

Arch. Tierz., Dummerstorf **49** (2006) Special Issue, 57-61

<sup>1</sup>Animal and Feed Science Department, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain, <sup>2</sup>Vall Companys Group, Spain, <sup>3</sup>PIC España, S.A, Spain.

ALBA CERISUELO<sup>1</sup>, ROSER SALA<sup>1</sup>, JAUME COMA<sup>2</sup>, DOMINGO CARRIÓN<sup>3</sup>,  
JOSEP GASA<sup>1</sup> and MARIA D. BAUCELLS<sup>1\*</sup>

## Effect of maternal feed intake during mid-gestation on pig performance and meat quality at slaughter

### Abstract

A study was conducted to evaluate, under commercial conditions, the effect of a high feed intake during mid-gestation on postnatal growth performance and meat quality of the progeny. Sows from 1 to 7 parities were divided into two treatments, control (C) and experimental (E). C sows received 3.0 kg/day (12 MJ of ME/kg) throughout all gestation and E sows (E) received +50% and +75% extra feed from 45 to 85 days of gestation for first-parity and multiparous sows, respectively. This treatment (T) was applied throughout two reproductive cycles (2 replicates; n=103 sows in replicate 1 and n=96 in replicate 2). The offspring (barrows) were divided in 5 weight groups (WG) and reared conventionally throughout nursery (n=958) and growing-finishing (n=636) periods. During the nursery period, E pigs exhibited higher growth rates (ADG) than C group (333 g/d vs 316 g/d, p<0.05) in replicate 1 and a higher feed efficiency (G:F) than C group (0.48 vs 0.47, p<0.05) in replicate 2. However, this differences disappeared in the growing-finishing period. The pigs of the lightest weight groups seemed to be the most benefited by the additional maternal feed allowance. At slaughter, E pigs in replicate 1 showed a higher carcass and ham weight. These pigs also showed a higher pH at 24 hours postmortem in the *semimembranosus* muscle and lower lightness values in the *longissimus* muscle than C pigs, and this fact was consistent in both replicates. Overall, increasing feed allowance from 45 to 85 days of gestation had slight effects on growth performance and lead to differences on meat quality traits at market weight.

**Key Words:** maternal feed intake, growth performance, meat quality

### Zusammenfassung

Titel der Arbeit: **Effekt der maternalen Futteraufnahme in der mittleren Trächtigkeit auf Leistung und Fleischqualität der Nachkommen beim Schwein**

Der Effekt einer erhöhten Futteraufnahme in der mittleren Trächtigkeit wurde unter kommerziellen Bedingungen untersucht. Die Sauen (1. bis 7. Trächtigkeit) wurden auf zwei Gruppen aufgeteilt: Kontrollgruppe (C), Versuchsgruppe (E). Die C-Sauen erhielten 3.0 kg/ Tag (12 MJ ME umsetzbare Energie)/kg) in der gesamten Trächtigkeit, und die E-Sauen erhielten +50% (1. Trächtigkeit) bzw. +75% (2. Trächtigkeit) extra Futter vom 45. bis zum 85. Trächtigkeitstag. Diese Behandlung erfolgte für die Dauer von zwei Reproduktionszyklen (n=103 in Wiederholung 1; n=96 in Wiederholung 2). Die Nachkommen (männliche Kastrate) wurden in 5 Gewichtsgruppen eingeteilt und während der Säugezeit (n=958) und Mast (n=636) konventionell aufgezogen. Während der Säugezeit zeigten die Schweine der Versuchsgruppe (E) höhere Wachstumsraten (ADG) als die der Kontrollgruppe (333 g/d vs 316 g/d, p<0.05) in Wiederholung 1 und eine bessere Futtermittelverwertung (G:F) in Wiederholung 2 (0.48 vs 0.47, p<0.05). Diese Differenzen waren in der Mastperiode jedoch nicht mehr zu beobachten. Die Schweine der leichtesten Gewichtsgruppen schienen am meisten von der zusätzlichen maternalen Fütterung zu profitieren. Die Schlachtschweine der Versuchsgruppe hatten ein höheres Schlachtkörper- und Keulengewicht in der Wiederholung 1. Diese Gruppe zeigte auch in beiden Wiederholungen einen höheren pH Wert 24 h *post mortem* im *M. semimembranosus* und einen geringeren Helligkeitswert im *M. longissimus*. Insgesamt hatte die höhere verfügbare Futtermenge vom 45. bis zum 85. Tag der Trächtigkeit geringe Effekte auf die Wachstumsleistung und führte zu Unterschieden in der Fleischqualität.

