

THE EFFECTS OF INDIVIDUAL AND COMBINATIONS OF AIRBORNE POLLUTANTS ON FEED INTAKE, IMMUNE FUNCTION AND PHYSIOLOGY OF THE PIG

Timothy Wayne Murphy
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Poor air quality and surface hygiene are associated with increases in the prevalence and severity of enteric and respiratory diseases, as well as reduced growth rates in pigs. The pollutants which contribute to poor air quality include gases, dust, airborne particles, microorganisms and their toxins. In this study I investigated; 1) the effects of ammonia and alpha haemolytic cocci (AHC) including viridans-group streptococci (VGS) on feed intake, immune function and respiratory tract physiology in pigs, 2) the effects of stocking density on air quality parameters and growth rate in pigs and 3) the effects of shed design and management on air quality parameters. While exposure to AHC appeared to have a greater effect than ammonia on growth rate and feed efficiency, as well as aspects of immune function, the most significant effects were observed in pigs exposed to high levels of ammonia followed by AHC.

There was a strong positive relationship between the stocking density (StD) (m³ airspace/pig) and the mean growth rate in pigs from 10 to 22 weeks of age, in an all-in/all-out (AIAO) system. There was also a strong negative relationship between stocking density and the number of viable bacteria in the airspace. As the volume (m³ of airspace)/pig increased, the concentration of bacteria in the airspace decreased and the growth rate of the pigs increased significantly. I hypothesise that airborne bacteria trigger an immunological challenge which redirects metabolic activity that would otherwise contribute to growth and skeletal muscle accretion.

There is evidence that shed design and management can affect air quality and, consequently, growth rate of pigs. The results indicate that improving ventilation through widening ridge vents, leaving floors to dry before restocking pens, increasing pit depth to ≥400 mm, and flushing pits with fresh water all have a positive effect on air quality and growth rate. It is clear that facilities need to be managed as an all-in/all-out (AIAO) system as this enables farmers to maximise hygiene by thoroughly cleaning pens between batches, which is likely to improve air quality. Other important management and husbandry factors include adhering to stocking density (m³ airspace/pig) and stocking rate (pigs/m² floorspace) recommendations, especially in naturally ventilated buildings. The shape and dimensions of the shed, the ventilation and heating system used, and the effluent management system are also important. Maintaining good air quality is essential for pig health, growth, and welfare, as well as those working with pigs.

Statement of originality

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university of other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University library, being available for loan and photocopying, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

Signed:		
~		

Timothy Wayne Murphy December, 2011



For my darling wife Lesley

.....Forever

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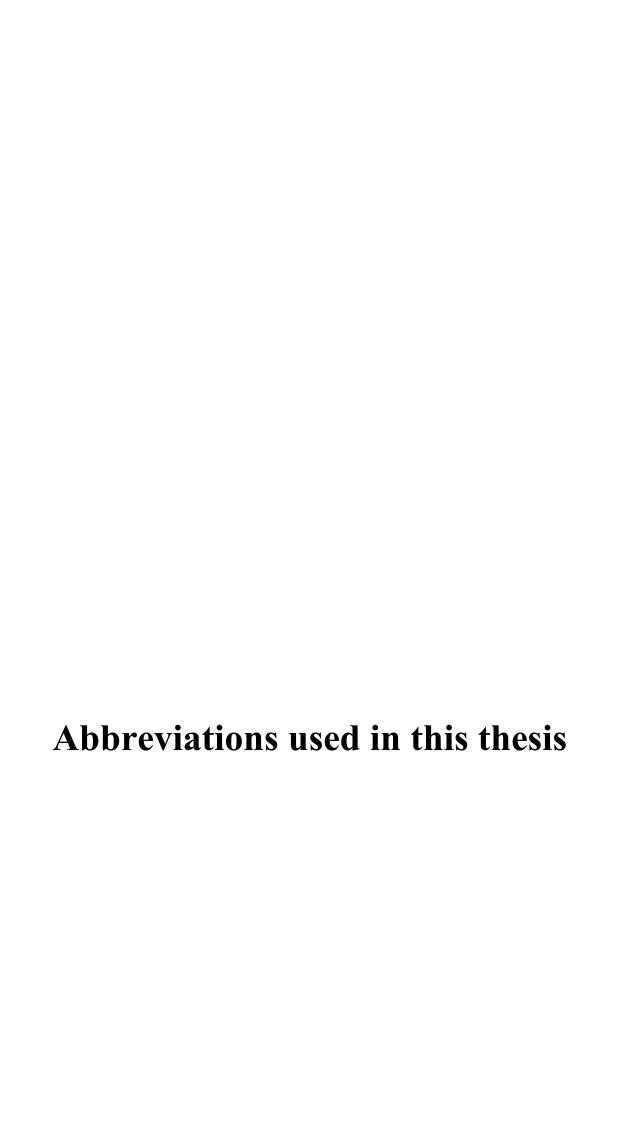
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Age-segregated rearing **ASR** Allophycocyanin APC All-in/all-out **AIAO** Alpha haemolytic cocci **AHC** Average daily gain **ADG** Bacteria Bac **Batch Farrowing** BF Beta-glucan β-1,3-glucan Bronchial Associated Lymphoid Tissue **BALT** Bronchoalveolar lavage **BAL** Bronchoalveolar lavage fluid **BALF** Cell Mediated Immunity **CMI** Colony forming unit cfu ^{0}C Degrees Celsius Endotoxin Unit \mathbf{EU} Ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid **EDTA** Feed conversion ratio **FCR** Fluorescein isothiocyanate **FITC** Forced expiratory volume-in-one-second FEV_1 Forced expiratory flow rate at 25-75% of the FVC FEF₂₅₋₇₅ **FVC** Forced vital capacity

Gram g
Hour h

Hygiene air quality HAQ

Immunoglobulin Ig
Inspirable particles TD

Insulin-like growth factor 1 IGF-1

Interleukin-1 IL-1

Intracerebroventricularly ip

Intraperitoneally icv

Kilogram kg

Litre l Litre per minute l/min Metabolisable energy ME Micron μm Milligram mg Millilitre ml Minute min Nanogram ng Nanomole nMol Natural killer NK Occupational health and safety OH&S Parts per million ppm Peridinin Chlorophyll Protein **PerCP** Peripheral blood mononuclear cells **PBMC** Phosphate buffered saline **PBS** Phycoerythrin PE Red blood cells **RBC** Relative Humidity RH Respirable particles **RP** Revolutions per minute rpm Second sec Segregated early weaning **SEW** Standard error of the mean **SEM**

Stocking density

StD (m³ airspace/pig)

Stocking rate

pigs/m² floorspace

SD

Streptavidin-Cy-Chrome CyC

Total dust TD

Viridans-group streptococci VGS

Voluntary feed intake VFI

White blood cell WBC

Standard deviation

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"Homer: Wait a minute wait a minute. Lisa honey, are you saying you're
never going to eat any animal again? What about bacon?

Lisa: No.

Homer: Ham?

Lisa: No.

Homer: Pork chops?

Lisa: Dad! Those all come from the same animal!

Homer: [Chuckles] Yeah, right Lisa. A wonderful, magical animal"

The 7th Season of the Simpson's – Lisa the Vegetarian (3F03)

www.snpp.com/episodes/3F03.html