



Carthage Corner

May, 2005 Quarterly Newsletter

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A note from:



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&

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Important Industry Dates:

Carthage Veterinary
Service, Ltd. Annual
Swine Conference
August 30, 2005

World Pork Expo
Iowa State Fairgrounds
June 9-11, 2005

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How can wean age and lactation length affect pig performance and profits?

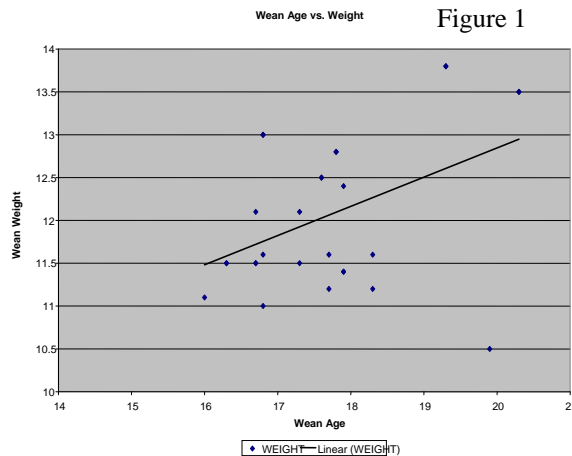
In the late 1980's and into the 1990's, there was a movement within the swine industry to move to multi-site production and early weaning.

This system was known by a variety of names such as Isowean, Segregated Early Weaning, Medicated Early Weaning, and Modified Medicated Early Weaning. The primary advantage of these methods was to lower disease levels in nursery and finishing pigs by removing the piglets from the sow while the piglets retained enough maternal antibodies to keep them from becoming infected with pathogens carried by the dam.

As more research is appearing on the influence of weaning weight and weaning age on performance of pigs in the nursery and finishing stages of production, there is a movement in the swine industry toward increasing weaning age.

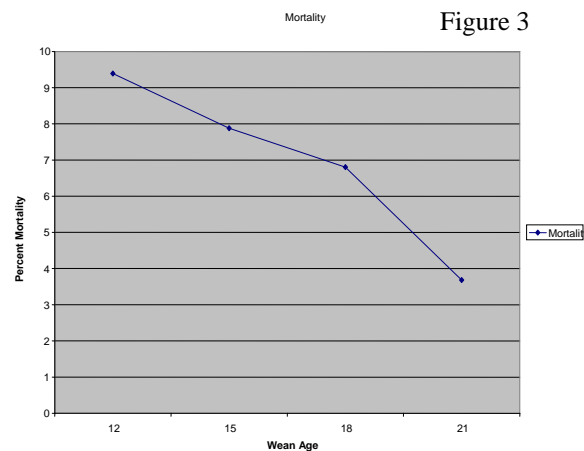
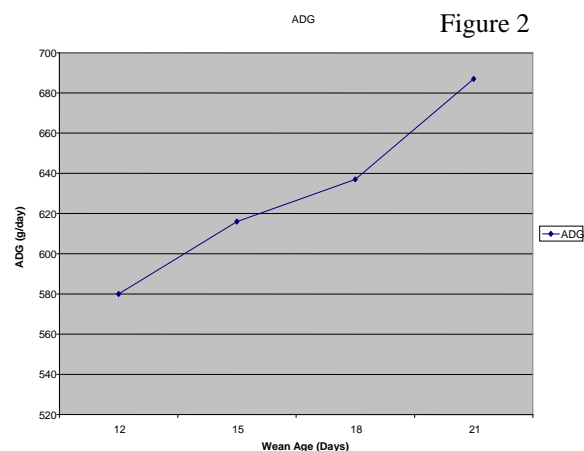
Effect on wean to finish performance

A general rule of thumb is that a piglet will gain 1/2 lb every day it remains on the sow. Many studies indicate that heavier pigs perform better in the wean to finish phase. Figure 1 is a chart of weaning age compared to weaning weight on a large farm in Western Illinois. Note how the trendline for weaning weight is nicely correlated with weaning age.



More recent data indicates that piglet weaning age is a major factor contributing to performance in the nursery and finishing stages of pig production.

Researchers at Kansas State University conducted a study comparing pigs weaned at 12, 15, 18 and 21 days of age¹. Figure 2 shows the Average Daily Gain (ADG) of those groups. They found an increase of 107 grams/day (0.235 lbs/day) in ADG from wean to finish in pigs weaned at 21 days compared to pigs weaned at 12 days. In addition to improvements in ADG, they also found that older weaning age led to lower mortality (as shown in figure 3), increased weight sold per pig weaned, and decreased cost per 100 lbs sold.



