

## Features of carcass performance and characteristics and meat quality in pigs fed agave oligofructans

### Rasgos del comportamiento y características de la canal y calidad de la carne en cerdos alimentados con oligofructanos de agave

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A total of 84 Yorkshire x Landrace x Duroc pigs, female and castrated male in the same proportion, were used. These animals were housed in groups of two, to be randomly assigned to three treatments that consisted in the addition of 0, 2.5 and 5.0 g of agave oligofructans (*Agave tequilana*) per kilogram of diet. Animals were fed *ad libitum* with a diet of cereals and grains from 28 d of age, with an initial weight of around 7 kg. There was no significant effect ( $P>0.05$ ) in any measure for sex x oligofructan level interaction. Oligofructans determined a lower food intake ( $P<0.001$ ), but there was no effect of treatment on weight gain, thus food conversion also decreased ( $P = 0.09$ ). Oligofructans determined the lowest numeric values, without significant effect ( $P > 0.05$ ) for thickness of dorsal fat, and the highest for lean yield, regarding control treatment and significantly ( $P < 0.001$ ) lower for losses by leaking and for pH at 24 h. It is suggested that agave oligofructans may have a positive influence on carcass and meat characteristics of growing finishing pigs, with more marked effect than in performance traits.

Key words: *pigs, agave, prebiotics, zootechnics, lipid metabolism*

Beneficial effects of supplementation of insulin as prebiotic of fructooligosaccharides on monogastric animal nutrition have been recently discussed Kozlowska *et al.* 2016). As it is known, fructose polymers, like insulin, are probiotics that resist enzymatic digestion in the prececal area from the feeding canal, and arrive almost intact to the colon, for later disappearing by intestinal fermentation. All these fructose polysaccharides are bifidogenic and stimulate growth of beneficial bacterial species (Kelly 2008).

Among fructose polysaccharides, there are oligofructans obtained from *Agave tequilana*, which is sown in great plantations from the Mexican state of Jalisco. There are many studies on fructose polymer performance, like oligofructans, on nutrition of recently weaned piglets, due to its abilities to change intestinal microbial population and due to its consequences on animal health (Jensen *et al.* 2010 and Zhao *et al.* 2012). However, there are less studies on characteristics of zootechnics of fattening pigs and its possible effect on carcass traits and meat quality

Se utilizó un total de 84 cerdos Yorkshire x Landrace x Duroc, machos castrados, y hembras en igual proporción, alojados en grupos de a dos para ser asignados aleatoriamente a tres tratamientos que consistieron en la adición de 0, 2.5 y 5.0 g de oligofructanos de agave (*Agave tequilana*) por kilogramo de dieta. Los animales se alimentaron *ad libitum* con una dieta de cereales y granos desde los 28 d de edad, con peso inicial de aproximadamente 7 kg. No hubo efecto significativo ( $P>0.05$ ) en ninguna medida para la interacción sexo x nivel de oligofructano. Los oligofructanos determinaron menor consumo de alimento ( $P<0.001$ ), pero no hubo efecto de tratamiento en la ganancia de peso, y así la conversión alimentaria también decreció ( $P = 0.09$ ). Los oligofructanos determinaron valores numéricos más bajos, sin efecto significativo ( $P > 0.05$ ) para el espesor de grasa dorsal, y más altos para el rendimiento magro, con respecto al tratamiento control y significativamente ( $P<0.001$ ) menores para las pérdidas por goteo y para el pH a las 24 h. Se sugiere que los oligofructanos de agave pueden ejercer influencia positiva en las características de la canal y de la carne de cerdos en crecimiento-acabado, con efecto más marcado que en los rasgos de comportamiento.

Palabras clave: *ganado porcino, agave, prebióticos, zootecnia, metabolismo lipídico*

Los efectos benéficos de la suplementación de inulina como prebiótico de fructooligosacáridos en la nutrición de animales monogástricos han sido discutidos recientemente (Kozlowska *et al.* 2016). Como se sabe, los polímeros de fructosa, como la inulina, son probióticos que resisten la digestión enzimática en el área prececal del canal alimentario, y alcanzan el colon prácticamente intactos, para desaparecer por fermentación intestinal. Todos estos polisacáridos de fructosa son bifidogénicos, y estimulan el crecimiento de especies bacterianas benéficas (Kelly 2008)

Entre los polisacáridos de fructosa, se encuentran los oligofructanos obtenidos a partir del agave, *Agave tequilana*, que se cultiva en grandes plantaciones en el estado mexicano de Jalisco. Si bien se ha estudiado mucho el desempeño de los polímeros de fructosa, como los oligofructanos, en la nutrición de cerditos recientemente destetados, por sus habilidades para cambiar la población microbiana intestinal y por sus consecuencias en la salud animal (Jensen *et al.* 2010 y Zhao *et al.* 2012), se han abordado menos las características de la zootecnia de cerdos en ceba y su

(Verdonk *et al.* 2005).

