Project Number & Title
2C-125: Lauric acid, a potentially new feed additive for the Australian pork industry

Project Leader
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Project Participants
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Aims and Objectives
Three experiments were conducted in this project. The overall aim of these studies was to examine the effects of feeding increasing levels of lauric acid (LA; Experiment 1) or monolaurin (MLA, the monoglyceride formed from LA; Experiment II), relative to LA, on aspects of production (especially feed intake), meat quality and faecal bacteriological indices in late finishing pigs. Experiment III examined whether LA (20 g/kg) could have positive health outcomes in finishing pigs infected with Lawsonia intracellularis.

Key Findings
The following key findings can be drawn:

- **Experiment I:** increasing levels of LA (0-25 g/kg) fed in the first 7 days after offer showed maximum average daily gain occurring at 11.8 g/kg (-1.2%), and for average daily feed intake from d 7-28, the maximum occurred at 13.4 g/kg (-1.3%). Pigs fed diets LA 15 and LA 20 had a lower FCR during days 7-14 of the experiment. Feeding increasing levels of LA linearly decreased, albeit non-significantly, the proportion of Streptococcaceae in the faeces of pigs.

- **Experiment II:** at day 26, after 14 days of feeding, there was a significant Linear effect of feeding MLA on final BW. However, there was no difference (contrast; p>0.05) in BW between feeding LA or the average of the MLA treatments. Modelling the MLA inclusion rate demonstrated that for (a) ADG d 12-26, maximum ADG (1.12 kg/day) occurred at an inclusion rate of MLA of 20 g/kg (2%), and (b) FCR d 12-26, minimum FCR occurred also at an inclusion rate of 20 g/kg (2.4).

- **Experiment III:** pigs fed 20 g/kg (2%) LA under conditions of a Lawsonia intracellularis challenge showed a strong statistical trend to shed lower Lawsonia intracellularis numbers than control pigs at days 7 and 14 post-infection, and there was a significant interaction between treatment and time with higher Lawsonia intracellularis numbers excreted by Control pigs at day 7 post-infection. Furthermore, feeding LA significantly reduced the variation in voluntary feed intake between pigs early in infection and also the feed: gain ratio in mid infection.

Application to Industry
Lauric acid or monolaurin used in late-finishing pigs shows potential application for use in late-finishing Improvac-treated males or female pigs for production gains and (or) amelioration of a Lawsonia intracellularis challenge. Further studies should be conducted in commercial facilities to confirm or refute these findings.