**Schlüsselwörter:** Maternale Futteraufnahme, Wachstumsleistung, Fleischqualität

### Introduction

Maternal nutrition and other factors affecting the fetal environment (as hormonal treatments) may cause changes in postnatal growth (REHFELDT et al., 2004). In pigs, muscle mass is largely determined by the number of muscular fibers that, in turn, is positively correlated with postnatal growth (DWYER et al., 1993; GONDRET et al., 2005). Also, prenatal muscle fibre development is thought to influence meat quality

(LARZUL et al., 1997), since contractile and metabolic properties of skeletal muscle may affect the pattern of energy metabolism in live animal, as well as during the post mortem conversion of muscle to meat (KARLSSON et al., 1999).

Myogenesis is a biphasic phenomenon with the sequential formation of two generations of muscle fibres. A primary generation forms from 25 to 50 days of gestation, followed by a second generation which form between 50 and 80 days of gestation (WIGMORE and STICKLAND, 1983). A possible positive effect was found on the number of muscle fibres when feed allowance during the first period of the myogenesis was increased (GATFORD et al., 2003). On the contrary, no effects or even opposite effects have been observed in other studies (NISSEN et al., 2003; BEE, 2004). However, this disadvantage overruled when the period of increased maternal feeding was prolonged from day 25 to day 70 of gestation (NISSEN et al., 2003), suggesting that increasing feed allowance during the period of the secondary fiber development may be more advantageous for the offspring. Thus, the present experiment was conducted to study, under commercial conditions, the implications of providing a higher feed intake to the sows during mid-gestation (from d 45 to d 85 of gestation) on growth performance and meat quality of the offspring.

#### Materials and Methods

The experiment was conducted involving two reproductive cycles (2 replicates). LD x LW PIC sows from 1 to 7 parities were divided randomly into two treatments, Control (C, n=49 and n=46 in replicate 1 and 2, respectively) and Experimental (E, n=54 and 50 in replicate 1 and 2, respectively). C group received 3.0 kg/d (12 MJ of ME/kg feed and 6 g lysine/kg) throughout gestation (level routinely used on the farm) and E group received additionally + 50% and +75% of the control diet, for first-parity and multiparous sows, respectively, from d 45 to d 85 of gestation. After weaning, at  $22 \pm 2$  days of age, piglets were reared conventionally throughout the nursery and the growing-finishing period.

Only barrows were used for the study of growth performance throughout the nursery (n=958) and the growing-finishing period (n=636). Pigs were divided into 5 weight groups (WG, being group 1 the heaviest and group 5 the lightest) per treatment and weighed weekly in the nursery and every three weeks in the growing-finishing phase. Feed consumption (ADFI) was also obtained in the nursery for all pens and in the growing-finishing period only for the middle and light WG. Carcass measurements [carcass weight, percentage of lean meat (Fat-O-Meat'er, SFK, Denmark), mid-line fat thickness at the gluteus medium (GM) and ham, *longissimus* (L) and *semimembranosus* (SM) muscle weight] and technological meat quality measurements [pH, drip loss and meat colour (Minolta CR300)] were registered in pigs from the lightests groups of weight (n=90), that were slaughtered at an average weight of  $104.1 \pm 1.16$  kg in replicate 1 and  $120.9 \pm 2.65$  kg in replicate 2.

Data was analysed using SAS (SAS Inst., Inc., Cary, NC, 2001). In all cases, gestation feeding level served as treatment and main factor. Statistical differences between treatments were analysed using the GLM procedure. In growth performance analysis, pen was the experimental unit and WG was added as a main factor and thus, interaction T\*WG was also studied. In carcass and meat quality data analyses pig was the experimental unit. In all cases, the results are expressed as LS-means  $\pm$  SE.

## Results

During the nursery period, E pigs showed higher ADFI and ADG in replicate 1 and a higher feed efficiency (G:F) in replicate 2 than C pigs (Table 1). These parameters were studied in detail within the nursery and the growing-finishing periods (data not shown) and it was observed that in both replicates, differences became statistically significant by days 53-58 of age. At this point, the interaction T\*WG was significant for the lightests groups of pigs in test in replicate 1, being E pigs heavier than C. In spite of the differences found in the nursery period, these were not maintained during the growing-finishing period neither in replicate 1 nor in replicate 2 (Table 1).

