in the levels of transcription of IFN- $\gamma$  based  
251 on the gender of the individual animals (no significant differences were observed when the data

252 was compared by T-Test). Similar observations were made by (de Groot et al., 2005) who  
253 showed no significant effect of gender on IFN- $\gamma$ , IL-4 or IL-10 production in 2-8 week old piglets.

254 The data presented in this current study also demonstrates a significant up-regulation of MyD88  
255 transcription in both the RLN and MLN samples, which is indicative of an innate immune function  
256 involving TLR's. Previous studies in pigs have shown MyD88 is involved in the regulation of Th1  
257 (IFN- $\gamma$ ) type immune responses following a challenge with *T. gondii* (Dawson et al., 2004).. If  
258 CD8 $\alpha^{\text{dim/-}}$  NKp46 $^{\text{high}}$  NK cells (Mair et al., 2013) are involved in the production of IFN- $\gamma$  during  
259 porcine *Toxoplasma* infections then this may account for the sporadic T cell (CD8 $\alpha$ ) responses  
260 and the consistent increases seen in CXCR3 seen in the group 1 (Chal) and group 2 (Vac/Chal)  
261 and group 3 (Vac) animals.

262 The results from this current study show reductions in levels of CD4 transcription in samples  
263 from group 1 (Chal), group 2 (Vac/Chal) and group 3 (Vac) compared to the group 4 (control)  
264 animals. Previous reports have documented significant decreases in the percentage of cells  
265 expressing CD4 in samples of PBMC (Jungersen et al., 1999; Solano Aguilar et al., 2001), however  
266 both of these reductions were seen in samples of PBMC soon after infection (1 – 2 weeks) and  
267 not in lymphoid tissues (RLN, MLN and spleen) following an infection (6 weeks post challenge) as  
268 we have observed in this current study. However we must bear-in-mind that during the current  
269 study we only have samples from a single time point, which will not be reflective of the CD4  
270 responses earlier following infection.

271 There also appears to be no evidence of IL-12 (p35) involvement in the immune response against  
272 *T. gondii* parasites in pigs at 6 week post challenge. In this current study the levels of  
273 transcription of IL-12 (p35) were down regulated in samples from group 1 (Chal), group 2  
274 (Vac/Chal) and group 3 (Vac) compared to the group 4 (control) animals. A previous study by

275 Solano-Aguilar et al., (2002) demonstrated a limited involvement of IL-12 in T cell proliferation  
276 and IFN- $\gamma$  production in porcine PBMC and lymphoid cells, however these were healthy non-  
277 *Toxoplasma* infected pigs (Solano-Aguilar et al., 2002). As we only have samples from 6 weeks  
278 post challenge any previous involvement of IL-12 in the initiation of an immune response would  
279 have gone undetected.

280 Previous studies have attempted to use a number of different vaccine formulations to inhibit  
281 tissue cyst formation in pigs. These have included using either live RH isolate tachyzoites,  
282 temperature sensitive mutant-4 (TS-4), tachyzoite- excreted–secreted antigens (ESAs) and crude  
283 rhoptry antigens prior to a *T. gondii* oocysts challenge (Garcia et al., 2005; Pinckney et al., 1994;  
284 Wang et al., 2013). All of these vaccines failed to prevent tissue cyst formation, though they did  
285 all reduce parasite numbers, compared to non-vaccinated/challenged animals. In this current  
286 study we have shown that prior exposure to live S48 tachyzoites significantly limits (even  
287 potentially completely inhibits) parasite dissemination in animals challenged with oocysts and  
288 appears to inhibit tissue cyst formation, as is evidenced by the negative 529 bp *T. gondii* qPCR,  
289 and *T. gondii* ITS1 PCR results from the tissues (brain, chop, loin, left tricep, left semitendinosus,  
290 diaphragm, heart, tongue and masseter) collected from the group 2 (Vac/Chal) pigs (Burrells et  
291 al., 2015). When tissues from group 2 pigs were used in a mouse bioassay, no mice (0/45)  
292 inoculated returned positive results for the presence of *T. gondii* (Burrells et al., 2015). All of the  
293 animals in both groups 1, 2 and 3 were shown to have sero-converted, to be producing anti-  
294 *Toxoplasma* IgG within 14-21 days after first exposure to the parasites, while the group 4  
295 (control) animals remained sero-negative throughout the experiment (Burrells et al., 2015) This  
296 current data combined with the findings of Burrells et al., (2015) suggests that a live attenuated  
297 vaccine could be used to significantly reduce parasite burdens in pigs making for safer meat for

298 human consumption. This could be particularly important in the continuing climate of increased  
299 consumer demand for outdoor reared “free range” pork.

