

Housing finishers according to their gender and ad lib feeding from tube feeders with and without water supply

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Abstract

Feeding finishers via tube feeders with and without water supply from 60 kg and housing the pigs according to their gender were studied in two herds – one using meal feed and one using pelleted feed.

Group 1:	Tube feeder with water from 60 kg, female pigs
Group 2:	Tube feeder with water from 60 kg, castrates
Group 3:	Tube feeder without water from 60 kg, female pigs
Group 4:	Tube feeder without water from 60 kg, castrates

In herd A, where the pigs were given meal feed, the trial comprised 15 blocks with 640 pigs/group. In herd B, where the pigs were given pelleted feed, the trial comprised 21 blocks with 1,255 pigs/group. Production results were recorded from 39 kg and 35 kg, respectively, until slaughter at 106 kg and 103 kg, respectively, in herds A and B.

The trial demonstrated that it was possible to reduce the feed intake by turning off the water in the tube feeders at 60 kg. The lean meat percentage was improved averagely by 0.7 percentage units with meal feed and 0.2 percentage units with pelleted feed, which may be relevant in specialised productions. In the herd using meal feed, daily gain dropped by 87 g a day and the feed conversion ratio was reduced by 0.1 FU_g per kg gain, which was probably caused by feed waste despite great attention to the adjustment of the feeders. As a result, the production value dropped by 13% when the water was turned off in the tube feeders with meal feed. In both herds, the castrates had the lowest lean meat percentage and the poorest feed conversion ratio. Turning off the water at 60 kg had the same effect on daily gain, feed conversion ratio and lean meat percentage for both genders. In herd B, a higher frequency of tail biting was observed in pens holding castrates.

Overall, the trial demonstrated that it cannot be recommended to turn off the water in herds with meal feed due to the risk of feed waste and thereby a poor feed conversion ratio. However, a small positive effect can be achieved on the lean meat percentage by turning off the water in herds with pelleted feed without significantly increasing the risk feed waste.