Table 1  
Nursery and growing-finishing growth performance (Wachstumleistung in der Aufzucht und Mast)

Replicate	1			2		
	Maternal treatment <sup>1</sup>			Maternal treatment <sup>1</sup>		
Growth period	C	E	P-value	C	E	P-value
<b>Nursery<sup>2</sup></b>						
Pigs, No	230	231	-	246	251	-
ADFI, g/d	430 ± 0.004	448 ± 0.004	0.008	455 ± 0.006	455 ± 0.006	0.962
ADG, g/d	316 ± 0.004	333 ± 0.004	0.013	327 ± 0.005	333 ± 0.005	0.316
G:F	0.73 ± 0.005	0.74 ± 0.005	0.322	0.72 ± 0.005	0.74 ± 0.005	0.038
<b>Growing-Finishing<sup>3</sup></b>						
Pigs, No	188	189	-	129	130	-
ADFI, g/d	1670 ± 0.041	1630 ± 0.041	0.518	1970 ± 0.038	2010 ± 0.038	0.491
ADG, g/d	789 ± 0.012	774 ± 0.012	0.390	808 ± 0.011	797 ± 0.011	0.442
G:F	0.47 ± 0.005	0.48 ± 0.005	0.627	0.40 ± 0.009	0.38 ± 0.009	0.164

<sup>1</sup>Maternal treatment, C: 3 kg/d and E: +50% or +75% amount of feed than C from 45 to 85 days of gestation.; <sup>2</sup>Nursery period: from 21 to 62 d on average; <sup>3</sup>Growing-Finishing period: from 62 to 184 d on average.

Table 2  
Carcass and meat quality traits (Schlachtkörper- und Fleischqualitätsmerkmale)

Replicates	1			2		
	Maternal treatment <sup>1</sup>			Maternal treatment <sup>1</sup>		
Variable	C	E	P-value	C	E	P-value
Pigs, No	25	25	-	20	20	-
Carcass wt (kg)	72.4 ± 2.020	77.9 ± 1.978	0.056	87.43 ± 2.360	86.7 ± 2.360	0.835
Lean meat (%)	54.23 ± 0.738	52.68 ± 0.738	0.146	54.11 ± 0.920	53.35 ± 0.920	0.563
GM <sup>2</sup> (mm)	17.52 ± 1.018	19.24 ± 1.018	0.238	22.6 ± 1.033	21.65 ± 1.033	0.520
pH <sub>45</sub> <sup>3</sup>						
SM <sup>4</sup>	6.18 ± 0.047	6.22 ± 0.047	0.546	6.24 ± 0.048	6.14 ± 0.048	0.145
L <sup>5</sup>	6.17 ± 0.051	6.30 ± 0.051	0.079	6.19 ± 0.035	6.12 ± 0.035	0.124
Main cuts weight (kg)						
SM <sup>4</sup>	0.972 ± 0.026	1.059 ± 0.028	0.030	1.177 ± 0.033	1.165 ± 0.033	0.720
L <sup>5</sup>	2.65 ± 0.111	2.67 ± 0.223	0.695	3.22 ± 0.099	3.21 ± 0.099	0.920
Ham	10.56 ± 0.265	11.38 ± 0.271	0.036	13.17 ± 0.324	13.27 ± 0.324	0.840
pH <sub>24</sub> <sup>6</sup>						
SM <sup>4</sup>	5.53 ± 0.027	5.62 ± 0.029	0.045	5.60 ± 0.031	5.71 ± 0.031	0.013
L <sup>5</sup>	5.53 ± 0.019	5.53 ± 0.019	0.918	5.59 ± 0.016	5.62 ± 0.016	0.175
Meat colour <sup>7</sup>						
L	53.89 ± 0.567	52.38 ± 0.567	0.066	51.88 ± 0.755	49.39 ± 0.755	0.025
a	5.36 ± 0.242	5.43 ± 0.242	0.852	5.61 ± 0.213	6.13 ± 0.213	0.090
b	3.86 ± 0.271	4.32 ± 0.271	0.238	4.47 ± 0.227	3.98 ± 0.227	0.135
Drip loss (%)	1.84 ± 0.294	1.87 ± 0.294	0.939	0.87 ± 0.178	1.22 ± 0.178	0.171