300

## 301 5. Conclusion

302 The results from this current study show that exposure of pigs to live *T. gondii* parasites (S48  
303 tachyzoites) elicits a strong cell mediated immune response against a subsequent oocyst  
304 challenge with *T. gondii* parasites. The data presented here demonstrates that at six weeks post  
305 challenge this immune response appears to involve both cell mediated and innate immune  
306 responses (CD8 $\alpha$  T-cells and NK cells along with IFN- $\gamma$  and MyD88), along with strong anti-  
307 *Toxoplasma* IgG responses (Burrells et al., (2015) which appear to be sufficient to limit the  
308 spread of *T. gondii* parasites in pigs.

309

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317

318 Conflict of Interest:



319 The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest

320

321 Ethical approval:

322 All applicable international, national, and/or institutional guidelines for the care and use of

323 animals were followed (Experiment number - E28/11).

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385


386

387 Figure Caption

388 Fig. 1A-F.  $\Delta\Delta C_t$  values for A - IFN- $\gamma$ , B – CD8 $\alpha$ , C – MyD88, D – CXCR3, E- IL-12 and F- CD4

389 normalised against HPRT, from samples of Mesenteric Lymph Node, Retropharyngeal Lymph

390 Node and spleen from:

391  Group 4 (Con) Group 3 (Vac) Group 2 (Vac/Chal) Group 1 (Chal)

392 <sup>A</sup> – Results significantly different ( $p < 0.05$ ) compared to Group 4 (control)

393 <sup>B</sup> – Results significantly different ( $p < 0.05$ ) compared to Group 3 (Vac)

