

# Response to Site of Weaning (ON vs. OFF) and Dietary Energy Content on Performance of Weaned Pigs

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Off-site weaning has been shown to improve performance of pigs weaned at a young age (<12 days) or from a sow herd with poor health status. Less is known about its effect when conventional weaning ages are employed and the sow herd of origin has a high health status. Similarly, little information is available on the response of weaned pigs to diets differing in dietary energy content. This experiment addresses both issues, comparing the growth performance of pigs weaned on-site or off-site to three levels of dietary energy concentration. The experiment employed 252 pigs weaned at 17 ± 2 days of age and assigned to on-site (ON) or off-site (OFF) nursery and one of three dietary energy levels (3.35, 3.50, 3.65 Mcal DE/kg). All pigs received commercial starter diets from 17 to 25 days of age and were given experimental diets from 26 to 56 days of age. OFF pigs were heavier at 56 days of age than ON pigs (23.40 vs. 21.24 kg, respectively). OFF pigs grew faster ( $P < 0.01$ ) and ate more than the ON pigs from 17 to 56 days of age. These results indicate that weaning off-site results in faster piglet weight gain, even when the herd of origin is of high health status. Elevating the energy content of the diet did not increase performance. Pigs on the low DE diet consumed more feed ( $P < 0.01$ ) that resulted in greater gains from 26 to 41 days of age compared to the mid or high energy diets. The heavier body weight at 56 d of age for off-site pigs may represent a decrease in days to market compared to on-site weaned pigs.

## Implications

High energy weanling diets are more expensive; however, they may not provide an increase in piglet gain to compensate for the higher feed cost.