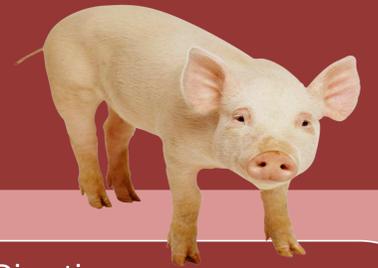


# Effects of Target Training and Enrichment on Swine Behavior

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## Introduction

Target training is a method for training animals that uses positive reinforcement along with the use of a target to shape a desired behavior.

The mission of this study was to introduce pigs to target training in order to see if they would benefit from the enrichment as well as if it would create easier farm management techniques for the producer.

The transport of live animals is known to be stressful and therefore can have a direct impact on animal welfare and on food safety and quality (Genswein, 2008).

## Materials and Methods

Nine pigs from the SUNY Cobleskill farm were included in the study:

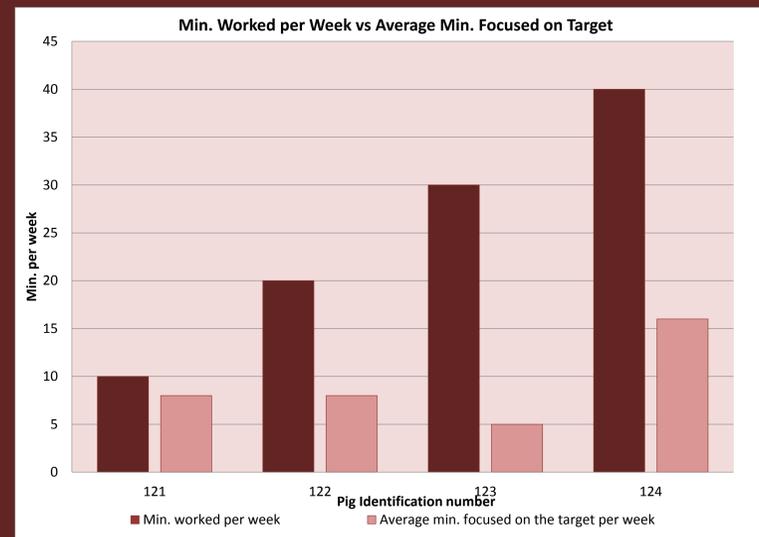
- Five pigs were assigned to the control group (limited human interaction).
- Four pigs were assigned to the experimental group (target training).

The group of four pigs were each target trained at different time intervals for a length of seven weeks.

- Pig #121- worked with once a week.
- Pig #122- worked with twice a week.
- Pig #123- worked with three times a week.
- Pig #124- worked with four times a week.

The two final tests included timed trials to compare the rate in which it took the control group to step up on a scale and also go into a crate, in comparison to how long it took the experimental group to do the same while using the method of target training.

## Results & Discussion



These results indicated that there was no positive correlational between the number of minutes worked with the individual pigs as to the average amount of time they truly focused on the target.

Each pig reacted differently to the target training and the graph indicates that there is no directly proportional relationship.

Scale Test		Crate Test	
Control	Experimental	Control	Experimental
116 -16.22	121 -11.66	116 -18.71	121 -17.52
118 -16.38	122 -18.6	118 -44.31	122 -18.45
119 -32.94	124 -2.3	119 -35.65	124 -20.49
120 -1:16.24		120 -23.49	

These results showed that the experimental group was more efficient at the timed trials and produced faster times than the control group.

## Conclusions

The study concluded that the use of target training involving pigs provided mental stimulation and good animal welfare practices, but did not show a significant difference between the behavior of the control group and experimental group in regards to the scale or crate tests.

There was no significant time decrease in relationship with the target training for creating better time management techniques for the producer.

## Future Direction

The method of target training has proved to be successful with horses in regards to improving the loading experience (Ferguson, 2001). It has been known to be an effective method for stress reduction in equine transportation.

Animal welfare plays a vital role in today's society and is dedicated to providing animals with proper care and treatment. It is important to explore different methods in order to reduce stress to make for a healthier and happier animal.

However, the limited amount of research presented on target training pigs creates a problem for producers due to the lack of information they have on whether or not it would be an effective method.

The knowledge gathered from the study indicates that target training would not benefit the producer due to the factor of increased time consumption. I do not see the use of target training pigs or more research on this subject being done in the future.



## Acknowledgements

The study was accomplished with the assistance of Brianna Hughes, Cynthia Shelley, Kim Tarvis, and Dirk Schubert

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