



<b>Name:</b>	Agnese Balzani		
<b>Project title:</b>	Improving udder quality traits in sows to aid survival, health and lifetime performance of piglets		
<b>Institute:</b>	Newcastle University		
<b>Start date:</b>	October 2012	<b>Finish date:</b>	September 2015
<b>Lay summary of project</b> ( <i>in your own words</i> )			
<p>Piglet mortality is an important issue in the pig industry. The importance of colostrum for survival and development of the newborn has been well established. It is essential that the piglet has its first colostrum intake as quickly as possible after birth, but this can be impeded by characteristics of the teat placement, size and exposure. Thus sow udder conformation may play an important role in piglet survival. Our research aims to improve the udder conformation of the sow to facilitate colostrum intake. First of all we are developing practical methods to characterise udder conformation traits and colostrum quality. Then we study the relationship between these traits and piglet survival and growth. Finally we will assess if the critical traits have a significant genetic component and whether their selection would conflict with, or complement, selection for other important reproduction or production traits.</p>			
<b>A bit about yourself</b> ( <i>one paragraph</i> )			
<p>I studied animal science at the University of Bologna and then I worked for two years as a research technician in a laboratory for analysis of food and animal products in Reggio Emilia before starting my PhD. I am a very curious person and I always want to know everything. In my spare time I enjoy cycling and travel to discover new places.</p>			
<b>What you hope to get out of your PhD</b>			
<p>I hope to improve my abilities to understand and solve problems, increase my confidence, make myself a better communicator and gain skills that may lead to a good job in the research field.</p>			



**A photograph of your work**



Declaration: I hereby give permission for my photo and the information provided to be used by BPEX in any publication, printed or electronic, for the purpose of informing stakeholders about my work.

Signature: Agnese Balzani

Date: 18-09-2013