The objective of this experiment was to determine carcass and performance traits, as well as indexes of technological quality of meat in pigs fed conventional diets of cereals and grains, to which a variable level of agave oligofructans (*Agave tequilana*) is added.

### Materials and Methods

A total of 84 Yorkshire x Landrace x Duroc pigs, female and castrated male in the same proportion, were used. These animals were housed in groups of two, to be randomly assigned to three treatments that consisted in the addition of 0, 2.5 and 5.0 g of agave oligofructans (*Agave tequilana*) per kg of diet. These oligofructans were obtained from an industrial plant in Jalisco, and came from plantations of jalisciense agave. Pens, of 2 x 2 m of surface, had concrete floor and were located in an open stable. Each of these pens contained feeding and water troughs.

Animals were fed *ad libitum* for four stages: pre-beginning, beginning, development and final, with typical diets of cereals and grains from 28 d of age, with an initial weight of around  $7 \pm 0.50$  kg. These diets were formulated to fulfill nutritional requirements recommended by NRC (1998). The content of nutrients of diets for the different stages that animals went through were determined in representative samples of food, according known procedures (AOAC 2005). Table 1 shows characteristics of diets.

In order to calculate daily food intake, per week, once the leftovers are weighed, the average per pen is determined. For calculating daily weight gain, pigs

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possible repercusión en rasgos de canal y calidad de la carne (Verdonk *et al.* 2005).

El objetivo de este experimento fue determinar rasgos de comportamiento y canal, así como índices de la calidad tecnológica de la carne en cerdos alimentados con dietas convencionales de cereales y granos, a las que se adicionó un nivel variable de oligofructanos de agave (*Agave tequilana*).

### Materiales y Métodos

Se utilizó un total de 84 cerdos Yorkshire x Landrace x Duroc, machos castrados y hembras en igual proporción, alojados en grupos de a dos para ser asignados aleatoriamente a tres tratamientos, consistentes en la adición de 0, 2.5 y 5.0 g de oligofructanos de agave (*Agave tequilana*) por kg de dieta. Estos oligofructanos se obtuvieron de una planta industrial de Jalisco, y procedían de plantaciones de agave jalisciense. Los corrales, de 2 x 2 m de superficie, eran de piso de concreto, y estaban localizados en un establo abierto. Cada uno de estos corrales estaba provisto de un comedero y un bebedero.

Los animales se alimentaron *ad libitum* durante cuatro etapas, preiniciación, iniciación, desarrollo y finalización, con dietas típicas de cereales y granos, desde los 28 d de edad, y con peso vivo inicial de aproximadamente  $7 \pm 0.50$  kg. Estas dietas se confeccionaron para cumplir los requerimientos nutricionales recomendados por el NRC (1998). El contenido de nutrientes de las dietas para las distintas etapas por las que transitaron los animales se determinó en muestras representativas de alimento, de acuerdo con los procedimientos reconocidos (AOAC 2005). Las características de las dietas se muestran en la tabla 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of diets with cereals and grains used in this experiment

Stage	Analysis, % under dry basis					
	DM	Ashes	Crude fiber	Ether extract	NFE	Crude protein
Pre-beginning	89.87	4.74	1.7	5.04	57.17	20.34
Beginning	89.55	5.4	1.93	4.77	57.89	19.56
Development	91.37	8.6	2.73	9.53	54.16	16.35
Final	91.5	6.03	3.91	12.73	54.26	14.57

were weighed at the beginning and at the end of the test, between four and 23 weeks. Once the performance test was over, the content of dorsal fat was determined *in vivo*, at the level of the eleventh rib, with a proper ultrasound equipment.

