

## EFFECTS OF PROBIOTICS DIETARY SUPPLEMENTATION ON DIARRHEA INCIDENCE, FECAL SHEDDING OF *ESCHERICHIA COLI* AND GROWTH PERFORMANCE IN POST-WEANED PIGLETS

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**Abstract.** The effects of the probiotic products were investigated over a trial period of 56 days (72 weaned piglets from 30 to 85 days of age). At weaning the piglets were assigned to three dietary experimental groups, Ctr (control), PrbC and PrbU (microencapsulated and uncoated probiotic bacteria *Enterococcus faecium* NCIMB 11181). The probiotics PrbC and PrbU supplement provided  $1.9 \times 10^7$  CFU g<sup>-1</sup> and  $1.20 \times 10^7$  CFU g<sup>-1</sup> of the diet respectively. PrbC and PrbU reduced the frequency and severity of post-weaned diarrhoea in piglets. The probiotics PrbC and PrbU increased the final live weight by 13.6% (P<0.01) and 12.1% (P<0.01) and the average daily gain by 18.4% (P<0.01) and by 16.5% (P<0.01) respectively. Over the 56 day trial period the feed/gain ratio was on the average 1.91, 1.72 and 1.78 kg in the Ctr, PrbC and PrbU groups, respectively.

**Keywords:** piglets, probiotics, diarrhea, live weight, feed/gain ratio.