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Effect of Yoghurt on Colibacillosis Treatment in Piglets

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Abstract

E. coli (colibacillosis) infection in neonatal pigs is widespread through pig industry in Thailand and causes enormous economic losses. Good management is important in controlling development of disease. This includes good hygiene in the farrowing quarters, washing the sow before entry to the farrowing quarters, adequate heating for piglets, access to colostrum immediately after birth and vaccinating sows prior to farrowing. In cases of illness, treatment usually relies on antibiotics which act on pathogenic microorganisms in the digestive tract. However, from antibiotic administration normal flora important for fermentation may be negatively affected. This study was carried out to evaluate potential use of *Lactobacillus* spp. in the form of yoghurt to treat piglets from colibacillosis. Piglets, 1–14 days old, from 28 sows that showed signs of diarrhoea were randomly divided into two groups: 1) 91 piglets were treated with yoghurt and 2) 60 piglets were treated with antibiotic. Yoghurt was given orally twice a day, 5 ml/dose on the first day and 10 ml/dose on the following days. Antibiotic (enrofloxacin) was given by intramuscular injection, once daily in dose of 25 mg/piglet. Duration of treatment depended on evident signs of diarrhoea. Most of the piglets recovered from diarrhoea within 3 days. Treatment efficacy of yoghurt and antibiotic were not different. However, cost of treatment per animal by using yoghurt was lower than that of antibiotic. This suggests that yoghurt can be used for colibacillosis treatment in piglets instead of antibiotics which have potential problems of drug resistance in pigs and antibiotic residue problem in humans.

Keywords: Colibacillosis, piglet, yoghurt