Animals were slaughtered after a fasting of 10 hours, in order to determine carcass yield and main cuts. The slaughtering took place after pigs were stunned using electric clamps. After pigs were slaughtered and bled, pH, color and losses per leaking were measured, in samples of loin at the level of the eleventh rib. The pH was determined 24 hours post mortem, with an *ad hoc* electrode, connected to a potentiometer. Color was measured with a reflectometer sensor, estimating

Para calcular el consumo diario de alimento, semanalmente, una vez pesado el sobrante, se determinó el promedio por corral. Con la finalidad de calcular la ganancia diaria de peso, los cerdos se pesaron al inicio y al final de la prueba, entre las cuatro y 23 semanas. Cuando terminó la prueba de comportamiento, se determinó *in vivo* a nivel de la onceava costilla, el contenido de grasa dorsal mediante un equipo apropiado de ultrasonido

Los animales se sacrificaron después de un ayuno de 10 horas, con el fin de determinar el rendimiento en canal y los cortes principales. Se procedió al sacrificio después que los cerdos se aturdieron mediante pinzas eléctricas. Después que los cerdos se sacrificaron y desangraron, se hicieron mediciones de pH, color y pérdida por goteo, en

luminosity "L", and "a", tendency to red or green color, and "b", tendency to yellow or blue color. To measure losses by leaking, a sample of 100 g from the loin was taken, it was weighed at the beginning, at 24 h, at 120 h, and after being placed in polyethylene bags suspended by a thread. This way, it was avoided the sample to touch the walls or covers of these bags. During the measured time, samples were refrigerated at 0 °C in a cold chamber.

Besides the measures of carcass traits and meat quality, at the moment of pig slaughtering, cecal content was collected in five animals per treatment, randomly selected, in order to determine the content of short chain fatty acids (SCFA) in the digesta of this digestive organ. SCFA were identified and quantified in samples conveniently homogenized and prepared in the lab through liquid-gas chromatography in capillary column, with the use of 2-ethyl butyric acid as internal standard (Richardson *et al.* 1989).

Experimental data were processed by a completely randomized model (Steel *et al.* 1997). Treatments consisted on the use of different concentrations of oligofructans in the food. The following model provides details:

$$y = \mu + Vi + Rj + \epsilon$$

where:

$y$  = variable to be measured

$\mu$  = general mean

$Vi$  = the  $i$ -th level of oligofructan addition

$Rj$  = the  $j$ -th effect of repetition

$\epsilon$  = standard error

In the cases measures were significantly ( $P < 0.05$ ) different among them, they were separated by Fisher test, with 95 % of reliability margin. Data were processed with a proper statistical package (Statgraphic 1998).

## Results

Table 2 shows data belonging to productive performance of animals.

Initial weight of animals did not differ ( $P > 0.05$ ) among treatments. Pigs treated with 2.5 g of oligofructans/kg of diet, consumed less food ( $P < 0.001$ ) than in the treatment without this additive. Pigs with 5.0 g of oligofructans/kg of diet showed an intermediate response. This was not reflected on final weight, total gain or mean daily gain ( $P > 0.05$ ), although it was noted that all these measures were slightly inferior to those of the treatment without oligofructans. This way, it was evident that food conversion tended ( $P=0.09$ ) to be better in individuals treated with 2.5 or 5.0 g of this prebiotic per kg of food.

Table 3 shows data referring to carcass traits. Although without significant effect ( $P > 0.05$ ), lean meat yield seemed to be better in both treatments containing oligofructans. With 2.5 g of

muestras de lomo a nivel de la onceava costilla. El pH se determinó 24 horas post mortem con un electrodo *ad hoc*, conectado a un potenciómetro. El color se midió mediante el sensor de un reflectómetro, y así se estimó la luminosidad "L", y también "a", la tendencia al color rojo ó verde, y "b", la tendencia del color amarillo ó azul. Para medir la pérdida por goteo, se tomó una muestra de 100 g de lomo y luego de pesarla inicialmente, se volvió a pesar a las 24 y 120 h, después de ser colocada en bolsas de polietileno suspendidas por un hilo. Se evitó así que la muestra tocara las paredes o tapas de esas bolsas. Durante el período de tiempo medido, las muestras se refrigeraron a 0 °C en una cámara fría.

Además de las medidas de rasgos de canal y calidad de la carne, en el momento del sacrificio de los cerdos se colectó contenido cecal en cinco animales por tratamiento, seleccionados al azar, con vistas a determinar el contenido de ácidos grasos de cadena corta (AGCC) en la digesta de ese órgano digestivo. Los AGCC se identificaron y cuantificaron en las muestras convenientemente homogeneizadas y preparadas en el laboratorio mediante cromatografía de gas-líquido en columna capilar, con la utilización de ácido 2-etyl butírico como estándar interno (Richardson *et al.* 1989).

