

Abstract

Perinatal mortality in 48 North American swine herds

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Keywords: mortality, perinatal

Retrospective data from 48 herds were selected from a database of swine farms located in the United States and Canada. Perinatal mortality, defined as stillbirths and deaths that occur within 24 hours of birth, was recorded by producers. On average, 6.8% of all piglets were stillborn. Of piglets born alive, 3.9% died within 24 hours of birth (day 0). Stillbirths and day-0 mortality varied with litter size. The highest perinatal mortality rates were recorded for very small (fewer than four piglets) and very large (>17 piglets) litters. Stillbirth percentages accounted for most of the variation among total born litter sizes. Overall, perinatal deaths increased as parity increased. However, day-0 mortality did not vary with parity, except for sows with a parity greater than seven. When considering the number of birth events on each day of the week, the highest mortality percentage was recorded on Monday. Most of the difference between Monday and the other days of the week could be attributed to day-0 mortality of liveborns. The influence of day of the week on the probability of being stillborn was virtually non-existent. Over half of all perinatal mortality (51.3%) could be attributed to only 13.2% of the litters.

Vaillancourt JP, Marsh WE, Dial GD. Perinatal mortality in 48 North American swine herds. *Swine Health and Production*. 1994;2(4):13-18.