



ENTRY OF GILT PROGENY INTO THE BREEDING HERD

Project Participants

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Problem

Gilt progeny have lighter birthweights, slower growth rates and higher rates of morbidity and mortality compared to sow progeny. There is minimal data to show that effects these characteristics may have on the future reproductive performance and longevity of these progeny and whether it is economically viable to include them in the breeding herd.

Project

This study aimed to quantify the performance of gilt progeny in the breeding herd by benchmarking their performance against that of sow progeny. Areas of benchmarking included reaching first mating, reproductive performance up to parity four and longevity up to parity 3.

Value for Producers

Producers should continue to include gilt progeny in the breeding herd as they perform just as well as sow progeny after farrowing their first litter. However, they will show higher rates of anoestrus than sow progeny prior to this.



Results

Gilt progeny were lighter than sow progeny at each liveweight measurement and had a higher backfat level at the same liveweight than sow progeny. Gilt progeny selected into the breeding herd made it to first mating (prior to 270 days of age) less often than sow progeny and took one day longer to be mated.

Once first mated, there was no significant difference in performance parameters between gilt and sow progeny for the first 4 parities. Gilt progeny had less piglets weaned and a higher rate of stillborn piglets at parity one than sow progeny and a longer weaning-to-oestrus interval between weaning the second litter and the subsequent mating.

Recommendations

This research indicates gilt progeny may be less developed reproductively at selection and therefore show higher rates of anoestrus than sow progeny before the first mating. After farrowing their first litter, gilt progeny perform just as well in the breeding herd as sow progeny and last up until at least parity 3. It is recommended to continue to include gilt progeny in the replacement gilt selection process.

Further research is needed to determine if gilt progeny require separate selection criteria to sow progeny to reduce reproductive wastage from higher rates of anoestrus.

More Information

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