

Should we be friends?

Effects of gilts' breed and social experiences on reactions to unfamiliar pigs

CONCLUSION

There are some short term effects of social experience on play and exploration behaviour, but not in social behaviour in gilts during paired interaction tests at the age of 5 and 20 week. The breed of the gilts did not effect gilt response to the test but individual gilt response may to some extent be repeatable over time.

Aim

To assess short term effects of gilts' breed and social experience on behavioural response in a paired interaction test (PIT) with unfamiliar pigs.

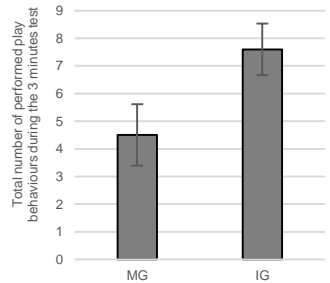
RESULTS

Preliminary results show no effect of breed or social experience on social behaviour in paired interaction tests at 5 and 20 weeks of age.

Gilts with additional social experience from 2 to 5 weeks of age performed more exploration behavior in the test arena ($p=0.022$)

Gilts with additional social experience from 10 weeks of age performed less play behavior at the test at 20 weeks of age ($p=0.025$).

There were a tendency for repeatability of closeness to the test pig between the test at 5 and 20 weeks ($r=0.25$, $p=0.060$)



Play behaviour during the test at 20 weeks of age, for gilt in the MG and IG treatments, least square means and standard errors $p = 0.025$

METHODS

Gilts were of the breed Swedish Yorkshire (SY) or Dutch Yorkshire (DY).

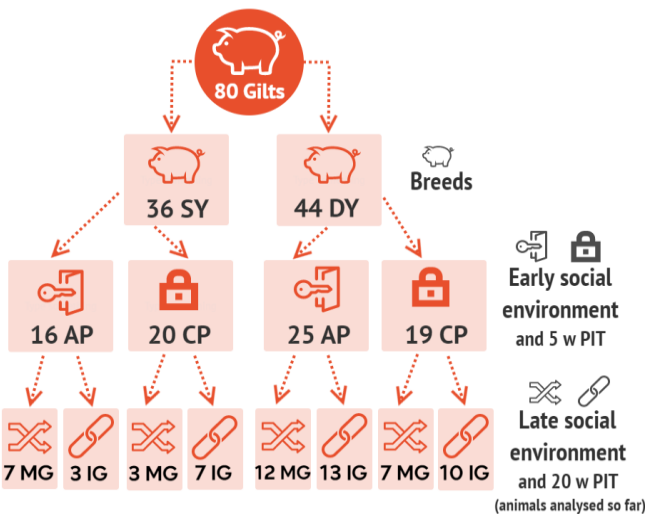
Early social environment, from 2 to 5 weeks of age, gilts had access to the piglets and sows in the neighbouring pen (AP) or not (CP).

Late social environment, from 10 weeks until farrowing, 2 gilts from the same litter were mixed with 2 unfamiliar gilts (MG) or stayed with the same group of four gilts (IG).

The gilts met an unfamiliar gilt of the same age for 3 minutes in paired interaction tests (PITs). Tests were carried out when pigs were 5 and 20 weeks of age in a novel environment outside their home pens.

Data was analysed with general linear models and repeatability of behaviour responses over time were analysed with residual Pearson correlations.

Flowchart of N breeds and social environments



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