

Environmental enrichment in pig production: advantageous, disadvantageous and gaps on knowledge

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Abstract

The scientific studies developed during the last decades lead to a better understanding of pigs' social and exploratory needs and the impact that restrictions on these behaviours have on their welfare.

The environment enrichment could be a way to reverse this situation, however studies on this subject have considered different production systems, conditions and variables. Therefore, the review of the investigation done until presently will allow us to establish workable basis that will be advantageous for pigs and producers.

Different environment enrichment forms, if well designed, will increase the behavioural repertoire and decrease the performance of aggressive and abnormal behaviours, some of them with negative effects on the final product. However, results regarding the effect on lesions and productivity differ.

The performed investigation shows that environment enrichment has an enormous potential, but that further studies are required.