



Universitat de Lleida

Emisión de amoníaco (NH₃) y gases con efecto invernadero (CH₄ y N₂O) en cerdos en crecimiento: efecto del nivel de proteína y fibra de la ración

Henris Jobany Morazán Nuñez

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Emisión de amoníaco (NH₃) y gases con efecto invernadero (CH₄ y N₂O) en cerdos en crecimiento: efecto del nivel de proteína y fibra de la ración està subjecte a una llicència de [Reconeixement-NoComercial-SenseObraDerivada 3.0 No adaptada de Creative Commons](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/)

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Trade-offs among growth performance, nutrient digestion and carcass traits when feeding low protein and/or high neutral-detergent fiber diets to growing-finishing pigs

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Complete List of Authors:	Morazán, Henris; Universitat de Lleida-Agrotecnio Center, Departament de Producció Animal Alvarez-Rodriguez, Javier; Universitat de Lleida-Agrotecnio Center, Departament de Producció Animal Seradj, Ahmad Reza; Universitat de Lleida-Agrotecnio Center, Departament de Producció Animal Balcells, Joaquim; Universitat de Lleida-Agrotecnio Center, Departament de Producció Animal Babot, Daniel; Universitat de Lleida-Agrotecnio Center, Departament de Producció Animal
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1 *Running Head: CP and NDF effects on pig performance*

2 **Trade-offs among growth performance, nutrient digestion and carcass traits when feeding**
3 **low protein and/or high neutral-detergent fiber diets to growing-finishing pigs¹**

4
5 H. Morazán, J. Alvarez-Rodriguez², A.R. Seradj, J. Balcells, D. Babot

6
7 Departament de Producció Animal. ETSEA, Universitat de Lleida-Agrotecnio Center, Av.

8 Alcalde Rovira Roure 191, 25198 Lleida, Spain

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22 ² Corresponding author: jalvarez@prodan.udl.cat

23 **ABSTRACT**

24 This study evaluated the effects of reducing dietary CP and increasing NDF on growth
25 performance, nutrient digestibility and carcass parameters of lean pigs as a means of reducing the
26 environmental load of slurry. Sixty-four intact male Landrace x Large-White pigs (13.8 ± 2.3 kg
27 of initial BW) were assigned to one of two dietary CP levels (high, **HP** or low, **LP**) and one of
28 two NDF levels (high, **HF** or normal, **NF**) in a 2 x 2 factorial design, and subjected to a three-
29 phase feeding program from 6 to 21 wk of age (15 to 110 kg of BW). The diets had similar ME,
30 total lysine content and ideal AA ratio. Pigs fed HP diets had the highest ADG and BW from 12
31 wk of age ($P < 0.05$), which was associated with a G:F ratio that was significantly higher than in
32 the LP treatment ($P < 0.05$). Dietary NDF did not affect significantly the ADG or G:F of pigs (P
33 > 0.05). The overall fecal CP digestibility coefficient was higher in HP groups ($76.5 \pm 0.75\%$),
34 than it was in the LP groups ($73.2 \pm 0.75\%$, respectively), independent of the dietary NDF level.
35 Fecal CP digestibility coefficient did not vary significantly between 11 and 16 wk of age (73.8
36 vs. $73.6 \pm 0.72\%$, $P < 0.01$) but it was significantly higher at 21 wk of age ($77.3 \pm 0.72\%$, $P <$
37 0.001). Low dietary CP reduced NDF digestibility in pigs fed diets that had a normal NDF level
38 (LP-NF: 45.0%), but not in pigs that were fed a high NDF diet (LP-HF: 54.8%), compared to
39 pigs fed HP diets (HP-NF: 54.6%, and HP-HF: $58.3 \pm 1.09\%$). Low dietary CP increased the
40 fecal output at 21 wk of age ($P < 0.001$) and high dietary NDF increased fecal output from 16 wk
41 of age ($P < 0.001$). The slurry pH was higher in the HP groups than it was in the LP groups (7.42
42 vs. 7.18 ± 0.085 , $P = 0.05$), but the level of dietary NDF did not alter the pH of slurry ($P = 0.66$).
43 The economic margin (diet cost minus carcass income) was lower in the LP group than it was in
44 the HP group (reference = 100%; 105.9 vs. $129.6 \pm 5.5\%$; $P = 0.004$), but dietary NDF and
45 economic outcome were not correlated (111.5 vs. $123.9 \pm 5.5\%$, $P = 0.12$). In conclusion, adding
46 free AA to reduce dietary CP is unlikely to have a significant effect on growth performance up to
47 11 wk of age; thereafter, however, it would be appropriate to increase dietary NDF at a constant
48 energy density to avoid impaired growth performance, excess carcass fatness, and decreased
49 economic margin.

