

Piglet and blood percentage - can it be affected?

Vet-Team veterinarians have over time measured the blood percentage of piglets in over 50 herds. The blood percentage is measured as the haemoglobin content in the blood, and is dependent on the iron content in the blood.

Pigs are born with a very small reserve of iron and there is not much iron in the milk. The pigs therefore depend on an iron supplement, being given soon after birth. Later, the iron supply is also secured by absorption from the feed

Iron-, and thus haemoglobin deficiency results in poorer growth, increased susceptibility to infections and pale pigs.

Measurements in farms have shown that there are many herds with pigs below the limit of 90 g haemoglobin pr. litre of blood. Recommendations are even that the content should be over 110 g / litre. On the graph it can be seen that the average for 10-14 days old pigs is 90 grams, but with many herds below the limit and that the average for pigs at weaning is approx. 100 grams. Farms that give extra iron in the form of e.g. drinking iron, in combination with an injection, have generally a bit higher concentration of haemoglobin in the blood.

In an experiment, it was measured whether an injection of 1.5 ml instead of the normally used 1 ml could raise haemoglobin levels in the blood. The experiment showed that the content could be raised from 91.9 to 95.3 g / litre. The increase was significant, but still lower than the desired 110 g / litre.

Lately, there have been registered a couple of products, where in the same injection iron and a product for the prevention of coccidiosis is given. Initial measurements show a slight increase in haemoglobin levels in the blood when using these products, but generally the level appears to be very close to that when the original iron product is used.

It can be concluded that many pigs have a low blood percentage and that this can be affected slightly by giving a higher dose of iron at birth. However, care must be taken with the smallest pigs, as too high a dose can also be harmful to the pig. The focus may have to be more on an early supplementary intake in the form of feeding or supplementation in some other way. An extra iron injection for 10-14 day old pigs can also be tried.