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TITLE

RAISING PIGS WITHOUT ANTIBIOTICS - A COHORTE STUDY

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CONTENT

In Denmark, about 40% of the antimicrobials used for animal production are used in pigs. This has led to the development of the concept "Raised without antibiotics" (RWA), where pigs are ear-tagged at birth and the ear-tag is removed if the pig receive any antibiotic (AB) treatment. The aim of the study was to investigate when piglets were treated with AB in an RWA herd, in order to identify risk periods relevant for timing of preventive interventions. In one Danish sow herd all piglets (n=518) from 29 sows born within two days were individually ear-tagged for study identification within 12 hours of farrowing. All piglets also received a herd RWA ear-tag in the opposite ear 4 days after birth. The pigs were individually weighed at birth, at 14 days, at weaning and at 12 weeks of age. Additionally, piglets were identified and RWA ear-tag were checked at 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 12 weeks of age. At weaning 72% pigs remained RWA whereas 17% of piglets was treated with AB and 7% died in the suckling period. At 12 weeks of age, 65% of the pigs remained RWA, while 17% were treated with AB and 10.6% were dead. The average weight at birth, weaning and 12 weeks was 1.2 kg, 5.9 kg and 30.8 kg respectively. Treated pigs had a reduced bodyweight compared with untreated pigs at day 14 (3.1 kg, 5.1 kg), at weaning (4.8 kg, 6.2 kg) and at 12 weeks of age (27.0 kg, 31.7 kg). The preliminary results from this herd demonstrated that most first-time AB treatments of RWA pigs occurred during the suckling period and that pigs receiving AB treatment had reduced daily weight gain.