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## **EFFECT OF AN OLIGOSACCHARIDE-PROBIOTIC PRODUCT ON THE GROWTH RATE OF PIGS IN THE PRESTARTER AND STARTER STAGES**

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Increasing operating expenses of piggeries compel hog raisers to use growth enhancing drugs. But with consumers demanding safe and wholesome pork, hog raisers face the challenge of making ends meet. Development of growth enhancing products that are safe is thus urgently needed. A novel proprietary combination of probiotics delivered in an oligosaccharide matrix, PRIMOS™ 25, was developed by Vantarion Pte Ltd. This was tested in a one thousand sow level commercial farm in the Philippines. Randomly selected were four hundred and twenty pigs at seventy days of age. Three groups of four pens with thirty five pigs each were made. The group A pigs were fed daily with PRIMOS™ 25 at 0.05% in pre-starter and starter feeds; group B pigs were fed daily with an approved growth enhancing drug at 0.05% in pre-starter and starter feeds; group C

pigs neither fed with growth enhancing drug or PRIMOS™ 25. Initial and final weights, and feed consumed per pen at the end of each feed regimen were recorded. Analysis using Statgraphics Centurion XV software, one-way ANNOVA, demonstrated that pigs fed with PRIMOS™ 25 had an average daily weight gain (A.D.G.) that is significantly superior ( $p \leq 0.06$ ) than pigs fed with growth enhancing drug and the control. The significant improvement in A.D.G. with PRIMOS™ 25 did not come at the expense of increasing feed cost, as feed conversion ratio (F.C.R.) among all the groups was not significantly different. As a direct-fed microbial licensed in several Asian countries, PRIMOS™ 25 offers a safer alternative to growth enhancing drugs, and possibly the best solution where such drugs are banned.

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