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Ninety one-days-old piglets recognize and remember a previous aversive handler

Roberta Somnavilla, Evaldo Antonio Lencioni Titto, Cristiane Goncalves Titto, Maria José Hötzel



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Roberta Somavilla^{1*}, Evaldo Antonio Lencioni Titto¹, Cristiane Goncalves Titto¹, Maria José Hötzel²

¹Biometeorology and Ethology Laboratory, Animal Science and Food Engineering Faculty of São Paulo University, Avenida Duque de Caxias Norte, 225, Pirassununga, 13.530-000, SP, Brazil.

²Applied Ethology Laboratory of Federal University of Santa Catarina, Rodovia Admar Gonzaga, 1346, Itacorubi, Florianópolis, 88.034-001, SC, Brazil

*Corresponding author. Roberta Somavilla. robertasomavilla@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to determine if 91 days-old piglets can remember a previous aversive handler after three weeks with no contact with this person. For this, 16 piglets from a group of 48 piglets were submitted to an aversive treatment from birth until 70 days of life, made by a woman wearing orange coveralls (AH). AH was noisy, moved harshly and shouted frequently. After day 70, piglets did not have any further contact with AH. At the same time, a new neutral treatment was introduced made by another person (NH – a woman wearing blue coveralls). NH used a soft tone of voice and was careful. The Human Approach Test was applied to measure the avoidance response of piglets to the approach of AH, NH and an unfamiliar handler (UH), at 35 days and at 91 days after birth. Scores ranged from 1 (experimenter could touch piglets) to 4 (piglets escaped as soon as the experimenter moves). On day 35, piglets kept more

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