50 **Key words:** dietary manipulation, feed efficiency, economic performance, swine

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INTRODUCTION

53 To increase lean growth rate and G:F, intensively managed growing-finishing pigs are fed
54 diets that are rich in essential AA. Thereby, dietary fiber is reduced to improve energy density
55 and avoid decreased ADFI and carcass yield, although a minimum amount of fiber might be
56 necessary to maintain intestinal peristalsis and to avoid gut ailments (e.g. stomach ulcer and
57 rectum prolapse; FEDNA, 2006).

58 Phase feeding programs are commonly used in rearing growing-finishing pigs as a means of
59 meeting animal requirements accurately and preventing nutrient waste (Alvarez-Rodriguez et al.,
60 2013). In Spain, the most common feeding protocol for growing-finishing pigs is a three-phase
61 program that reduces dietary CP from 17.1% (19 kg of BW) to 15.6% (108 kg of BW) (Agostini
62 et al., 2013). However, feeding programs that minimize nutrient excretion without causing
63 detrimental effects on growth performance and carcass traits have yet to be developed.

64 Dietary CP restriction reduced heat production, which in turn increased the efficiency of
65 metabolic utilization of energy (Le Bellego et al., 2001), but moderate increases in dietary fiber
66 did not influence that these traits (Le Goff et al., 2002). Furthermore, feedstuffs that contain
67 fermentable fiber (e.g. sugar-beet pulp) can shift the balance of nitrogen excretion from urine to
68 feces (Zervas and Zijlstra, 2002) by binding nitrogen into microbial protein (Bindelle et al.,
69 2009). Most of those studies, however, were performed over short periods (e.g. 25 to 40 kg of
70 BW, or 50 to 70 kg of BW). To test the hypothesis that the observed response does not vary
71 significantly during the fattening period, an integrated assessment is needed. The objective of this
72 study was to evaluate the effects of reducing dietary CP and increasing NDF by adding sugar-
73 beet pulp on growth and carcass performance, and nutrient digestibility of lean pigs from 6 to 21
74 wk of age (15 to 110 kg of BW).

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

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All procedures were carried out under Project Licence CEEA 03/01-10 and approved by the in-house Ethics Committee for Animal Experiments at the University of Lleida. The care and use of animals were in accordance with the Spanish Policy for Animal Protection RD53/2013, which meets the European Union Directive 2010/63 on the protection of animals used for experimental and other scientific purposes.

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Animals, diets and experimental design

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Sixty-four crossbred 6-wk-old intact male pigs (mean initial BW= 13.8 kg, SD = 2.29 kg) were used in the experiment, which was carried out in the cool-warm season (March-June 2012) and lasted 105 d. All the pigs were the progeny of Large-White sires and Landrace dams (Nucleus S.A.S., Le Rheu, France). Pigs were housed in 55% concrete slatted-floor pens (2.1 × 2 m) in a controlled-environmental barn [from 6 wk to 11 wk of age: 23.9 ± 2.4°C and 52.3 ± 13.9% relative humidity (RH), from 12 wk to 16 wk of age: 21.7 ± 2.5°C and 67.5 ± 10.3% RH, and from 17 wk to 21 wk of age: 25.9 ± 3.4°C and 60.5 ± 11.1% RH] and were randomly assigned to one of 16 pens (4 pigs/pen, with a space allowance of approximately 1 m²/pig), based on their initial BW.

