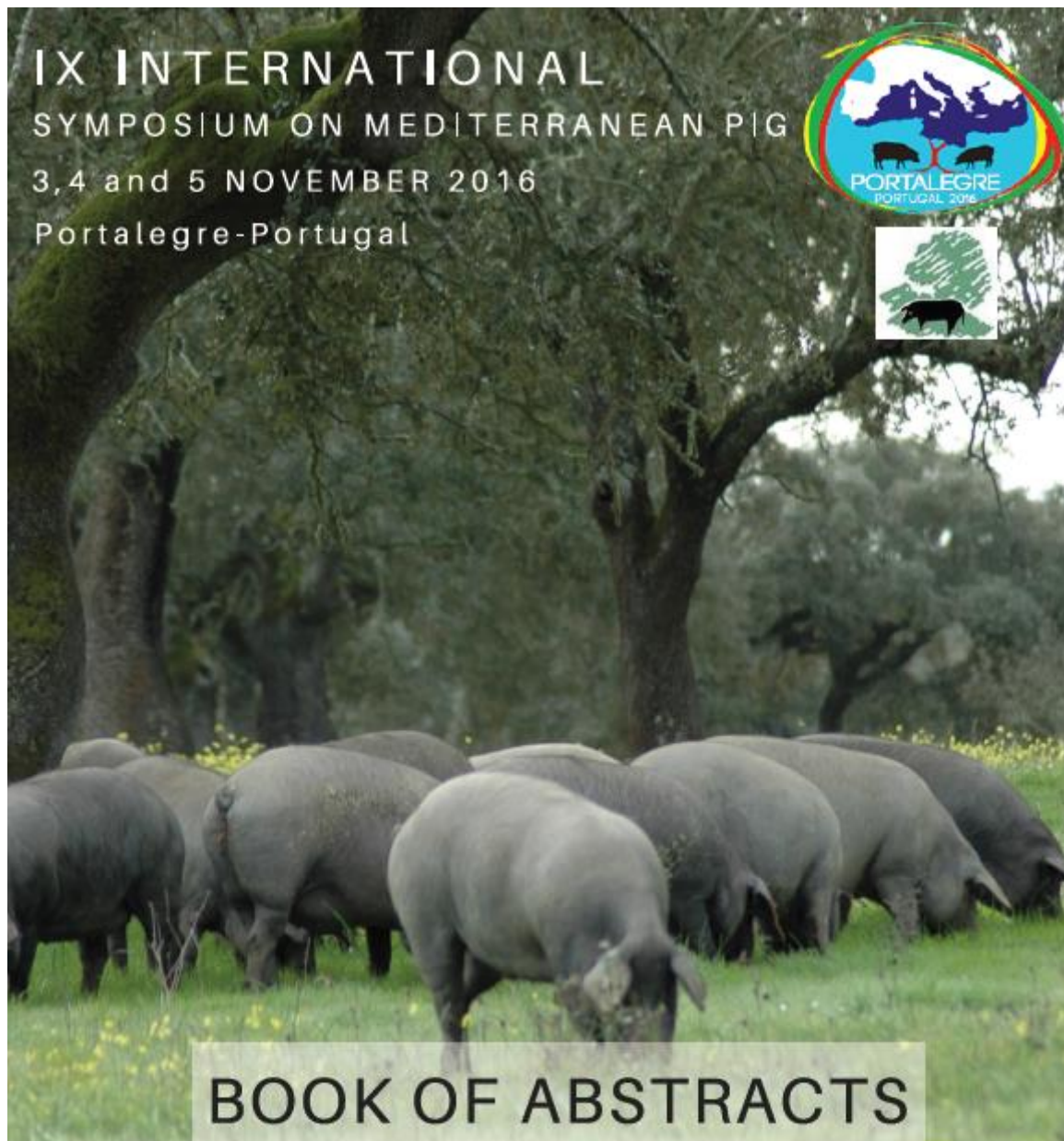


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GROWTH OF KRŠKOPOLJE PIGLETS DURING LACTATION AND THE FIRST REARING PERIOD

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Abstract: The only Slovenian autochthonous pig breed (Krškopolje) is reared in very diverse conditions. Many small-scale breeders are rearing these pigs in extensive conditions, often using a combination of indoor and outdoor system, while some breeders are dealing with a more intensive production. Growth rates, reflecting different feeding regimes, are consequently very diverse. Due to the fact that literature data on this pig breed is scarce, growth potential in different phases of growth was assessed within the TREASURE* project. Growth of the piglets in the pre-weaning period (n=156; born within 2 weeks period) was recorded on the farms of their origin (7 organic and 11 conventional), whereas growth in the post-weaning period was recorded on a subsample of piglets transferred to the experimental farm (n=42; 3 castrates per litter originating from 5 organic and 9 conventional farms). At experimental farm, piglets were assigned within litter to three pens; one pen (ECO; n=14) received organic feed mixture (starter; 12.8 MJ metabolisable energy, 17% crude proteins), while two pens (CON, n=28) received initially (10 days) a conventional starter (14 MJ metabolisable energy, 17.8% crude proteins) and thereafter a grower diet (13.6 MJ metabolisable energy, 16.8% crude proteins). Piglets were fed ad libitum and weighed at the average age of 38, 54 and 113 days. In the pre-weaning period, the piglets grew faster on conventional farms (app. 20%) than on organic farms (LSM±SEM being 209±16 vs. 173±19 g/day, respectively), but the difference was not significant when taking into account the random effect of farm (P=0.17). Post-weaning, piglets fed conventional feed had 8% higher daily gain than piglets receiving organic diet (LSM±SEM being 391±31 vs. 361±41 g/day for CON and ECO, respectively; P=0.60). Our results suggest that no differences in growth rate of pigs between organic and conventional system are expected in the case of similar rearing and feeding conditions.

Keywords: Krškopolje piglets, growth rate, pre and post-weaning growth.

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