Los datos experimentales se procesaron mediante un modelo completamente aleatorio (Steel *et al.* 1997). Los tratamientos consistieron en el empleo de distintas concentraciones de oligofructanos en el alimento. El modelo se detalla a continuación:

$$y = \mu + Vi + Rj + \epsilon$$

donde:

$y$  = la variable a medir

$\mu$  = la media general

$Vi$  = el  $i$ -ésimo nivel de adición de oligofructano

$Rj$  = el  $j$ -ésimo efecto de repetición

$\epsilon$  = error estándar

En los casos en que las medias contrastadas fueron significativamente ( $P < 0.05$ ) distintas entre sí, se separaron mediante la dócima de Fisher, con 95 % de margen de confianza. Los datos se procesaron con la ayuda de un paquete estadístico apropiado (Statgraphic 1998).

## Resultados

Los datos correspondientes al comportamiento productivo de los animales se muestran en la tabla 2.

El peso inicial de los animales no difirió ( $P > 0.05$ ) entre tratamientos. Los cerdos que se trataron con 2.5 g de oligofructanos/kg de dieta, consumieron menos alimento ( $P < 0.001$ ) que en el tratamiento sin este aditivo. Los cerdos con 5.0 g de oligofructanos/kg de dieta mostraron una respuesta intermedia. Ello no se reflejó en la disminución del peso final, la ganancia total o media diaria ( $P > 0.05$ ), aunque se notó que todas estas medidas fueron ligeramente inferiores con respecto a las del tratamiento sin oligofructanos. De esta manera, se evidenció que la conversión alimentaria tendiera ( $P=0.09$ ) a ser mejor en los individuos tratados con 2.5

Table 2. Performance traits in pigs fed agave (*Agave tequilana*) oligofructans

Indicator	Agave oligofructans, g/kg of food			SE ±	P
	0	2.5	5.0		
n	14.00 <sup>1</sup>	14.00	14.00	-	
Initial weight, kg	7.30	7.14	7.45	0.54	0.94
Final weight, kg.	111.68	106.81	110.76	4.20	0.33
Total intake, kg	298.86 <sup>a</sup>	275.38 <sup>b</sup>	290.31 <sup>ab</sup>	8.80	0.001
Gain					
Total, kg	104.39	99.41	103.31	4.15	0.12
Daily, g	822.00	783.00	814.00	30.00	0.12
Conversion, kg/kg	2.86	2.77	2.81	0.22	0.09

<sup>1</sup>Each replication is the mean of two animals<sup>ab</sup>Means without common letter in the same row differ significantly (P<0.05) among them

oligofructans/kg of diet, the lowest values of dorsal fat thickness were obtained and with 5.0 g/kg, there was superior muscle depth. However, the statistical analysis indicated no significant effect (P<0.05) in these two last measures.

o 5.0 g de este prebiótico por kg de alimento.

Los datos referentes a los rasgos de la canal se muestran en la tabla 3. Aunque sin efecto significativo (P>0.05), el rendimiento en carne magra pareció ser mejor en los dos tratamientos que contenían oligofructanos.

Table 3. Carcass traits in pigs fed agave (*Agave tequilana*) oligofructans

Indicator	Agave oligofructans, g/kg of food			SE ±	P
	0	2.5	5		
n	14.00 <sup>1</sup>	14.00	14.00	-	
Lean meat, %	57.56	58.29	58.41	1.27	0.67
Muscle depth, mm	51.54	48.91	51.57	1.91	0.18
Dorsal fat thickness, mm	13.59	12.44	13.14	1.46	0.63

<sup>1</sup>Each replication is the mean of two animals

Indexes of technological quality of meat appears in table 4. It was observed that losses by leaking was significantly (P=0.001) low in the groups with the addition of 2.5 and 5.0 g of oligofructans/kg of food, compared to the treatment without prebiotic. Regarding pH measured 24 h *post mortem* in the meat of control pigs, it was 5.53, which was inferior (P=0.001) to that found in the treatment with more prebiotic (5.86). With the use of 2.5 g of oligofructans in the diet, an intermediate value was found (5.62). Regarding subjective color, it reached a value of 3 with 5.0 g/kg of oligofructans, while there was no effect on marbling of the evaluated samples.

