AUSTRALIAN Pork™

R&D Snapshot

Feeding caffeine to sows in late gestation increased total born alive and gestation length and decreased stillbirths

Investigators: Dr William van Wettere, University of Adelaide

Purpose:

- To determine whether supplementing sow gestation diets with caffeine (6g/day) or melatonin (15mg/day) from day 112 of gestation to farrowing can improve piglet survival through to weaning and reduce stillbirths.

Take home messages:

- A higher number of live born piglets were produced from sows fed the caffeine supplemented diet compared to sows fed the control diet or the melatonin diet.
- Sows fed the caffeine supplemented diet had a lower proportion of stillborn piglets and a longer gestation length compared to sows in the control treatment.
- Piglet growth and survival pre-weaning was not affected.
- Further work to commercially validate these findings is being conducted in a commercial facility.

Additional information:

- For further information or a copy of the full report, please contact Dr Robyn Terry at robyn.terry@australianpork.com.au on 0427 423 869.

APL Project 2012/2434 – Pre-farrowing melatonin and caffeine supplementation to reduce stillbirth and increase piglet viability and survival