

Abstract

Domestic pigs have a high piglet mortality up to 20% during the first days post partum. It is unclear whether piglet mortality is caused by neonatal litter competition. Piglets are precocial and capable of active competition within minutes of birth on access to teats. There is very little known about this theme. The aim of the study is to review the behavioural mechanism of neonatal sibling competition during teat access and their consequences in domestic pigs. Factors which influence the level of neonatal litter competition should be considered. The consequences of the neonatal sibling competition should be reviewed on the survival and life history of individual piglets. Based on the knowledge from the literature an experimental design should be suggested for further experiments which clarify unknown aspects of litter competition.