<sup>1</sup>Maternal treatment, C: 3 kg/d and E: +50% or +75% amount of feed than C from 45 to 85 days of gestation.; <sup>2</sup>GM: Mid-line fat thickness at gluteus medium; <sup>3</sup>pH<sub>45</sub>: pH at 45 minutes postmortem; <sup>4</sup>SM: *Semimembranosus* muscle; <sup>5</sup>L: *Longissimus* muscle; <sup>6</sup>pH<sub>24</sub>: pH at 24 hours postmortem; <sup>7</sup>Meat colour (L: lightness; a: redness; b: yellowness) was measured in LD muscle.

Increased maternal feed intake during mid-gestation did not lead to differences on lean meat content, GM, pH<sub>45</sub> and drip loss measurements in the 90 selected pigs (Table 2). Regarding to the main cuts weight, in replicate 1, E pigs showed higher SM muscle and ham weights, according to the tendency to a higher carcass weight observed for this group. At 24 h post-mortem, pH<sub>24</sub> in the SM muscle was significantly higher and lightness in the L muscle tended to be lower in the E group compared to the C group, in both replicates.

### Discussion

Feed restriction during pregnancy has negative effects on the postnatal growth of the offspring (POND et al., 1985). However, the effects of feed supplementation during gestation are not so clear in the literature. Contradictory results have been obtained on muscle fiber development and postnatal growth (DWYER et al., 1994; GATFORD et al., 2003; NISSEN et al., 2003; BEE et al., 2004; HEYER et al., 2004). In the present experiment, the supplementation took place later than in most of the studies previously mentioned (from day 45 to 85 of gestation) and slight differences in growth performance and growth efficiency between treatments were observed at the near end of the nursery period (50 to 60 days of age). It has been shown that latter in the nursery phase, growth is more correlated to the number of muscle fibres (potential for growth) than to other factors such as birth weight (DWYER et al., 1993; GONDRET et al., 2005). When differences in growth performance appeared, the higher response was observed in the lightest WG, as it has been previously reported (DWYER et al., 1994; REHFELDT et al., 2001). For this reason, we select this range of weight for carcass and meat quality. Later, in the growing-finishing phase, the differences in growth performance disappeared. However, in replicate 1, we observed that the E pigs tended to show a higher carcass weight, suggesting that feed supplementation during mid-gestation could lead to a higher growth rates in the lightest groups of pigs, also during the growing-finishing phase.

On the other hand, low pH values have been related with an increased lightness and drip loss parameters (SCHAFER et al., 2002). In the present study, contrary to NISSEN et al. (2003) and HEYER et al. (2004), C pigs showed a lower pH<sub>24</sub> in the SM muscle and higher lightness values in the L muscle than E pigs, and these results were consistent between replicates. However, values of pH<sub>24</sub> and lightness in both treatments were within the normal for meat pork.

From our results we conclude that increasing feed allowance during the time of the secondary muscle development (from 45 to 85 days of gestation) has slight effects on growth performance. In addition, changes in meat quality parameters have been observed. Whether these differences are due to changes in muscle fiber characteristics is still unknown. Within the present work, further studies are being conducted to establish the effect of this feeding strategy on sow performance and muscle fiber development.

### Acknowledgements

This work was financed by a project (PETRI 95.0639.OP) and PIC España, Vall Companys Group and SCA Ibérica and by the concession of a grant by the Generalitat de Catalunya. Appreciation is expressed to the Granja Santa Ana (Soria, Spain) staff for their help and assistance and to Dr. Charlotte Rehfeldt for her useful comments.

