

TITLE

FIELD EVALUATION OF HAEMOGLOBIN (HB) LEVEL AND INFLUENCING FACTORS AT WEANING ON FRENCH FARMS

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CONTENT

Background and Objectives

Iron deficiency anaemia (IDA) is a serious health problem in neonatal piglets and is controlled by routine application of iron in various formulations. The iron status at weaning of piglets with fast growing genetics is frequently discussed. The aim of the present study was to evaluate the haemoglobin level (Hb) of piglets at weaning in commercial farms in France and to assess the possible influence of the piglet size, the litter size, the Hb status of the sow and the type of iron form on Hb.

Materials and Methods

Twelve randomly selected farms using different forms of iron supplementation (oral, injectable) were included in the study. Within each farm, ten randomly selected litters from different parity sows have been assessed (30 piglets per litter, 360 piglets in total). Sow, small, medium and large piglet were sampled and Hb levels were measured immediately on farm test (HemoCue ®). The influence of size of the piglet, product used and interaction (parity, litter size) was evaluated by ANOVA.

Results

The selected treatment (product used) has significant effect on Hb level at weaning. Oral forms of iron provided generally lower and more variable Hb levels when compared with dextran/gleptoferron based products with some exceptions. The percentage of not anaemic piglets (Hb>9 g/dL) was highly variable from one farm to another depending on product used. There was no statistically significant effect of other factors.

Discussion and Conclusions

In our study, the type of iron used has significant effect on the Hb level at weaning. There was no effect of size of the piglets on Hb level; with one of the possible explanations was rather smaller size of the litters (11.42 piglets on average) with rather equal size of the piglets born.