Table 5 shows data related to measurements of luminosity and color (a and b, tendency to red and yellow, in that order). The authors found values of luminosity significantly higher (P=0.04) in meat samples of control pigs compared to those that consumed the prebiotic, without difference between both treatments with oligofructans. Regarding chromaticity, the tendency to red (a) and to yellow (b), showed no influence of treatment (P> 0.05).

Table 6 shows the status of cecal SCFA in pigs. There was significant effect (P<0.01) of treatment in this experiment, when measuring total SCFA

Con 2.5 g de oligofructanos/kg de alimento se obtuvieron valores más bajos del espesor de grasa dorsal, y con 5.0 g/kg mayor profundidad del músculo. No obstante, el análisis estadístico no indicó algún efecto significativo (P<0.05) en estas dos últimas medidas.

Los índices de la calidad tecnológica de la carne se muestran en la tabla 4. Se observó que la pérdida por goteo fue significativamente (P=0.001) menor en los grupos adicionados con 2.5 y 5.0 g de oligofructanos/kg de alimento, en comparación con el tratamiento sin prebiótico. En relación con el pH medido 24 h *post mortem*, en la carne de los cerdos testigos fue de 5.53, valor que resultó inferior (P=0.001) al hallado en el tratamiento con más prebiótico (5.86). Cuando se usaron 2.5 g de oligofructanos en la dieta, se halló un valor intermedio (5.62). En cuanto al color subjetivo, alcanzó el valor de 3 con 5.0 g/kg de oligofructanos, mientras que no se observó efecto alguno en el marmoleo de las muestras evaluadas.

Los datos relativos a las mediciones de luminosidad y color (a y b, tendencia al rojo y al amarillo, en ese orden) se muestran en la tabla 5. Se hallaron valores de luminosidad significativamente mayores (P=0.04) en las muestras de carne de los cerdos testigos en comparación con los que consumieron el prebiótico, sin diferir ambos tratamientos con oligofructanos entre

Table 4. Indexes of technological quality of carcass in pigs fed agave (*Agave tequilana*) oligofructans

Indicator	Agave oligofructans, g/kg of food			SE ±	P
	0	2.5	5.0		
n	14.00 <sup>1</sup>	14.00	14.00	-	
Losses by leaking, %	5.85 <sup>a</sup>	3.50 <sup>b</sup>	4.56 <sup>b</sup>	0.54	0.001
pH after 24 hours	5.53 <sup>a</sup>	5.62 <sup>ab</sup>	5.86 <sup>b</sup>	0.06	0.001
Subjective Color	2	2	3	-	-
Marbled	1	1	1	-	-

<sup>1</sup> Each replication is the mean of two animals<sup>ab</sup> Means without common letter in the same row differ significantly (P<0.05) among themTable 5. Luminosity and chromaticity of meat in pigs fed agave (*Agave tequilana*) oligofructans

Indicator	Agave oligofructans, g/kg of food			SE ±	P
	0	2.5	5.0		
n	14.00 <sup>1</sup>	14.00	14.00	-	
Luminosity	51.62 <sup>a</sup>	50.58 <sup>b</sup>	49.44 <sup>b</sup>	1.04	0.04
Chromaticity					
a	8.61	8.20	8.67	0.37	0.15
b	0.25	-0.11	-0.24	0.54	0.29

concentration in cecal digesta, with high values for samples of animals consuming food with 5.0 g of oligofructans/kg of diet. A lower concentration of the prebiotic in the food did not differ in this index regarding control, without oligofructans. The same happened when concentrations of cecal butyrate, propionate and acetate were measured. In fact, cecal acetate concentration was 1093 µmol/g of fresh digesta, when prebiotic concentration was 5 g/kg of diet, and only 431 µmol/g of fresh digesta in the control treatment. Acetate was the predominant SCFA and, when oligofructans passed from 0 to 2.5 and 5.0 g per kg of diet in these animals, it constituted 55.7, 51.7 and 69.0 % of the total, respectively

sí. En lo concerniente a la cromaticidad, ni la tendencia al rojo (a) ni al amarillo (b), mostraron influencia del tratamiento (P> 0.05).

