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EFFECTS OF WEANING TIME (PM OR AM) ON NURSERY-PIG GROWTH PERFORMANCE

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Summary

An experiment was conducted to evaluate the effects of weaning time (PM or AM) on nursery-pig growth performance. The objective was to see how weanling pigs would adjust to the nursery environment if sows were removed from the farrowing crates 12 h before moving pigs into the nursery. Each sow and litter was randomly allotted to a wean time (PM or AM). Half of the litters had their sow removed on Thursday afternoon (PM), leaving the pigs in the farrowing crate. The other litters remained on the sow until weaning on Friday morning (AM). All pigs, both PM and AM treatments, were moved from the farrowing house to the nursery on Friday morning. A total of 542 weanling pigs (PIC 327L × C22) from 50 litters were used in the experiment. Pigs were approximately 21 d of age with an average initial body weight of 13.4 lb. All pigs were weighed in the farrowing house in the morning of the day that half of the sows were removed from the farrowing house that afternoon. Pigs were again weighed on d 7, 14, 21, and 28 after weaning to determine ADG, ADFI, and F/G. There was an improvement in F/G ($P < 0.002$) from d 0 to 7 for pigs that were left on the sow until actual

weaning in the AM, but this was because litters were weighed on Thursday morning and their pigs were allowed to nurse for 2 h longer than pigs in those litters whose sows were removed Thursday afternoon (PM), which caused gut loss in the pigs. Removing sows from the farrowing house early (PM) had no benefit or detrimental effect on ADG, ADFI, or F/G for the overall 28-d study.

(Key Words: Nursery Pigs, Pigs, Wean Time.)

Introduction

Weanling pig acclimatization to the nursery environment is very important to ensure good growth performance. The faster pigs can transition from sow's milk to dry feed, the better the pig performance will be. Removing the sow from the litters 12 h before moving pigs to the nursery may increase the pig's hunger and, therefore, encourage a faster start on feed. The PM weaning might also allow farm managers to find more quickly pigs that don't start eating feed than with traditional morning weaning (AM). It would also allow sows to be moved into the breeding barn in the afternoon and not miss being fed the morning of weaning. The objective of this study was to evalu-

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ate the effects of wean time (PM or AM) on the growth performance of weanling pigs.

Procedures

A total of 542 pigs (initial BW = 13.4 lb and approximately 21 d old) were blocked by weight. Each sow and litter was randomly allotted to a wean time (PM or AM). A total of 25 litters were weaned on Thursday afternoon (PM), with the pigs remaining in the farrowing crates. The other 25 sows were allowed to remain with their litters all night. On Friday morning (AM), litters from both the PM and AM treatments were moved into the nursery. All pigs from the litters went on trial. A total of 271 pigs were used for each treatment (PM and AM). All pigs were fed a corn-soybean meal diet in a two-phase feeding program. All pigs were weighed in the farrowing house in the morning of the day that half of the sows were removed in the afternoon. The

pigs were weighed again on d 7, 14, 21, and 28 to determine ADG, ADFI, and F/G. Statistical analysis was conducted according to SAS v. 8.1.

Results and Discussion

The litters that were weaned on Friday morning (AM) had improved F/G ($P < 0.002$) from d 0 to 7. This was because all of the litters were weighed on Thursday morning, and litters weaned Friday (AM) were allowed to nurse for 12 h longer than pigs in those litters that had sows removed Thursday PM, causing gut loss in the pigs. There was no effect of wean time (PM or AM) observed for ADG, ADFI, or F/G for the overall trial (d 0 to 28). Therefore, our study indicated that wean time (PM or AM) did not affect nursery-pig performance.

Table 1. Effects of Weaning Time (PM or AM) on Nursery-Pig Growth Performance^a

Item	Wean Time ^a		SE	P-value
	PM	AM		
Day 0 to 7				
ADG, lb	0.31	0.32	0.05	0.84
ADFI, lb	0.37	0.35	0.02	0.24
F/G	1.30	1.14	0.05	0.003
Day 0 to 14				
ADG, lb	0.57	0.57	0.02	0.93
ADFI, lb	0.63	0.62	0.02	0.72
F/G	1.12	1.09	0.02	0.24
Day 0 to 28				
ADG, lb	0.85	0.86	0.02	0.68
ADFI, lb	1.11	1.11	0.02	0.82
F/G	1.29	1.29	0.01	0.50
Final weight, lb	37.2	37.3	0.5	0.82

^aA total of 542 nursery pigs (PIC L 327L × C22) were blocked by weight. Fifty sows and litters were randomly assigned to a weaning time (PM or AM). Twenty-five sows were removed from their farrowing crates in the PM, leaving the pigs in the farrowing crates. The other 25 sows remained in the farrowing house with their litters. All pigs were moved in the nursery at the same time. All pigs in each litter were put on trial.