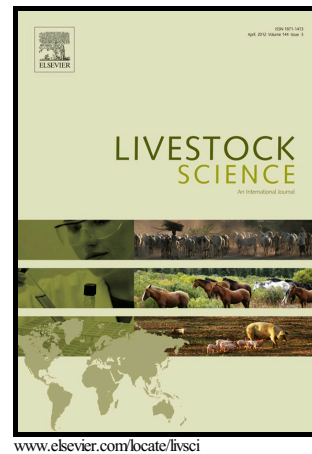


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Radiant heat increases piglets' use of the heated creep area on the critical days after birth

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Abstract

The aim of the present study was to investigate how piglets' use of a creep area is affected by using radiant heat compared to an incandescent light bulb. It was hypothesised that radiant heat would increase the use of the creep area. Twenty litters were randomly assigned to one of two heat sources in the creep area: (1) an incandescent light bulb (STANDARD, n=10) or (2) a radiant heat source (RADIANT, n=10) with five of each type of heat source in each of two batches. Observations on piglets' position in the pen were made by scan sampling every ten minutes in a 4-hour period from 1100-1500 h on day 1 to 7, 14 and 21 *post partum*. A higher percentage of piglets in the creep area was seen for RADIANT litters compared to STANDARD litters on day 2 ($P=0.002$) and day 3 ($P=0.005$), and percentage of piglets in the creep area increased for RADIANT litters from day 1 to 2 ($P<0.001$) and from day 2 to 3 ($P=0.03$) while it first increased for STANDARD litters from day 2 to 3 ($P=0.01$). In conclusion, radiant heat gave an earlier and increased use of the creep area on the critical days after birth.

Keywords: Behaviour; Piglet; Thermal environment; Heat source; Use of creep area

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