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The effects of two dietary CP concentrations (High or Low) and two NDF concentrations (Normal or High) were assessed in a 2 × 2 factorial design throughout a three-phase feeding program: phase I (from 6 to 11 wk of age), phase II (from 12 to 16 wk of age), and phase III (from 17 to 21 wk of age), with four replicates per treatment. The diets (Table 1 and Table 2) were formulated to be iso-energetic and to meet or exceed the CP and NDF levels recommended by the NRC (NRC, 1998) and Fundación Española para el Desarrollo de la Nutrición Animal

98 (FEDNA, 2006). The diets (milled-ground through a 6 mm screen, which yielded 1-2 mm-sized
99 feed meal) mainly comprised cereals, with soybean meal and/or rapeseed meal as a source of CP,
100 and/or sugar-beet pulp as a source of NDF. To achieve an ideal AA ratio (NRC, 1998), the diets
101 were supplemented with synthetic AA, which ensured that Lys was the first-limiting AA. In
102 addition, diets were fortified to meet vitamin and mineral requirements (FEDNA, 2006) and
103 enzymes (phytases and carbohydrases) were added to improve the digestibility of phosphorus and
104 non-starch polysaccharides.

105 Each pen had an automatic single-space dry feeder in the concrete floor area and a nipple
106 square drinker in the slatted floor area. Throughout the growing-finishing period, pigs had *ad*
107 *libitum* access to feed and drinking water (pH = 8.0, electrical conductivity (EC) = 485 μ S/cm.,
108 sodium concentration = 22.2 mg/L; chloride concentration = 33.7 mg/L). To prevent feed
109 wastage or shortages, the feed drop was adjusted weekly.

110 ***Measurements and calculations***

111 Individual BW and feed consumption per pen were recorded weekly, which were used to
112 calculate the ADG and ADFI of each replicate. Feed wastage was recorded for each replicate
113 weekly. Feed samples were collected at each feeding phase shift for chemical analysis. At the end
114 of each feeding phase, back-fat thickness (BFT) was measured at the P2 position (above the last
115 rib at 6.0 to 6.5 cm from midline), using an A-mode ultrasound device (Renco sonograder 4.2,
116 Renco Corporation, Minneapolis, USA). Energy efficiency was calculated as the ratio between
117 ME intake and the sum of maintenance ME and growth ME based on FEDNA (2013).

118 Thirty-two pigs [8 (two pens) per treatment] were used to assess apparent whole-tract
119 digestibility. In the last week of each feeding phase (11, 16 and 21 wk of age), chromic oxide
120 (Cr_2O_3), an indigestible marker, was homogeneously mixed (2 g/kg DM) with ground feed. After

121 a 5-d adaptation period, fecal samples (approx. 50 g) were collected using rectal stimulation at 8
122 h intervals for 2 d. Fecal samples were stored at -20°C until chromium and proximate chemical
123 analysis (DM, Ash, CP, aNDFom and EE). After thawing, fecal samples from each pig were
124 pooled to produce one grab sample per collection period (11, 16 or 21 wk of age).

125 The apparent whole-tract digestibility of nutrients was calculated using the nutrient-to-
126 marker ratio in the diet and feces, as follows (Equation [1]):

$$127 \quad \text{Apparent digestibility (\%)} = 100 \left[100 \left(\frac{\text{Cr}_2\text{O}_{3,\text{diet}}}{\text{Cr}_2\text{O}_{3,\text{digesta}}} \right) \left(\frac{Z_{\text{feces}}}{Z_{\text{diet}}} \right) \right], \quad [1]$$

128 where Z_{feces} and Z_{diet} are the nutrient concentrations (%) in the feces and in the diet, respectively;
129 and $\text{Cr}_2\text{O}_{3,\text{feces}}$ and $\text{Cr}_2\text{O}_{3,\text{diet}}$ are the concentrations (%) of chromium oxide in the feces and in the
130 diet, respectively.

131 To compare different diets under *ad libitum* feeding conditions, the amount of nutrients
132 digested were estimated from whole-tract digestibility coefficients and ADFI.

