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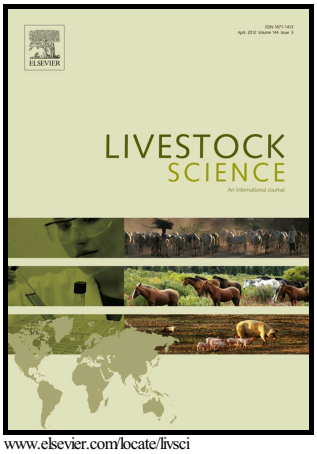

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Effect of rubber mats on sow behavior and litter performance during lactation

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The objective of the present study was to evaluate the effect of rubber lying mats on, sow behavior, production and litter performance throughout lactation. In total, 213 multiparous, late gestation, group housed sows were enrolled in the study after being blocked by parity and classified as lame or non-lame. Sows were randomly allocated to treatments; a farrowing crate with a perforated rubber lying mat (R), or a farrowing crate with standard metal slotted flooring (C). Sow behavior, lesion scores, sow weight, and body condition measurements were obtained once weekly over the course of 4 weeks around the farrowing event (1 week prior until 3 weeks post farrowing day). Piglet weights were recorded during the weeks of farrowing and weaning. Wean to estrus intervals and piglet mortality data were obtained post-hoc via records from the farm's computer database PigKnows®. Sows housed on the R treatment spent an increased proportion of time spent standing (P=0.02) and tended to spend a lower proportion of