

Starter Diet – Quantity and Quality Revisited

The question of creep feeding and starter diet quality has been a timely topic of discussion for decades. With a transition in the industry from 12 day back to 21 day and even 28 day weaning the topic is back in vogue and new information is required to provide insight into the best management practices and cost effective solutions under current economic conditions.

Recent trials at Prairie Swine have allowed us to make two conclusions at this point:

- 1) Piglets weaned at 4 weeks of age and fed creep during lactation are about 300 grams heavier at weaning. The advantage of creep feeding, however is not maintained in the nursery at 56 days of age.
- 2) Creep feeding adversely affected initial feed intake in nursery piglets weaned at 4 weeks of age.

These conclusions are preliminary and full analysis will be available later this fall but clearly this area will continue to interest producers trying to invest in the best practices to optimize current profitable market conditions.

The following articles located in our PorkInsight database provide additional insight into the effectiveness of starter diets on productivity and gut health.

From Greece and the UK, the impact of starter quality on performance and gut health. This study indicates low quality diets can provide equivalent performance and presumably at lower cost, with no significant effect on growth performance to slaughter weight.

<http://www.prairieswine.com/the-effect-of-weaner-diet-protein-content-and-diet-quality-on-the-long-term-performance-of-pigs-to-slaughter/>

From Prairie Swine Centre, pigs which are heavier at weaning perform better than lighter pigs, regardless of age or intake of Phase 1 diet, which had only modest effects on performance

<http://www.prairieswine.com/development-of-weanling-feeding-program-based-on-age-and-weight/>

From Prairie Swine Centre - Variability in pig growth, determined as the coefficient of variation, was not affected by starter program.

<http://www.prairieswine.com/the-effect-of-starter-feeding-regimen-on-variability-in-bodyweight-and-performance-in-the-nursery/>

Regards,

Research Profits Everyone

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