133 The slurry collection system was a shallow pit (maximum depth = 0.5 m) that was drained
134 into a lagoon at two-week intervals. Each shallow pit collected the slurry from four treatment
135 pens. Before draining the pit, excreta production was estimated by using a meter rule to measure
136 the slurry depth, and 1-kg homogeneous samples were collected for analysis of physical and
137 chemical composition.

138 At the end of the experiment, 48 pigs were slaughtered at a commercial abattoir following
139 standard procedures. Feed was withdrawn 18 h before the animals were slaughtered. After the
140 pigs were placed in the slaughterhouse holding pens, they were allowed to rest for 2 h and had *ad*
141 *libitum* access to water but did not have access to feed. The pigs were stunned by CO₂ (Butina
142 ApS, Holbaek, Denmark) using a dip lift system, exsanguinated, scalded, skinned, eviscerated
143 and split down the midline. Hot carcass weight was recorded before the carcass sides were

144 refrigerated in line processing at 2°C. Back-fat thickness was measured 6 cm off the midline
145 between the third and fourth last ribs using the Autofom automatic carcass grading (SFK-
146 Technology, Herlev, Denmark).

147 *Laboratory analysis*

148 Feed and fecal samples were analyzed following recommendations of the AOAC (2000)
149 whereas the slurry samples were analyzed based on the Standard Methods for the Examination of
150 Water and Wastewater (APHA, 1995). All of the samples were analyzed in duplicate for DM
151 (gravimetry at 105°C), Ash (Incineration at 550°C) and N content (Kjeldahl method). Feed
152 samples were analyzed for total lysine (HPLC-Fluorescence), crude fiber (Weende method),
153 starch (polarimetry), acid hydrolyzed ether extract (**AEE**) (Soxhlet method), NDF and ADF
154 contents (sequential procedure, following Van Soest et al. (1991)). Neutral-detergent fiber was
155 assayed with a heat-stable amylase and expressed exclusive of residual ash (aNDFom). The
156 concentration of carbohydrates (**CHO**) in diets and feces was calculated as follows (Urriola and
157 Stein, 2012, Equation [2]):

$$158 \quad \text{CHO} = \text{DM} - (\text{CP} + \text{AEE} + \text{Ash}) \quad [2]$$

159 The slurry was analyzed for bulk density (densimeter), electrical conductivity (EC)
160 (conductometry), pH (electrometry), ammonium-N (volumetric titration), phosphorus
161 (ultraviolet-visible spectroscopy) and potassium (atomic absorption spectrometry).

162 Feed and fecal samples were analyzed for Cr concentration after nitro-perchloric acid (ration
163 5:1) digestion (de Vega and Poppi, 1997) using inductively coupled plasma optical emission
164 spectroscopy (HORIBA Jobin Yvon, Activa family, with AS-500 Autosampler, HORIBA
165 Scientific, Madrid, Spain).

166 *Economic analysis*

167 The economic analysis was based on partial budgeting principles, which only includes the
168 financial components that change in response to a particular decision (e.g. nutritional strategy),
169 only (Warren, 1998). Estimates of the costs and incomes associated with each diet were used to
170 compare the diets in economic terms. The economic evaluation accounted for a reduction in
171 dietary CP and an increase in dietary NDF; therefore, four diets were assessed (HP-HF, HP-NF,
172 LP-NF and LP-HF).

173 Diet cost included feed price (all raw ingredients excluding manufacturing, delivery,
174 financial and overhead costs) and overall pen ADFI in each growing-finishing phase. Carcass
175 price was based on individual carcass weight and the standardized EU classification, which uses
176 lean content (BOE, 2011). The economic gross margin was carcass income minus diet costs. To
177 account for changes in market price over time, diet cost (as-fed basis), carcass income, and
178 economic gross margin were assessed as a proportion of the lowest outcome (shown as 100%).
179 Labor and facility requirements were assumed to be the same for all treatment groups and
180 therefore not considered.

