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Use of an oral salicylate post-farrowing to improve sow performance

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Introduction

Pain in the sow around and after farrowing is a welfare-parameter given more and more attention, also because it has been demonstrated that, there is a positive correlation between the use of a pain killer and piglet survival (1). This Danish investigation (1) focus on pain produced by aftercontractions of the uterus, so that oxytocin needed to press the milk from the alveoli also induce contractions of the uterus which can cause pain especially in elder sows with a stronger and thicker myometrium than younger sows. However there was a large variation between herds in the effect of the NSAID used, namely meloxicam injectable. Many herdsmen also find it difficult and time-consuming to inject the sows or give meloxicam orally with a drench gun. So the hypothesis was to evaluate the effect of a cheap and safe and easy to administer NSAID in the form of soluble sodiumsalicylate (Sodilin®80%, Dopharma, Netherlands) in the trough after farrowing. Withdrawal period of Sodilin® is zero days.

Materials and methods

Sodilin was given with 10 grams daily in the trough for the first 4 days after farrowing, so that if a sow had farrowed in the night she received the first dose in the morning. If a sow farrowed through the day the first dose was given in the afternoon. The next 3 days the dose was given at the same time early morning. No other changes were done.

All kind of herds were chosen for this investigation. Sow number vary from 420 to 1600, including all kind of health status and production systems. Herd specific data are not available yet.

Results

In about half of the herds there was a very good effect of this treatment. About 25% of the herds have a good effect and the remaining has little to no effect.

From two well managed herds with a very good effect of this treatment there has been a dramatic

reduction in overall early piglet loss. Also were noticed a reduction in antibiotic treatment of the MMA-complex to about 30 to 40% of what was before the treatment period. Further a clear reduction in piglet diarrhea are observed.

Discussion

The results are amazing, because everybody before this treatment start agreed that the herds with a very good effect were well managed.

However in two of the herds with a very good effect a closer look at the feeding regime around farrowing revealed that the sows in general were given too much feed and did not eat the rations. These herds were recommended to lower the amount of feed around farrowing or eventually change to another type of feed, take care of water supply etc.

It is interesting that herds with no effect had a very low rate of MMA which needed medical attention. So we think that this treatment can be used in a very effective way to measure management around farrowing. The large variation between herds might be the explanation, why some investigations (2), demonstrate no difference between treatment and control groups with meloxicam injectable.

Conclusion

1: This treatment regime is very easy and cheap to implement in the sowherds.

2: It sharpens the eye of the herdsmen.

3: Better wellbeing of the sows and a reduction in diarrhea among the piglets provide more colostrum.

References

Keller F., 2012, IPVS. 249.

Friendship et al., 2012 IPVS. 217