

Effects of diet on digestibility of dry matter and nitrogen in nursing pigs

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Major: Animal Science

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In recent years, the numbers of pigs per litter have increased. This reduces the ability to cross-foster pigs, which may contribute to pre-weaning mortality. Thus alternative management strategies are needed, such as the use of commercial milk replacers. This study was performed to look at the feasibility of using commercial replacer as an alternative to sow milk. Pigs ($5d \pm 1$) were housed in metabolic crates and randomly allotted to receive either sow milk ($n=3$), milk replacer ($n= 8$), or milk replacer with Actigen™, an additive designed to enhance the intestinal environment ($n=9$). Pigs were fed 200 g of a liquid diet five times per day for a total of 9 days. Feces, were collected once per day and fecal output and fecal nitrogen were determined. There was a trend ($P=0.06$) for more nitrogen apparent total track digestibility and had greater ($P< 0.01$) average daily feed intake on a dry matter basis, though dry matter digestibility was similar across treatments. In conclusion, pigs can be sustained solely on a commercial milk replacer diet and this could be used as a way to decrease pre-weaning mortality.