181 *Statistical analysis*

182 The data were analyzed using the SAS statistical software (SAS Institute Inc., Cary, NC,
183 USA). Production indicators (ADFI, BW, ADG, FCR, energy efficiency index and BFT),
184 apparent fecal digestibility coefficients and the amounts of nutrients digested (DM, OM, CHO,
185 CP, NDF and EE) were tested using repeated measures ANOVA (PROC MIXED), based on the
186 following mixed model (Equation [3]):

$$187 \quad Y_{ijklm} = \mu + AGE_i + A_j + CP_k + NDF_l + (AGE_i \times CP_j) + (AGE_i \times NDF_l) + (CP_k \times NDF_l) +$$
$$188 \quad E_{ijklm} \quad [3]$$

189 where Y_{ijklm} = dependent variable, μ = overall mean, AGE_i = age effect (i = 6 to 11 wk, 12 to 16
190 wk, 17 to 21 wk of age), A_j = animal/pen random effect j , CP_k = dietary CP level effect (k = HP,
191 LP), NDF_l = dietary NDF level effect (l = HF, NF), and E_{ijklm} = residual error.

192 Factors that influenced excreta composition and yield were evaluated using a linear model
193 (proc GLM) that considered the same fixed effects (age, dietary CP level, dietary NDF level) and
194 their second-degree interactions. Factors that influenced carcass traits were evaluated using a
195 linear model (proc GLM) that considered the fixed effects of dietary CP level, dietary NDF level,
196 and their interaction effect, and slaughter BW was included as a covariate. Significant differences
197 between carcass classification groups were assessed using the Chi-square test (FREQ procedure
198 in SAS). The economic analysis was evaluated using a linear model (proc GLM) that included
199 the fixed effects of dietary CP level, dietary NDF level and their interaction effect. The
200 experimental unit for the parameters included in the study was the individual animal, with the
201 exception of ADFI and G:F, which used the pen, and the slurry parameters, which used the pit.
202 Variances were unequal; therefore, calculations of the SE and degrees of freedom were based on
203 the Kenward-Roger Method. Differences between least square means were assessed using the
204 Tukey test. Values are presented as least square means \pm SE. The level of significance was set at
205 0.05. Second degree interaction effects were retained in the models and they are specifically
206 commented in the text if they reached statistical significance.

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208

RESULTS

Growth performance

210 There interaction between dietary CP and NDF effects on production parameters was not
211 significant ($P > 0.05$); thus, both factors influenced the ADFI, BW and growth efficiency of

212 Landrace x Large-White pigs independently. Dietary CP did not have a significant effect on
213 ADFI ($P > 0.05$; Table 3); however, from 17 to 21 wk of age, elevated dietary NDF reduced
214 ADFI ($P < 0.05$). Dietary CP had a significant effect on the development of pig BW throughout
215 the growing-finishing period ($P < 0.001$). Pigs fed HP diets grew faster from 12 to 21 wk of age
216 ($P < 0.05$), which was associated with higher G:F and energy use efficiency than did pigs fed the
217 LP diet ($P < 0.05$); however, dietary NDF level did not have a significant effect on pig growth,
218 G:F, or energy use efficiency ($P > 0.05$).

219 *In vivo* BFT was not affected by dietary CP ($P = 0.77$) or NDF ($P = 0.79$) throughout the
220 growing-finishing period (data not shown); however, from 12 to 21 wk of age, mean BFT
221 increased steadily from 4.6 to 11.1 ± 0.19 mm ($P < 0.001$).

222 ***Whole-tract digestibility coefficients of nutrients***

223 The interaction between dietary CP and NDF effects did not have a significant on the
224 apparent fecal DM, OM, AEE and CHO digestibility throughout the growing-finishing period (all
225 with $P > 0.07$); therefore the effects of dietary CP and NDF acted independently (Table 4).

226 Low dietary CP decreased the fecal digestibility of DM and CHO at wk 11 of age ($P < 0.05$),
227 but not thereafter ($P > 0.10$). Dietary CP reduction decreased the fecal AEE digestibility
228 coefficients at 11 wk and 21 wk of age ($P < 0.05$).

229 Pigs fed the high fiber (HF) diets had higher whole-tract DM digestibility coefficients at 11
230 wk and 16 wk of age ($P < 0.05$) and had higher AEE digestibility than did pigs fed the normal
231 fiber (NF) diets ($P < 0.05$). In contrast, elevated dietary NDF reduced CHO digestibility at 21 wk
232 of age ($P < 0.05$).

