



# LARGER CREEP PELLETS FOR IMPROVED WEANER GROWTH

OPTIMISING THE PROGENY OF FIRST-LITTER SOWS  
IN THE AUSTRALIAN HERD

## Project Participants

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## Problem

Gilt progeny are born lighter and often do not perform as well as progeny born to multiparous sows. Previous research has shown creep feed intake of piglets during lactation is positively related to a greater interest in feed after weaning and subsequent feed intake and performance. However, consumption of creep feed in lactation is typically low and varies considerably between and within litters. Most efforts at increasing creep feed intake in lactation have focused on feed composition, with less attention paid to the physical characteristics of the feed offered to pigs.

## Project

The project aimed to investigate the effect of creep pellet diameter on the performance of gilt progeny.

## Value for Producers

While feeding larger diameter pellets (nine millimetres) to piglets pre-weaning does not improve the weaning weight of piglets born to gilts, it does decrease the removal rate and improve the performance of pigs post-weaning.



## Recommendations

Total creep feed consumed in lactation was higher in litters offered the larger diameter (9mm) pellets. However, this did not cause an improvement in litter weaning weight for piglets born to gilts.

Growth rate and feed intake were both stimulated in pigs offered the larger diameter pellet pre-weaning.

The pellets offered benefits to piglets in the post-weaning period through lowered removal rate, and improved performance. This may be due to the increased feed-related exploratory behaviour shown by the greater disappearance of creep feed in lactation.

Further research is required on pellet diameter before any solid recommendations can be made. However, these results allow for the possibility of manipulating the composition of pellets fed to gilt progeny to decrease the removal rate and improve the performance of these pigs post-weaning.

## More Information

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