

## **Intermittent suckling to decrease piglet mortality and increase piglet growth**

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Intermittent suckling can help facing two of the major obstacles in organic pig production; suboptimal sow reproduction and problems with sow and piglet health. Intermittent suckling will promote natural behavior by avoiding abrupt weaning of piglets, give piglets a longer and gradual change from milk to solid feed, improved piglet survival and vitality, give more homogeneous piglet size at weaning, reduced need for antibiotics and zinc additives, improved piglet growth before and after weaning including better health and welfare in sows and piglets.

Unfortunately, due to the Corona pandemic we have not been able to pursue the project as planned during 2020 but at a much slower pace. It has not been possible to travel or visit organic piglet producing farms, meet farmers to inform about the project and demonstrate how to collect data, information and samples, neither to investigate the options to conduct the project in specific farms or if any adaptations at the farms may be needed.

The pandemic also conducted to that the two researchers/teachers at SLU in this project had to do much more teaching than planned. The project participant from Farm & Animal Health have partly retired during this year and has not been able to work in the project.

What has been performed during the year is literature studies, planning of the field studies at farms and gathering information from Farm and Animal Health and local veterinarians about suitable organic piglet including contacts with the farmers.