

CREEP FEEDING STRATEGIES TO INCREASE THE WEANING WEIGHT OF UNDERWEIGHT PIGLETS

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Weaning weight and age are two important determinants of market age and weight of fatter pigs. It is a common practice to use single starter feed for piglets until weaning though their nutrient requirements vary during this period. A study was carried out to compare effect of two tier feeding regimes with a creep feed on improvement the weaning weight of piglets. A least cost standard creep feed and a starter diet were formulated using locally available ingredients. New feeding regime (Treatment) was compared with existing regime (Control) in randomly selected eight litters. Diets were fed from day five to weaning (day 40). For treatment group creep feed was given for first five days (5-10 days) and formulated starter diet for rest of the period, whereas for control existing single tier starter was fed throughout. Body weight gain, body length, heart girth, feed intake and mortality were recorded. Piglets fed on treatment diets grew much faster than their counterparts fed on control diet. Average weight of piglets of treatment group was significantly heavier ($p < 0.05$) than that of control group (7.45 vs. 5.81 kg) on day 40. Piglets fed with two tier feeds converted feeds more efficiently than the piglets fed with single tier feed ($p < 0.05$). Body conformity was measured in form of body length (17.45 vs. 15.32 cm) and heart girth (15.81 vs 13.38 cm) was higher ($p < 0.05$) in treatment group than that of control. Mortality was lower ($p < 0.05$) in treatment litters when compared to control litters. Feeding a creep feed improved the piglet weights substantially (28%) and the number weaned. Although the cost was relatively high for a creep feed that generate more returns by weaning more piglets and achieving market weights early.

Key words: Creep feed, Fatteners, Pig performance