

Young pigs prefer traditional soybean diet

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Pigs aren't known for being picky, but new research shows they avoid bitter tastes when they can.

In a new study of nursery pig diets, researchers from the University of Alberta offered [pigs](#) different amounts of soybean meal, napus canola meal and juncea canola meal. They found that pigs ate more soybean meal when given a choice.

Napus canola meal and *juncea* canola meal come from rapeseed and mustard greens, respectively. Canola meals are less expensive than soybean meal. If producers can replace soybean meal in swine diets, they could produce pork at a lower cost.

In a presentation at the 2013 ADSA Midwest Branch / ASAS Midwestern Section Meeting, Dr. Jose Luis Landero said previous studies showed that producers can replace up to 20 percent of soybean meal with napus canola meal without affecting pig performance.

Landero said the drawback to using canola meals is that the feeds naturally contain more glucosinolates. Glucosinolates are [organic compounds](#) that can cause a [bitter taste](#). [Brussels sprouts](#) are high in glucosinolates, for example. A high level of glucosinolates in swine feed could cause swine to eat less.

In recent feeding trials, Landero and fellow researchers set up pens with two feeders. In the first trial, one feeder had a commercial soybean meal [diet](#), and the other feeder had a percentage of *napus* or *juncea* canola

meal to replace the soybean meal. In the second trial, the control feeder had neither soybean or canola meals, and the test feeder can some percentage of the three meals.

The researchers tested 360 pigs overall. They measured feed preference by dividing the feed intake of the test diet with total feed intake per pen.

According to Landero, the data showed a clear preference for soybean meal over *napus* or *juncea* canola meal. *Juncea* meal was the least favorite choice. Landero hypothesized that that was because *juncea* canola meal contains different types of bitter glucosinolates.

Landero warned scientists and producers to be careful about interpreting feed preferences. Pigs do not normally get a choice of [feed](#), so they would probably still eat a diet with a low level of *napus* or *juncea* canola meal.

More information: Landero's abstract is titled "Feed preference of nursery pigs fed diets with soybean meal, napus canola meal or juncea canola meal." It was presented as part of the Nonruminant Nutrition Nursery Pig Nutrition and Management Oral Session.

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