## References

- BEE, G.:  
Effect of early gestation feeding, birth weight, and gender of progeny on muscle fiber characteristics of pigs at slaughter. *Journal of Animal Science* **82** (2004), 826-836
- DWYER, C.M.; FLETCHER, J.M.; STICKLAND, N.C.:  
Muscle cellularity and postnatal growth in the pig. *Journal of Animal Science* **71** (1993), 3339-3343
- DWYER, C.M.; STICKLAND, N.C.; FLETCHER, J.M.:  
The influence of maternal nutrition on muscle fiber number development in the porcine fetus and on subsequent postnatal growth. *Journal of Animal Science* **72** (1994), 911-917
- GATFORD, K.L.; EKERT, J.E.; BLACKMORE, K.; DE BLASIO, M.J.; BOYCE, J.M.; OWENS, J.A.; CAMPBELL, R.G.; OWENS, P.C.:  
Variable maternal nutrition and growth hormone treatment in the second quarter of pregnancy in pigs alter semitendinosus muscle in adolescent progeny. *British Journal of Nutrition* **90** (2003), 283-293
- GONDRET, F.; LEFAUCHEUR, L.; LOUVEAU, I.; LEBRET, B.; PICHODO, X.; LE COZLER, Y.:  
Influence of piglet birth weight on postnatal growth performance, tissue lipogenic capacity and muscle histological traits at market weight. *Livestock Production Science* **93** (2005), 137-146
- HEYER, A.; ANDERSSON, H.K.; LINDBERG, J.E.; LUNDSTRÖM, K.:  
Effect of extra maternal feed supply in early gestation on sow and piglet performance and production and meat quality of growing/finishing pigs. *Acta Agric.Scand., Sect.A, Animal Sci.* **54** (2004), 44-55
- KARLSSON, A.H.; KLONT, R.E.; FERNANDEZ, X.:  
Skeletal muscle fibres as factors for pork quality. *Livestock Production Science* **60** (1999), 255-269
- LARZUL, C.; LEFAUCHEUR, L.; ECOLAN, P.; GOGUE, J.; TALMANT, A.; SELLIER, P.; LE ROY, P.; MONIN, G.:  
Phenotypic and genetic parameters for longissimus muscle fiber characteristics in relation to growth, carcass, and meat quality traits in large white pigs. *Journal of Animal Science* **75** (1997), 3126-3137
- NISSSEN, P.M.; DANIELSEN, V.O.; JORGENSEN, P.F.; OKSBJERG, N.:  
Increased maternal nutrition of sows has no beneficial effects on muscle fiber number or postnatal growth and has no impact on the meat quality of the offspring. *Journal of Animal Science* **81** (2003), 3018-3027
- POND, W.G.; MERSMANN, H.J.; YEN, J.T.:  
Severe feed restriction of pregnant swine and rats: effects on postweaning growth and body composition of progeny. *Journal of Nutrition* **115** (1985), 179-189
- REHFELDT, C.; KUHN, G.; VANSELOW, J.; FURBASS, R.; FIEDLER, I.; NURNBERG, G.; CLELLAND, A.K.; STICKLAND, N.C.; ENDER, K.:  
Maternal treatment with somatotropin during early gestation affects basic events of myogenesis in pigs. *Cell Tissue Research* **306** (2001), 429-440
- REHFELDT, C.; NISSSEN, P.M.; KUHN, G.; VESTERGAARD, M.; ENDER, K.; OKSBJERG, N.:  
Effects of maternal nutrition and porcine growth hormone (pGH) treatment during gestation on endocrine and metabolic factors in sows, fetuses and pigs, skeletal muscle development, and postnatal growth. *Domestic Animal Endocrinology* **27** (2004), 267-285
- SAS.:  
SAS/STAT user's guide V8: Statistical Analysis System, SAS Institute Inc., Cary, North Carolina (2001)
- SCHAFFER, A.; ROSENVOLD, K.; PURSLOW, P.P.; ANDERSEN, H.J.; HENCKEL, P.:  
Physiological and structural events post mortem of importance for drip loss in pork. *Meat Science* **61** (2002), 355-366
- WIGMORE, P.M.; STICKLAND, N.C.:  
Muscle development in large and small pig fetuses. *Journal of Anatomy* **137** (1983), 235-245
- Authors  
ALBA CERISUELO. PHD Student. Animal and Feed Science Department. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 08193 Bellaterra, Spain.  
Dr. ROSER SALA. Animal and Feed Science Department. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 08193 Bellaterra, Spain.  
Dr. JAUME COMA. Vall Companys Group, Pol. Ind. El Segre, 25191 Lleida, Spain.  
Dr. DOMINGO CARRIÓN. PIC España S.A, Avda. Ragull, 80, 08190 Sant Cugat del Vallés, Spain.  
Dr. JOSEP GASA. Animal and Feed Science Department. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 08193 Bellaterra, Spain.  
\*Dr. MARIA D. BAUCCELLS. Animal and Feed Science Department. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 08193 Bellaterra, Spain.
- \* Corresponding author