

## Toys, mingling and driving reduce excitability in pigs

Journal of Animal Science, volume 65 Supplement 1 (1987) page 230-231

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● The purpose of this experiment was to determine if environmental enrichment would produce calmer, less excitable pigs.

In trials 1 and 2, each with 2 replicates of a 2x2x2 factorial design, 128 Landrace-sired pigs weighing 42.5 and 43.5kg were used. Four pigs were placed in 1.35 X 2.25m partial-slotted pens in a closed house.

- Pigs were held in plain pens with minimal presence of humans for 28 days.
  - Treatments were imposed the last 31 days
  - Treatments were :
    1. Control (C)
    2. Mingle (M) - a person entered the pen and petted the pigs for 10 minutes once per week.
    3. Driving (D) - Pigs from each pen were allowed to walk / run for 1 minute in an alley once a week.
    4. Toy (T) - The pigs had continuous access to three 60cm long, 2.5cm diameter rubber hoses suspended 25cm above the floor.
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In trial 3, 184 Hampshire-sired pigs weighing 32.8kg were used in a 15 week trial with the treatments applied 5 times during the last half of the trial.

- Treatments were:
  1. Control (C)
  2. Assertive mingle (AM) - a person entered the pen for 5 minutes once a week and approached each pig and petted assertively.
  3. Gentle mingle (GM) - a person entered the pen for 5 minutes a week and only petted the animals who willingly approached.
  4. Toy (T) - The pigs had continuous access to three 60cm long, 2.5cm diameter rubber hoses suspended 25cm above the floor.
- In all three trials the pigs had ad-libitum access to standard growing diet and water.
- Excitability was rated by two observers blind to treatments on a scale of 1 - 4.
  - 1=calm - approached when observer entered the pen.
  - 4=active avoidance and piling up when observer entered the pen.

● In trials 1 and 3, the group of control pigs were more excitable than pigs under other treatments.

● In trial 2, the group of control pigs were more excitable than the groups of pigs that received mingling, mingling and driving and the group that received mingling, driving and toy treatments.