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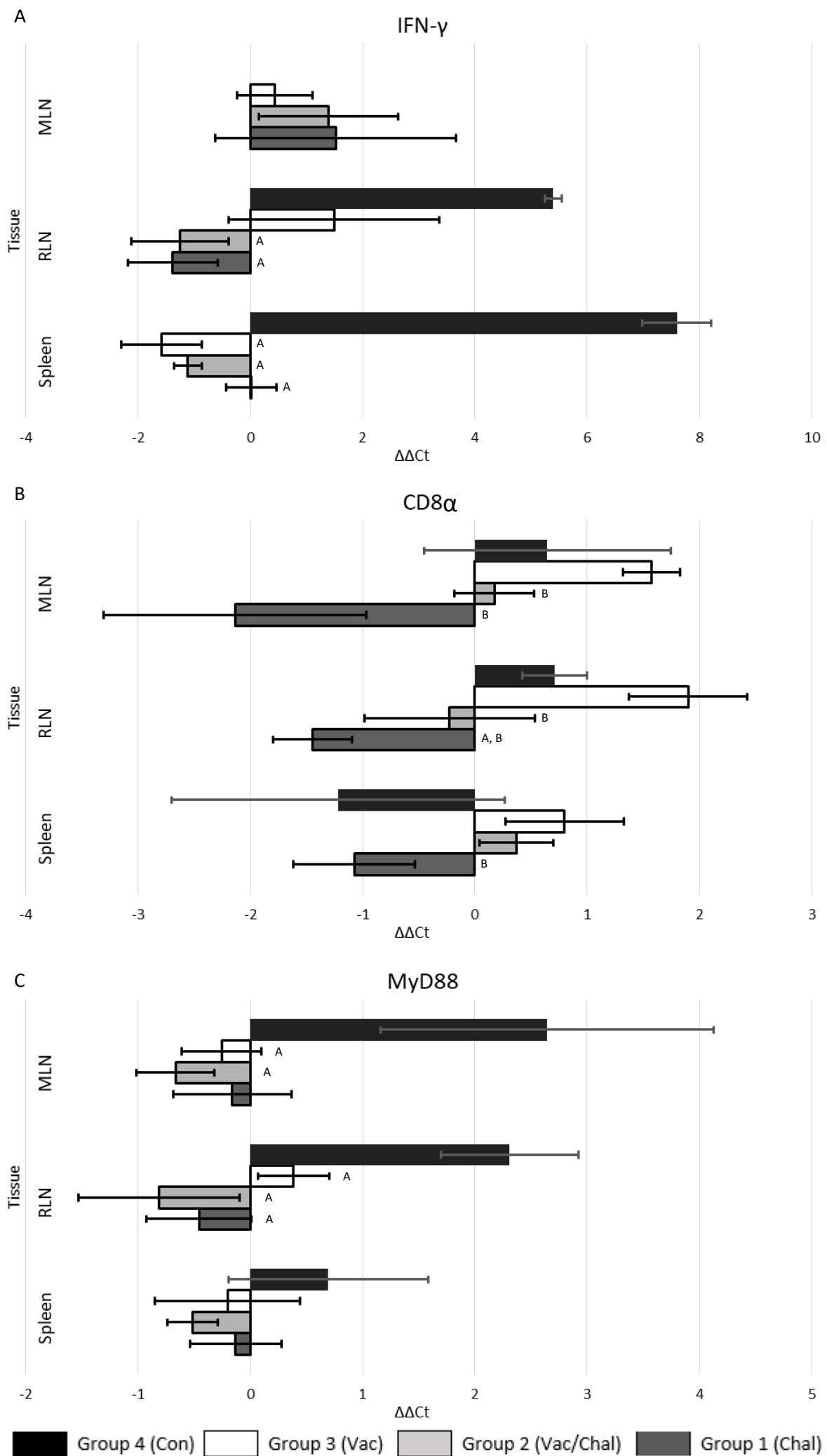
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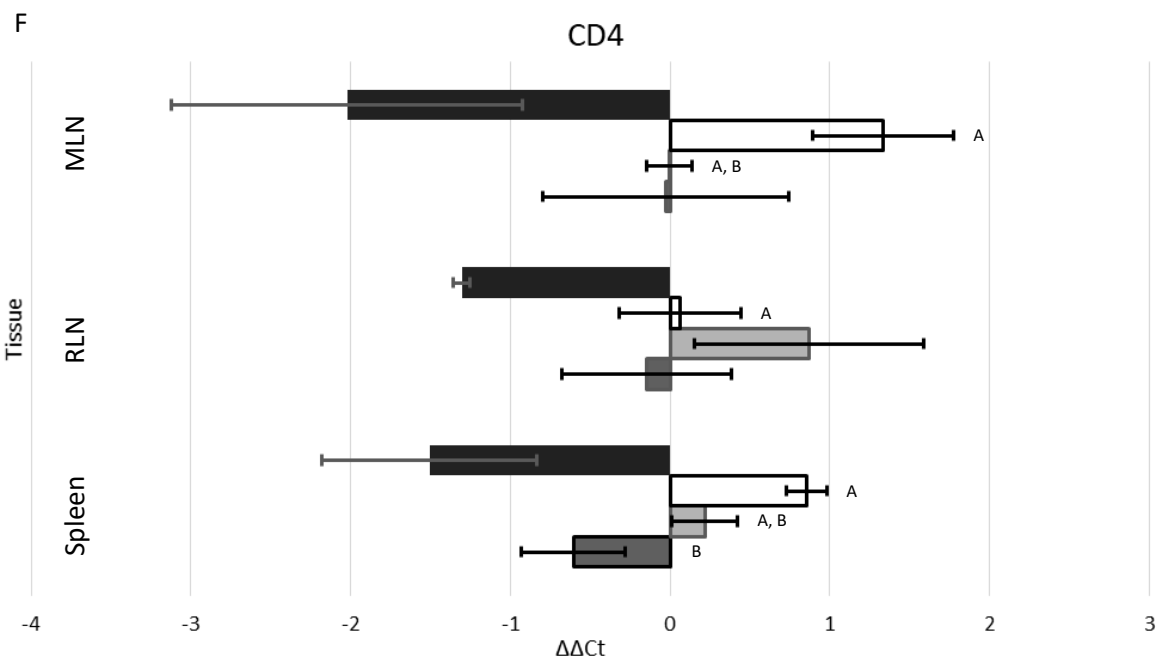
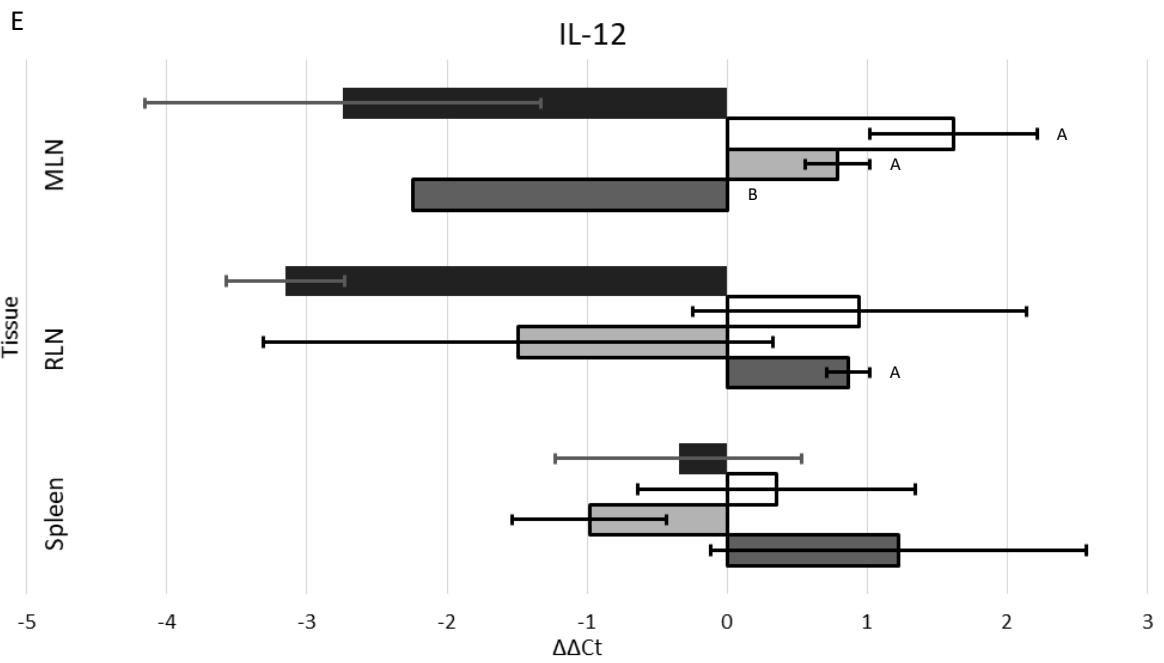
