



Impact of temporary crating on performance of Large White sows bred for piglet survival

Females from the first generation of selective breeding (G1), were inseminated with Pietrain boars in 1st parity and Large White boars with high genetic potential for piglet survival in 2nd and 3rd parities. A total of 24 pairs of sisters were studied, with one female temporarily crated around farrowing (90% free) and the other 100% free during the entire period spent in the farrowing unit (pen of 10 m²). Sisters were inseminated with the same boar, leading to litters genetically equivalent. Therefore, the housing effect was assessed at genetics fixed. The 48h post farrowing survival rate varied between 75% and 88% and piglet mortality was similar in both systems. After release of blocked sows, piglet mortality was 27.3% for 90% free sows vs 11.8% for 100% free sows. Stability of performance across parities was one more criteria (litter size and survival rate, number of piglets crushed) accounted for to select young females for the next generation (G2 sows).

Conclusion

For some sows, number of total born piglets and/or piglet survival varied greatly over parities. Survival rate decreased in 2nd parity in many sows, especially the 100% free sows because on average they weaned more piglets in 1st parity than 90% free sows. The positive effect of temporary crating on piglet survival was visible only in 3rd parity.

In addition, piglet survival until weaning was higher in sows being more maternal when their litter returned from weighing on the 1st day of lactation. Piglet mortality was influenced by sow behaviour and lowly by temporary crating.



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