

EFFECT OF AVERSIVE TREATMENT ON LACTATING PIGLETS' BEHAVIOR

EFEITO DE UM TRATAMENTO AVERSIVO NO COMPORTAMENTO DE LEITÕES EM LACTAÇÃO

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The work aims to analyze the behavior response and the ability to cope stressors when the piglets are exposed to aggressive treatment during the lactation phase. The behavior of 40 piglets was observed from birth to weaning (28 days). In the first fifteen days the observations were done every three days, with an interval of another three days. After this period, the observations were done once a week. Over a period of three hours, every five minutes it was registered the animal behavior. The group was divided into two treatments: rational group, where 18 piglets had minimal interaction with people and it was permitted the routine practice without sudden movements and loud sounds; and the aversive treatment, where 22 piglets received the daily routine of the farm, however, on every half hour during observations the observer performed a direct threat to the sow going into the cage with a flag and abruptly approach the animal, shouting or clapping. To avoid visual contact with the observer, he was located behind the maternity cage. Analysis of variance with fixed effects of time and time and means were compared by Tukey test or T at 5% of significance. In aversive treatment piglets spent most time at rest or exploring ($P>0.05$). However, in rational treatment the piglets remained resting most of the time ($P<0.05$). The interactions between pigs in the first phase of life are a determining factor of their behavior. In aversive treatment the frequency of negative suckling increased 76.07% compared to rational treatment ($P<0.05$). In this study the sows when in a stress situation expressed an increase in the frequency and time of vocalizations, so it leads to alterations on piglets such as the decline in suckling period. The physiological stress responses are responsible for the decrease in productivity of pigs in confinement and changes in behavior. Although the decrease in positive suckling has been observed in piglets submitted to aversive treatment, agonistic interactions were similar to the two treatments.

Table 1. Least square means and standard error (SD) of activities undertaken by lactating piglets during aversive and rational treatment

Activities	Aversive		Rational	
	Means%	SD	Means%	SD
Positive Suckling	12.78 bB	3.133	18.12 cA	3.236
Negative Suckling	5.60 deA	1.326	1.34 efB	0.407
Rest	26.84 aB	2.632	34.13 aA	3.725
Explore	26.65 a	2.573	26.60 b	1.515
At Feeder	5.78 de	1.877	5.39 e	3.717
Drinking	8.63 cdA	1.840	2.96 efB	1.233
Fighting	10.42 bc	0.972	10.19 d	1.889
Escape attempt	2.96 efA	0.700	0.31 fB	0.170
Agonistic Interaction	0.31 f	0.165	0.93 ef	0.582

Means followed by different capital letters in the same line and small letters in the same row are different by Tukey Test ($P<0.05$).

Keywords: animal welfare, production, social contact.