Effect of lactation length on sow performance

In addition to the improvement in growth performance of the weaned pig, there is a beneficial effect on sow reproductive performance. Longer lactation length gives the sow's uterus more time to involute (heal) following farrowing. Provided she is well fed during the lactation period, there is an increase in the number of eggs ovulated, which can translate into larger numbers of live



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Training Toolboxes!



We are happy to announce that the CVS Breeding Toolbox is complete and for sale. The Toolbox consists of 5 interactive multimedia training CD's with 30 lessons on various aspects of the Breeding barn. It is a great compliment to go along with our Farrowing Toolbox. For more information please email training@hogvet.com.

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born piglets in subsequent parities. Longer lactation length also decreases the wean to service interval and increases the conception rate, resulting in fewer non-productive days.

Increasing lactation length: The Danish perspective

A very popular speaker at the 2004 Carthage Veterinary Service Swine Conference was Dr. Hasse Paulsen, a veterinarian from Denmark. Dr. Paulsen works with several farms in Denmark that are at or near the 30 pigs/sow/year level. Some of these management differences are causing U.S. producers to rethink some of their production practices, especially concerning weaning age and lactation length.

Evidence from these Danish farms would suggest that that a key to lifetime performance of sows is a "challenging" period for gilts. Farms in Denmark routinely have gilts raise 13 pigs for 21 days, at which time the piglets are weaned. The gilt is then given 11-13 one week old pigs to raise for an additional 14 days. This results in a 35 day average lactation period for gilts. The average lactation length on these farms is 21 days for parity 2+ sows.

Danish producers differ from U.S. producers, in that gilts are not bred before 8 month of age at a minimum of 300-350 lbs.

References:

1. Main, R.G. et al. Increasing weaning age improves pig performance in a multisite production system. *J. Anim. Sci.* 82:1499-1507

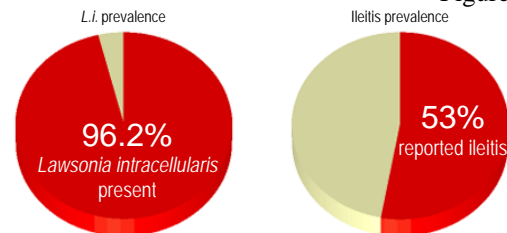
Best Regards,

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Ileitis remains prevalent and costly. Tylan remains recommended treatment.

Ileitis remains a critical problem for the U.S. swine industry. A private study in 2003 found 100% of tested U.S. herds serologically positive for *Lawsonia intracellularis* (*L.i.*), the bacteria that causes ileitis.¹ This finding correlates with an earlier study of serum samples from the U.S. National Animal Health Monitoring System, which found 96.2% of tested herds positive for *L.i.*² (Figure 1). In a 2003 survey of pork producers, 53% reported ileitis on their operations³ (Figure 1).

Figure 1



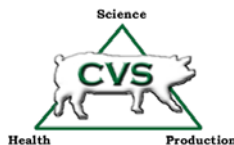
L.i. bacteria have been identified in blood samples from 96.2% of tested U.S. herds.² In a 2003 survey, 53% of pork producers reported ileitis on their operations.³

Pigs with ileitis typically show reduced gain, poor feed efficiency, increased weight variation, and more lightweights. Economic analysis places the cost of subclinical ileitis as high as \$3.42/pig, with clinical disease costing up to \$22.19/pig when performance loss, mortality and culls are considered.⁴

Therapies that do not prevent infection may allow disease to spread through fecal shedding, so a prevention protocol makes sense. Tylan[®] Premix fed at 100g/ton for 21 days is still the only feed product FDA approved for ileitis prevention and control. For best results, begin feeding Tylan three weeks prior to seroconversion or anticipated disease outbreak.

References:

1. Elanco. Unpublished, 2003.
2. Bane, D., Norby, B., et al. Prevalence and management risk factors associated with *Lawsonia intracellularis* seropositivity in the U.S. swine herd. 1997.
3. Doane Marketing Research. Focusing on swine ileitis, April 2003.
4. Veenhuizen, M. et al. the potential economic impact of porcine proliferative enteropathy on the U.S. swine industry. *Proc. 15th IPVS Congress*, 1998.



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