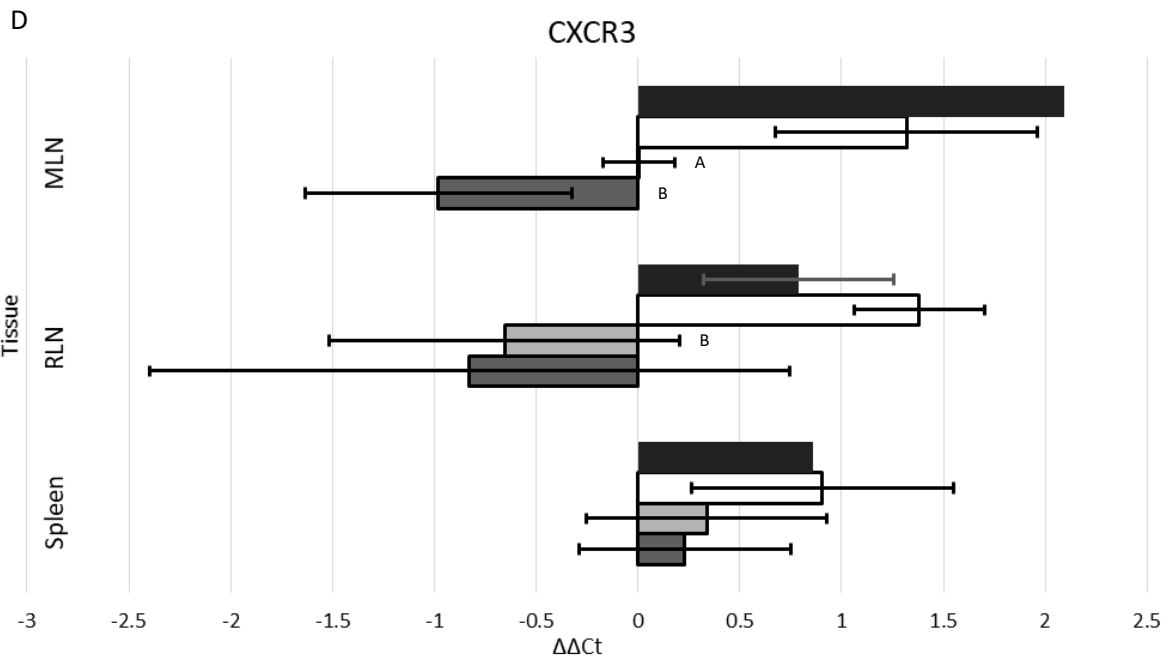
Table 1. Primers for SYBR green qPCR analysis of spleen and lymph node samples collected from pigs vaccinated / challenged with *Toxoplasma gondii*.

