

RES-OP-03

TITLE

IMPACT OF WASHING AND DISINFECTION OF MAMMARY GLANDS ON SOW AND PIGLET HEALTH AND PERFORMANCE

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CONTENT

Cleaning pregnant sows before entering the farrowing stable is commonly practiced for biosecurity reasons. However, the usefulness of it is debated as it may only decrease but not eliminate pathogens and it could even favor spread and survival of pathogens. The present study aimed to investigate whether disinfecting the mammary glands of sows after they have been washed has a beneficial effect on the health and performance of the sow and the offspring.

Rodac plates were taken in advance to evaluate bacterial contamination of the farrowing crates. 45 sows were randomly allocated in three groups: no washing and disinfection of the mammary gland, only washing with warm water and washing and disinfection with a iodine solution. Clinical and performance parameters of sows (temperature, backfat, appetite, weaned piglets/sow, medication) and piglets (weight, dead piglets/litter, diarrhea, medication) were recorded until weaning.

General bacterial contamination of farrowing crates was the same for all groups (41-400 colonies/plate). Swabs taken of the teats right after treatment showed no difference of number of bacteria between the groups (>100000 CFU; Enterobacteriaceae, Streptococcus sp., Staphylococcus sp.). Rectal temperature of sows around farrowing, appetite and medication use in the sows were not different between groups. Moreover, no difference could be observed in piglet mortality, average daily weight gain or piglet health (diarrhea, medication) between groups. Washing or washing and disinfection had no significant effect on the number of weaned piglets per sow.

Under the present farm conditions, neither washing nor washing followed by disinfection of the mammary glands provided an additional benefit on sow and/or piglet health and performance during lactation period compared to non-washed sows. Further research is needed to confirm the present results and to investigate whether beneficial effects can be obtained in herds with lower hygiene standards and more health problems in the farrowing unit.