DNA GENETICS RESEARCH TRIAL

Impact of Creep Feeding on Weaning and Postweaning Performance

OBJECTIVE

To gain a better understanding of the impact of creep feeding on weaning and postweaning performance.

DATE COMPLETED

July 2023

RATIONALE

Pigs experience multiple stressors at weaning, including a diet change from milk to solids, removal from their dams, introduction to new piglets and new environments. These stressors can result in a decrease in feed intake, growth and health. Producers have used creep feed as an option to decrease the impact of weaning stressors on postweaning piglet performance. Providing creep feed to piglets during the lactation phase could improve postweaning intake, growth and survival.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Wean weights (P = 0.0053), one week nursery placement weights (P = 0.0042) and end of nursery weights (P = 0.0018) were statistically different for pigs that received creep feed compared to pigs that did not receive creep feed (Table 1).
2. However, there was no difference in end of finish weights between pigs that received creep feed and those that did not receive creep feed (P = 0.1177; Table 1).
3. There was no difference in nursery and finish survival between the two treatments (P > 0.05; Table 2).

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Pigs that received creep feed prior to weaning had increased feed intake and growth during the nursery phase, resulting in heavier end of nursery weights.
2. Creep feeding had no statistical impact on survival.
3. Creep feeding pigs prior to weaning has a positive impact on those pigs that lose weight within the first week post weaning.
4. Producers should consider utilizing creep feed as a way to improve postweaning growth without impacting feed intake or survival.

TABLE 1 : WEIGHTS AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF PRODUCTION

	NO CREEP FEED	YES CREEP FEED	DIFFERENCE (YES-NO)	P-VALUE
BIRTH WEIGHT (LBS.)	2.78	2.89	0.11	0.2152
WEAN WEIGHT (LBS.)	13.29	14.35	1.06	0.0053
1-WEEK POST NURSERY PLACEMENT (LBS.)	14.59	15.52	0.93	0.0042
6-WEEK POST NURSERY PLACEMENT (LBS.)	45.86	48.94	3.08	0.0018
18-WEEK POST NURSERY PLACEMENT (LBS.)	229.28	231.49	2.21	0.1177

TABLE 2 : MORTALITY

	NO CREEP FEED	YES CREEP FEED	DIFFERENCE (YES-NO)	P-VALUE
NURSERY MORTALITY (%)	6.11	7.48	1.38	0.5587
FINISH MORTALITY (%)	4.34	3.86	-0.48	0.6801

For more information on this study, contact Amanda Cross (across@dnaswinegenetics.com).