233 The combination of dietary CP and NDF level influenced the apparent NDF digestibility
234 coefficient ($P = 0.007$; Figure 1). In pigs fed diets that had normal NDF levels, dietary CP

235 reduction reduced NDF digestibility (LP-NF: 44.99%) compared to pigs fed a HP diet (HP-NF:
236 54.56%, and HP-HF: $58.34 \pm 1.09\%$); however, a reduction in NDF digestibility did not occur in
237 animals fed a high-NDF diet (LP-HF: 54.80%).

238 The whole-tract CP digestibility coefficient did not differ between 11 wk and 16 wk of age
239 (73.8 vs. $73.6 \pm 0.72\%$) but it was significantly higher at 21 wk of age ($77.3 \pm 0.72\%$, $P <$
240 0.001). Conversely, the apparent NDF digestibility coefficient was higher at 11 wk and 16 wk of
241 age than it was at the end of the finishing period (53.6 and 54.6 vs. $51.2 \pm 0.94\%$, respectively; P
242 < 0.05).

243 *Amount of nutrients digested through the digestive tract*

244 At wk 11 of age, the amount of DM and OM digested did not differ significantly between
245 the two dietary CP levels ($P > 0.10$), but the amount of CHO digested was higher in the LP
246 groups than it was in the HP treatments ($P = 0.04$). At 21 wk of age, the amounts of DM, OM,
247 and CHO digested were higher in pigs fed the LP diets than it was in those fed the HP diets ($P <$
248 0.05). Throughout the growing-finishing period, dietary CP restriction did not have a significant
249 effect on the amount of AEE digested ($P > 0.10$).

250 High NDF diets reduced the amount of DM, OM and CHO digested at 21 wk of age ($P <$
251 0.05), but they increased the digestion of dietary AEE at 16 and 21 wk of age ($P < 0.05$). The
252 interaction between dietary CP and NDF affected the amount of CP digested (g/d) ($P = 0.02$; Fig.
253 1). Pigs fed HP diets digested more CP when dietary NDF was at a normal level (HP-NF: 327.2 g
254 CP/d) than when they were fed a diet high in dietary fiber (HP-HF: 311.1 ± 5.37 g CP/d, $P <$
255 0.05). Pigs fed LP diets digested the least amount of CP (LP-NF 252.6 g CP/d and LP-HF 260.6
256 ± 5.37 g CP/d). The average amount of CP digested increased linearly from 11 wk to 21 wk of
257 age (242.3 , 331.8 and 348.7 ± 4.58 g/d, $P < 0.001$).

258 There interaction between dietary CP and NDF on the amount of NDF digested (in g/d) was
259 not significant ($P = 0.24$); thus, pigs fed diets that had normal NDF content had the lowest
260 amount of NDF digested ($P < 0.05$), independent of dietary CP level. The average amount of
261 NDF digested was lower at 11 wk of age than it was at 16 and 21 wk of age (128.3 vs. 226.0 and
262 230.0 ± 3.83 g/d, respectively; $P < 0.05$).

263 *Slurry composition and yield*

264 At 11 wk of age, neither dietary CP nor NDF levels had a significant effect on fecal output
265 (based on DM) (Fig. 2; $P > 0.10$); however, low dietary CP produced higher fecal output at 21
266 wk of age ($P < 0.001$). High dietary NDF induced elevated fecal output at 16 wk and 21 wk of
267 age ($P < 0.001$). Slurry density and EC did not differ before 16 wk of age ($1,015 \pm 5$ kg/m³ and
268 14.72 ± 1.42 dS/m) but they were significantly higher at 21 wk of age ($1,029 \pm 4$ kg/m³ and 18.37
269 ± 1.15 dS/m). In addition, density and EC were highest in the slurry from pigs fed a high CP and
270 high NDF diet ($P = 0.003$ and $P = 0.002$, respectively; Fig. 3). The slurry from pigs fed HP diets
271 had higher pH than did the slurry from pigs fed LP diets (7.42 vs. 7.18 ± 0.08 , $P = 0.05$), but the
272 slurry pH did not vary significantly with the level of dietary NDF or growth period ($P = 0.07$ y P
273 $= 0.66$, respectively). Neither the levels of dietary CP and NDF, nor the growth period were
274 correlated with the concentrations of the main macronutrients (N, P and K) in the slurry (average
275 organic N = 37.5 ± 10.1 g/kg DM, NH₄-N = 52.6 ± 13.6 g/kg DM, P = 42.6 ± 2.1 g/kg DM and K
276 = 62.5 ± 12.3 g/kg DM; all with $P > 0.08$).