En la tabla 6 aparece el status de los AGCC cecales de los cerdos. En este experimento se halló efecto significativo (P<0.01) del tratamiento, cuando se midió la concentración de AGCC totales en la digesta cecal, con altos valores medidos para las muestras de los animales que consumieron el alimento con 5.0 g de oligofructanos por kg de dieta. Una concentración menor del prebiótico en la comida no difirió en este índice con respecto al testigo, sin oligofructanos. Ocurrió otro tanto cuando se midieron las concentraciones de acetato, propionato y butirato cecales. De hecho, la concentración de acetato cecal fue de 1093 µmol/g de

Table 6. Status of cecal SCFA in pigs fed agave (*Agave tequilana*) oligofructans

Indicator	Agave oligofructans, g/kg of food			SE ±	P
	0	2.5	5.0		
n	5	5	5	-	
SCFA, µmol/g fresh digesta					
Acetate	431 <sup>b</sup>	372 <sup>b</sup>	1093 <sup>a</sup>	48	0.001
Propionate	111 <sup>b</sup>	138 <sup>b</sup>	166 <sup>a</sup>	18	0.04
Butyrate	196 <sup>b</sup>	209 <sup>b</sup>	320 <sup>a</sup>	30	0.02
Total	738 <sup>b</sup>	719 <sup>b</sup>	1579 <sup>a</sup>	-43	0.01

<sup>ab</sup> Means without common letter in the same row differ significantly (P<0.05) among them

## Discussion

Results related to performance traits in piglets fed diets with oligofructans have not always been coincident (Verdonk *et al.* 2005). In addition, such data are scarce, regarding animals in finishing stage

digesta fresca, cuando la concentración prebiótica fue de 5 g/kg de dieta, y solamente 431 µmol/g de digesta fresca en el tratamiento testigo. El acetato fue el AGCC predominante y constituyó 55.7, 51.7 y 69.0 % del total, respectivamente, cuando los oligofructanos pasaron de 0 a 2.5 y 5.0 g por kg de dieta en estos animales.

## Discusión

(Sobolewska and Grela 2013). Some experiments have revealed evident advantages with the use of this additive in piglets during weaning period Farnworth *et al.* 1992, Howard *et al.* 1995 and Olsen and Maribo 1999). However, Shim (2005) obtained increase of liveweight and higher gains in pigs consuming additives in shape of prebiotics. Likewise, Kjos *et al.* (2010) found increase of weight with the addition of insulin, but these were relatively low, between 4.2 and 6.3 %. Experiments reported by Li and Kim (2013) and by Zhao *et al.* (2017), with growing pigs and treated with fructose oligomers, showed better performance in animal growth. Data obtained in this research is in accordance with this tendency of finding certain advantage in performance traits when oligofructans are included in the diet of growing and finishing pigs. It is possible that with an inhibition of voluntary intake of food, advantages may be obtained in food conversion of pigs with invariability of daily gain. This decrease of food intake was reported by Urias *et al.* (2008) in mice handled with this type of prebiotic, probably due to production of sacogenic/incretin peptides, produced in the large intestine of animals that consume oligofructans like those within agave.

Regarding carcass traits, this research could evidence a marked thickness of dorsal fat, like in other experiments with pigs treated with oligofructans (Dezelne *et al.* 2002). Those results have been attributed to a consequence of the influence of oligofructans, like those used in this experiment, in the lipid metabolism of pigs. It has been proposed that in humans and rats, prebiotics like fructooligosaccharides can modify lipid metabolism, specifically the action of decreasing metabolism of triacyl glycerol through the reduction of novo synthesis of fatty acids by oligofructose action (Delzenne and Kok 1999, Letexier *et al.* 2003 and Kang *et al.* 2006).

Sobolewska and Grela (2013) found no effect of weight on the improvement of carcass traits when variable levels of inulin were provided to fattening pigs. This apparent contradiction may be related to the type of fructose polymer included in the diet, as well as its way of supply and dose. Evidently, more research on this subject is needed.

It is evident that changes observed in this experiment on the profile and composition of cecal SDFA are a consequence of using oligofructans on pig rearing. It is very well known that fructose polymers, like oligofructans, are very resistant to enzymatic attack of the host in the stomach and small intestine of animals like pigs, so they reach almost intact to the caecum and colon, where they are attacked by resident microorganisms (Mussatto and Mancilha 2007).

