

ORAL: FRI, BEHAVIOUR, HEALTH AND PRODUCTION VI

FARROWING ACCOMMODATION FOR ORGANIC PIGS

H. M. Vermeer*, H. Altena

Applied Res., Animal Sciences Group, Wageningen UR

*Correspondence: herman.vermeer@wur.nl

Newborn piglets in organic farrowing pens have a lower survival rate than in conventional farrowing pens. This difference is mainly caused by housing the sow loose compared to crated and by climatic effects of the outdoor temperature. Organic lactating sows should have at least 7.5 m² indoor area with straw and a 2.5 m² outdoor run.

The aim of the project was to increase piglet survival in order to improve animal welfare as well as the profitability of organic farms.

In the experiment we compared survival and behaviour in 3 pen types: type 1 with outdoor run, type 2 with an indoor run and a higher proportion of solid floor and type 3 without run. Data was analysed with Analysis of Variance using parity and liveborn piglets as covariables. Results of 131 litters in total showed 9.6_a, 10.8_b and 9.4_a (p=0.05) weaned piglets per litter for pen type 1, 2 and 3. Fouling scores indicating dunging behaviour in the indoor lying area showed 13_a, 21_b and 19_b (p=0.04) for pen types 1, 2 and 3. We found a tendency that litters with high survival rates used the separate piglet nest sooner for lying than the litters with low survival rates. Climatic conditions seemed to be crucial for the vitality and survival of the newborn piglets.

The better climatic conditions combined with the higher proportion of solid floor resulted in a higher survival rate of the piglets. These results are currently used in a second experiment focussing on extra heating around farrowing and solid floor proportion in a new farrowing accommodation.

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