

Social learning in piglets as a way of stimulating feed intake

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Summary

When piglets are weaned from their dams, they have to rely entirely on the intake of solid feed to meet their nutrient requirements. As they have relied on milk before weaning, the intake of solid feed at weaning is generally very low. As a consequence, weaned piglets suffer from malnutrition and they may develop gastro-intestinal problems and growth delays.

To ensure piglets can adapt to the challenges of weaning, they have to develop and acquire sufficient 'knowledge' of solid feed intake before weaning. This may in part be acquired by social interaction with their dams and litter mates. This project therefore studies the impact of different types of social interaction on feed intake of piglets.

Research techniques involved

Behavioural observations, involving real-time observations and/or video-monitoring

For this project a PorkCRC scholarship may be available.