Acetic, propionic and butyric acids are final products of microbial activity that uses hydrolyzed oligofructans (Choct and Kocher 2000 and Sabater *et*

al. 2010). Some experiments have revealed evident advantages with the use of this additive in piglets during weaning period Farnworth *et al.* 1992, Howard *et al.* 1995 and Olsen and Maribo 1999). However, Shim (2005) obtained increase of liveweight and higher gains in pigs consuming additives in shape of prebiotics. Likewise, Kjos *et al.* (2010) found increase of weight with the addition of insulin, but these were relatively low, between 4.2 and 6.3 %. Experiments reported by Li and Kim (2013) and by Zhao *et al.* (2017), with growing pigs and treated with fructose oligomers, showed better performance in animal growth. Data obtained in this research is in accordance with this tendency of finding certain advantage in performance traits when oligofructans are included in the diet of growing and finishing pigs. It is possible that with an inhibition of voluntary intake of food, advantages may be obtained in food conversion of pigs with invariability of daily gain. This decrease of food intake was reported by Urias *et al.* (2008) in mice handled with this type of prebiotic, probably due to production of sacogenic/incretin peptides, produced in the large intestine of animals that consume oligofructans like those within agave.

Regarding carcass traits, this research could evidence a marked thickness of dorsal fat, like in other experiments with pigs treated with oligofructans (Dezelne *et al.* 2002). Those results have been attributed to a consequence of the influence of oligofructans, like those used in this experiment, in the lipid metabolism of pigs. It has been proposed that in humans and rats, prebiotics like fructooligosaccharides can modify lipid metabolism, specifically the action of decreasing metabolism of triacyl glycerol through the reduction of novo synthesis of fatty acids by oligofructose action (Delzenne and Kok 1999, Letexier *et al.* 2003 and Kang *et al.* 2006).

Sobolewska and Grela (2013) found no effect of weight on the improvement of carcass traits when variable levels of inulin were provided to fattening pigs. This apparent contradiction may be related to the type of fructose polymer included in the diet, as well as its way of supply and dose. Evidently, more research on this subject is needed.

It is evident that changes observed in this experiment on the profile and composition of cecal SDFA are a consequence of using oligofructans on pig rearing. It is very well known that fructose polymers, like oligofructans, are very resistant to enzymatic attack of the host in the stomach and small intestine of animals like pigs, so they reach almost intact to the caecum and colon, where they are attacked by resident microorganisms (Mussatto and Mancilha 2007).

Acetic, propionic and butyric acids are final products of microbial activity that uses hydrolyzed oligofructans (Choct and Kocher 2000 and Sabater *et*

*al.* 2009). Likewise, it is known that these prebiotics favor the development of bacterial species, like lactobacillus and bifidobacteria, which promote a beneficial path in the balance of native microflora (Banguela and Hernández 2006 and Kelly 2008), in order to favor a better development of gastrointestinal microarchitecture for a higher fermentative activity, among other events. This determines a better health state of animals (Jensen *et al.* 2010, Zhao *et al.* 2012 and Samanta *et al.* 2013).

It is suggested that agave oligofructans may have a positive influence on characteristics of carcass and meat of growing-finishing pigs, with a more marked effect than in performance traits. It is necessary more research to establish the best methods for using oligofructans in rearing pigs.

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en la crianza de los cerdos. Se sabe muy bien que los polímero de fructosa, como los oligofructanos, son muy resistentes al ataque enzimático del huésped en el estómago y en el intestino delgado de animales como el cerdo, y así alcanzan a llegar prácticamente intactos al ciego y al colon, donde son atacados por microorganismos allí residentes (Mussatto y Mancilha 2007).

Los ácidos acético, propiónico y butírico son los productos finales de la actividad microbiana que utiliza los oligofructanos hidrolizados (Choct y Kocher 2000 y Sabater *et al.* 2009). Igualmente, se sabe que estos prebióticos favorecen el desarrollo de especies bacterianas, como los lactobacilos y bifidobacterias, que promueven un cambio benéfico en el equilibrio de la microflora indígena (Banguela y Hernández 2006 y Kelly 2008) con el propósito de facilitar mayor desarrollo de la microarquitectura gastrointestinal por una mayor actividad fermentativa, entre otros eventos, lo que determina mejor estado de salud en los animales (Jensen *et al.* 2010; Zhao *et al.* 2012 y Samanta *et al.* 2013).

Se sugiere que los oligofructanos de agave pueden ejercer influencia positiva en las características de la canal y de la carne de cerdos en crecimiento-acabado, con efecto más marcado que en los rasgos de comportamiento. Se considera que es necesario investigar más para establecer los mejores métodos de uso de los oligofructanos en la crianza del ganado porcino.

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