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TITLE
COLOSTRUM INTAKE IN PIGS: ANALYSIS OF THE VARYING FACTORS IN 10 COMMERCIAL FARMS

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CONTENT

Background and Objectives
Sow prolificacy has been continuously increasing over the years and nevertheless the colostrum production of sows is independent from litter size. As piglets are completely dependent on colostrum intake for energy and maternal immune transfer, the issue of colostrum intake is critical. This study was carried out to assess the current levels of colostrum intake and management practices in French production farms.

Material & Methods
Ten production farms were selected regarding pre-weaning mortality (three < 11.5%; three > 15.5%; four in-between). Six liters per farm were studied (17.1 total live born on average) from birth to three weeks of age: 1009 piglets were identified at birth and weighed four times (at birth, end of farrowing, 24h and three weeks after farrowing). For each piglet, a 24h weight gain (WG24) was calculated. Blood samples of 496 piglets at 24h were analyzed for total IgG dosage. Farmers' practices and farrowing environment were also evaluated.

Results
Survival of piglets is dependent on their birth weight and on their WG24. Growth during the first hours of life influenced WG24 (mean: 87g in our study), which was correlated to ADG at 3 weeks (mean: 212g). 66% of live born losses occurred within three days. Cross-fostering before six hours after farrowing was associated with a lower immune transfer. Low WG24 (<50g; energy deficit) was more frequent than inadequate immune transfer (IgG < 20mg/ml; 31% vs 10%). A great diversity of farmers' practices has been observed and, despite available equipment, a lack of thermal comfort was noted in several farms.

Discussion & Conclusion
The colostrum intake is sufficient for 2/3 of piglets but management around farrowing needs to be improved especially regarding cross-fostering practices and thermal comfort.