

LIVABILITY: THE KEY TO PROFITABLE PIG PRODUCTION



Janet Remus
*Technical Services Director,
 Danisco Animal Nutrition*

Meeting the growing demand for pork while creating sustainable profits is a challenge that has only intensified with changing pork prices in the market.

Our recent seminar – “Maximum Efficiency in Swine Production” – was designed to help producers better understand how to win in this competitive market. Guest speaker Dr. R. Dean Boyd, Technical Director at The Hanor Company, made the case that pig viability/livability is now the most important Key Performance Indicator for swine producers.

His argument focused on new research showing how xylanase can be used in a prebiotic context to support gut health, in addition to improving carcass uniformity. Plenty of existing data points to the importance of good post-weaning growth for long-term pig performance. We have conducted studies showing that each extra kg of bodyweight achieved in the post-weaning phase can potentially reduce days to slaughter by 4-5 days, thereby saving production costs.

Dr. Boyd argued that while feed conversion rates are important in getting pigs to market quickly, livability improvements are key to profitability gains. In his example, changing net income by an extra \$1.50 USD per 127.9 kg pig in 2015 conditions means focusing on pig gut health and livability in addition to conversion, feed cost, and sow efficiency.

Dr. Boyd cited four commercial challenge and nonchallenge trials showing that xylanase usage generated a 4.8% average improvement in feed conversion through non-starch polysaccharide (NSP) reduction, and that the number of hogs reaching market weight improved as well. Livability results from two other trials run in commercially managed research facilities with high health hogs fed US-style diets are shown in Figure 1. According to Dr. Boyd, this positive effect on livability has recently been shown to be dose-related, with highest economic returns being shown at 6,000 units of xylanase per kg. He also said that adding xylanase to high doses of phytase has been shown to amplify livability, gestation and lactation benefits.

In describing his journey – guided by these xylanase studies – toward the keys to pig gut health, Dr. Boyd borrowed a quote from Nobel prize winner Albert Szent-Gyorgi: “Discovery consists of seeing what everybody has seen and thinking what nobody has thought.” To watch Dr. Boyd’s presentation on video, go to http://www.pigprogress.net/partners/dupont/Dean_Boyd.

Figure 1: Impact of Xylanase Dose on Deaths and Removals (25-280 lb)