Target	Primer Name	Sequence	Product (bp)	Tm Value	GENBANK Accession Number
Hypoxanthine phosphoribosyltransferase	HPRT-For	5'-CTTTGCTGACCTGCTGGATT-3'	114	60.4	CV870598
	HPRT-Rev	5'-CCCGTTGACTGGTCATTACA-3'		59.4	
T-cell surface glycoprotein CD4	CD4-For	5'-AGCAGAGGGGAAGAGAGACC-3'	123	60.0	NM001001908
	CD4-Rev	5'-AGGAACAGGTGCCTCAGAGA-3'		60.0	
CD8 antigen alpha	CD8 $\alpha$ -For	5'-AGCTGTTCTGGCTCTACCA-3'	133	60.0	AY517855
	CD8 $\alpha$ -Rev	5'-TGTCATTGGCCTTGTAAACCA-3'		60.0	
Interferon-gamma	IFN- $\gamma$ -For	5'-TCAGCTTTGCGTGACTTTGT-3'	150	59.6	X53085
	IFN- $\gamma$ -Rev	5'-CACAAATCCAATTCAGCATCA-3'		59.5	
Interleukin-12 p35 subunit	IL-12p35-For	5'-CCTCCAAACTAGCGACCTCA-3'	150	60.4	L35765
	IL-12p35-Rev	5'-CTGAGATGGTCCAGGTGGTT-3'		60.0	
C-X-C chemokine receptor type 3	CXCR3-For	5'-CTGGTGGACACCCTCATGTA-3'	150	59.4	AJ851240
	CXCR3-Rev	5'-GAACTTGACACCCACGAAGG-3'		60.5	
Myeloid Differentiation Primary Response Protein 88	MyD88-For	5'-CCTGCTGATGCTTTGAGGTC-3'	146	60.9	EU056736
	MyD88-Rev	5'-AGAGGCAGATGAGAGGTGGA-3'		59.9	

Footnote – Tm – melting temperature

Figure





Group 4 (Con)
  Group 3 (Vac)
  Group 2 (Vac/Chal)
  Group 1 (Chal)

A – Results significantly different ( $p < 0.05$ ) compared to Group 4 (control)

B – Results significantly different ( $p < 0.05$ ) compared to Group 3 (Vac)

**Declaration of interests**

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

The authors declare the following financial interests/personal relationships which may be considered as potential competing interests: