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TITLE

FIELD EVALUATION OF HAEMOGLOBIN (HB) LEVEL AND FACTORS INFLUENCING HB STATUS IN PIGLETS AT WEANING ON NETHERLANDS FARMS

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CONTENT

Background and Objectives

Iron deficiency anaemia (IDA) is a serious health problem in neonatal piglets and it is controlled by routine application of iron in various formulations. The aim of the study was to evaluate the haemoglobin level (Hb) at weaning in the commercial farms in Netherlands and to assess influence of the size of the piglet, litter size (TBL), parity, weaning age and type of iron form.

Materials and Methods

Ten randomly selected farms using different forms of iron (dextran, gleptoferron) and route of administration (injection x needle-less) were included. Within each farm, ten randomly selected litters from different parity sows have been assessed (30 piglets per litter, 300 in total). Small, medium and large piglet were sampled per litter, Hb levels were measured immediately on farm test (HemoCue ®). The statistical evaluation of interaction was performed by ANOVA.

Results

The type of iron treatment (product comparison) has significant effect ($P=0.0096$) on Hb level at weaning. The effect of parity, weaning age, TBL and the size of the piglet was not significant, but there was a tendency for lower Hb with big piglets, piglets from low parity sows (1-3), piglets from larger litters (>14 TBL vs. 8-13) and piglets weaned earlier (21 days vs. 26, 27 and 28 days).

Discussion and Conclusions

The effects of evaluated variables were not significant; however, the trend suggests that big piglets from large litters of low parity sows can be at risk of IDA. More studies need to be done to confirm it. There was no visible evidence of influence of different route of administration of iron supply efficiency. The percentage of no anaemic piglets (Hb >9 g/dL) was variable from one farm to another depending on product used and seems to be a more sensitive criterion beside Hb levels.