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Early life indicators predict mortality, illness, reduced welfare and carcass characteristics in finisher pigs

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ABSTRACT. The objective of this study was to investigate associations between early life indicators, lactation management factors and subsequent mortality, health, welfare and carcass traits of offspring. A total of 1,016 pigs from a batch born during one week were used. During lactation, number of liveborn piglets, stillborn and mummies, sow parity, number of times cross-fostered, weaning age, birth and weaning body weight (BW) were collected. Mortality was recorded throughout the offspring production cycle. Prior to slaughter, pigs were scored for lameness (1 = non-lame to 3 = severely lame). At slaughter, tail lesions were scored (0 = no lesion to 4 = severe lesion) and cold carcass weight (CCW), lean meat %, presence of pericarditis

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