A collaborative research project between JSR Genetics and the University of Kent has secured a four-year grant from the Technology Strategy Board, worth nearly £1,000,000. The funding will be used to improve sustainable protein production, entitled: ‘Pig IVF and genetics: A route to global sustainability’.

Professor Darren Griffin from the University of Kent’s School of Biosciences together with JSR Genetics, a Yorkshire-based SME, and The Bridge Centre (a leading IVF clinic) in London will introduce sustainable alternatives to transporting superior pig breeding stock using IVF embryos.

“This prestigious award enables the University to maintain its very productive collaborations with JSR and the Bridge Centre.”

JSR Genetics, a world leader in superior pig genetics, routinely flies over 1,000 pigs at a time to stock overseas farms in developing markets. This incurs high production and logistics costs, as well as environmental pollution and animal welfare issues.

The project aims to introduce a sustainable alternative to this practice through IVF technology: Transporting IVF embryos equates to a fraction of the cost associated with chartering planes, with no adverse impact on animals and the environment. The research will also look to adapt non-invasive pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) technology, currently used in human IVF treatment, to improve pig genetic stock: A mostly female sex ratio will realise further monetary and environmental benefits.

“This project is a fantastic example of how fusing knowledge and technology can deliver a global sustainability solution.”

The University’s Professor Griffin said,

“We are delighted to win this prestigious award and maintain our very productive collaborations with JSR and the Bridge Centre. The TSB Fund actively encourages collaboration between universities and industry – this project is a fantastic example of how fusing knowledge and technology can deliver a global sustainability solution.”

For further information on how your business can benefit from our support and services, contact Kent Innovation & Enterprise, University of Kent; T: +44 (0)1227 827376  E: enterprise@kent.ac.uk  www.kent.ac.uk/enterprise/