



WELFARE & NUTRITION

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INFLUENCE OF DAY-TIME ON FEEDING BEHAVIOUR OF GROW-FINISH PIGS FED VIA A LIQUID FEEDING SYSTEM AND WITH A PIG-TO-FEEDER RATIO $\geq 2:1$

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Introduction

Liquid feeding is commonly used on German pig farms but little is known about behaviour of pigs at feed-uptake using type of feeding. In practice pigs receive liquid feed in various feeding blocks throughout the day. This study investigated the influence of day-time, group-size and pig-to-feeder ratio on feed-uptake.

Material & Methods

In a grow-finishing unit applying liquid feed via sensor feeding in 5 blocks/day (2x30 min each), following a short acclimation period after placement, behaviour of pigs at feeding was recorded with the software VideoSyncPro during all feeding times and over a 3-day period. Before start of the observation period pigs were individually weighed and marked with a color code. In total 97 pigs in 4 pens were investigated: Group A: 13, B: 19, C: 26, D: 39 pigs; group A and C: pig-to-feeder ratio 2:1, group B and D: 3:1. Software Mangold INTERACT Version 17 was used to analyse how often and how long the individual pigs were standing at the trough.

Results

In all 4 groups independent of group size or pig-to-feeder ratio it was observed that each pig was taking up feed at least once in each of the feedings blocks. The observations revealed that in all 4 groups pigs on average were more often standing at the trough and stayed for a longer time during the 4th block than in any of the other 4 feeding blocks.

Discussion & Conclusions

This study demonstrated that all piglets took up feed in each feeding block. It was observed in all groups that pigs showed highest activity in feed uptake during afternoon hours. This is in line with the biphasic biorhythm of swine, with a more active behaviour during the afternoon. Further studies on other farms are ongoing to confirm that observations are not farm-related.