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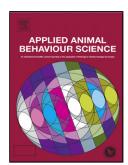
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ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

Do sows respond to sibling competition at the udder Day 1 post-partum?

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Highlights

It is important to understand whether sows influenced udder access and the release of milk due to sibling competition during the first day's post-partum when piglet mortality peaks. Very less is known about sow responses towards sibling competition. There are only 2 papers in the literature, and with contradictory results. In the first, 30% of sows responded to audio playbacks of fighting and screaming piglets by terminating a nursing during the first 24 h post-partum (Illmann et al., 2008). At this early piglet age the characteristic suckling and nursing behaviour is not developed, and it was not possible to identify with any validity whether sows terminated nursing before or after milk ejection. In the second, sows did not react towards greater sibling competition before milk ejection, but sows terminated postmassage when more piglets were fighting and screaming after 48 h post-partum (e.g., Day 2 post-partum; Bozděchová et al., 2014). It is not clear whether sows are passive towards litter competition during pre-massage (e.g., before milk ejection) in order to ensure that piglets with teat access can attend milk ejection; furthermore, sows only responded to greater sibling competition after milk ejection when piglets had already obtained milk.

ABSTRACT

The aim of the present follow-up study was to assess sibling competition during nursing on Day 1 post-partum (e.g., 24 h after the end of parturition), as well as whether sows respond to increased sibling competition. A total of 19 healthy sows and their piglets were directly observed and video recorded for 6 h on Day 1 post-partum. Piglet behaviours (presence at the

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