



Uniferon Best Practice Recommendation

A closer look at post-weaning effects of iron supplementation

While most pig breeders administer iron to their piglets during the first week of being born, the role of optimised anaemia care as a post-weaning health and growth benefactor in pig rearing deserves a wider recognition.

Upsides to an increased focus on iron

Most breeders administer parenteral iron to their piglets and most breeders do it knowing that iron has its own important place in the suckling period; a trusted and known supplement prerequisite for prevention of anaemia and for strengthening the piglet's growth potential in general and its immune system in particular.

What many breeders do not know, however, is that iron may be more than just that: Iron supplementation in piglets may very well be an important growth and health factor in pigs after weaning. This may be even more important in light of the increasing litter sizes, growth rates, and production yields.

Administered efficiently and safely in line with current knowledge, iron is a major contributor to the piglet's health and growth – and thus also to the overall potential porcine production profits.

In a study done by Haugegaard et al., *The Pig Journal (2008) vol. 61, 69-73*, it was found that piglets given an additional 200 mg of iron dextran on day 20 had a significantly higher growth rate of ~20 gram per day for the first 15 days after weaning. Furthermore, those piglets had a significantly higher content of haemoglobin of +10 g/L at the day of weaning.

Also interesting to post-weaning effects of iron supplementation is the hyperprolific sow. As litter size is increasing it becomes more challenging to keep the piglets healthy and viable until weaning. In this game, iron is an important success factor.

“It has been somewhat overlooked that iron supplementation and prevention of anaemia may also influence the health and performance after weaning. The relation between iron supplementation, haemoglobin levels, health and productivity after weaning needs to be reviewed” says Professor Dr Jens Peter Nielsen of the Department of Large Animal Sciences with the Faculty of Life Sciences at the University of Copenhagen.

Further, Professor Dr Jens Peter Nielsen says: “I truly believe that there is a significant upside in a more inquisitive stance and that iron supplementation strategy indeed can be viewed as a pivotal and key component in the breeder's ability to produce at an optimal level.”

Sincerely
The Uniferon Team

