Short communication

LACTATIONAL WEIGHT LOSS OF SOWS REARED UNDER FIELD CONDITION OF AIZAWL

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The loss of body weight by sow during the period of lactation i.e from the day of farrowing till the day of weaning is considered as lactational weight loss. Thaker and Bilkei (2005) have reported that as weight loss of sows during lactation increases subsequent reproduction performance decreases. Most studies have also indicated that the lactational body weight loss varies depending upon the length of lactation, litter size and breed of sow etc. Therefore the present study was under taken to find out the lactational weight loss in the field condition so that measures can be taken for the improvement of the reproductive performance of sows.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

A survey was conducted on the availability of breeder sow of different breeds reared under field conditions in Aizawl district of Mizoram. Farmers rearing the different breeds were identified and 29 sows of different breeds 14 Large White Yorkshire, 7 Hampshire and 8 Burmese Black sows were selected for the study during the period from July 2009 to May 2010. The management practices adopted by the farmers were also recorded during the study period.

In order to measure the lactational weigth loss, linear body measurements of the sow was taken just after completion of farrowing and on the day of weaning the piglets (i.e 56 days) by using ordinary measuring tape to find out the approximate body weight loss during lactation. Heart Girth (HG) was recorded in inches using a measuring tape as the circumference of the body at the heart region immediately behind the elbow joint. The estimated body weight was calculated by the formula given below (Groesbeck, 2003):

Pig weight (kg) = {10.1709 x Heart Girth (inches) - 205.7492} x 0.454

Here, Heart Girth was strongly correlated (r^2=98) with body weight.

The collected data were analyzed statistically as per method of Snedecor and Cochran (1995).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Lactional body weight loss in Large White Yorkshire, Hampshire and Burmese Black were found to be 33.60±5.17 kg, 24.49±3.84 kg and 29.98±6.53 kg respectively. However differences among the three breeds were statistically non significant . The overall average value of the three breeds was 30.40±3.19 kg, which was in agreement with Ravi (2007). Contrary to the present study, lower values were also reported by Chhabra (1987) and Bhatia *et al*. (1985). These might be due to decline in the production of the sow's milk from 4th week onwards after farrowing.

In addition to the above reason, creep ration**/**pre-starter ration was not provided to the piglets in the present study. Hence, the body reserves of the sow could have been utilised for milk production to meet the requirement of the piglets resulting in higher lactational weight loss of sow in the present study. This may lead to longer period for the onset of post-weaning oestrus thus suggesting the need of proper flushing immediately after weaning.

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