277 *Carcass traits*

278 The interaction effect of CP and NDF on carcass traits was not significant ($P > 0.25$); thus,
279 the two factors influenced these traits independently. Neither dietary CP nor NDF had a
280 significant effect on carcass yield or carcass classification based on the Spanish National

281 Standard (Table 5); however, BFT (measured between 3rd to 4th last ribs) was highest in pigs fed
282 low CP diets ($P < 0.001$) or high NDF diets ($P = 0.03$).

283 *Economic evaluation*

284 The interaction between dietary CP and NDF level had a significant effect on diet cost ($P =$
285 0.04 ; Fig. 4). The diet that had low CP and high NDF had a significantly lower cost than did the
286 diet that had high CP and high NDF ($P = 0.02$), however, the other two diets (LP-NF and HP-NF)
287 did not have a significant effect on diet cost ($P > 0.10$).

288 There interaction between dietary CP and NDF did not have a significant effect on carcass
289 income and economic gross margin ($P > 0.60$). Pigs fed LP diets had reduced carcass income
290 (118.9 vs. $104.6 \pm 3.4\%$; $P = 0.004$) and economic margin (129.6 vs. $105.9 \pm 5.5\%$; $P = 0.004$)
291 compared to pigs fed HP diets; however, the level of dietary NDF did not have a significant
292 effect on carcass income (115.2 vs. $108.3 \pm 3.4\%$, $P = 0.15$) or economic margin (123.9 vs. 111.5
293 $\pm 5.5\%$, $P = 0.12$).

294 **DISCUSSION**

295 *Effect of lowering dietary CP by incorporating AA in feed*

296 Although the ADFI of intact male Landrace x Large-White pigs did not differ significantly
297 between the two levels of dietary CP, from 12 wk to 21 wk of age the growth performance of
298 pigs fed low CP diets was lower than that of the pigs fed HP diets, which led to a 17.8% (12 to
299 16 wk of age) and 14% (17 to 21 wk of age) difference in G:F. Thus, the efficiency of energy use
300 for maintenance and gain was reduced, concomitantly. In dose-response trials that used Large
301 White \times Landrace crosses (from 45 to 95 kg of BW), reductions in dietary CP to 122.5 g/kg
302 (Carpenter et al., 2004) or 140 g/kg (Madrid et al., 2013) did not reduce significantly the ADFI,
303 ADG and G:F. Some studies have shown that growth performance was reduced when pigs were

304 fed diets that contained <120 g/kg CP, which led to one or more AA becoming limited in the diet
305 (Figuerola et al., 2002). Recently, Gloaguen et al. (2014) suggested that dietary N requirements
306 should be expressed as the minimum amount of dietary N:Lys that is required to maintain growth
307 in pigs so that non-protein N, dispensable AA and indispensable AA requirements would be
308 accounted for. Their study showed that the optimal digestible N relative to SID Lys was between
309 19.1 g/kg and 20.4 g/kg. In the present study, low CP diets led to digestible N:SID Lys ratio of
310 23.0 to 30.5 g/kg. Yet, growth performance was impaired, which suggests that, although the low
311 CP diets in our study were formulated to have the ideal protein balance, some AA can limit
312 protein deposition. Indeed, the recent Spanish guidelines for swine feed formulation have been
313 modified to include recommendations for lean well-conformed genotypes (FEDNA, 2013),
314 which might respond positively to an increase in nutrient supplies. Assuming that lysine is the
315 first limiting AA and ideal protein balance may be maintained, the level of dietary Lys should be
316 >9.1 g/kg from 12 wk to 16 wk of age, and >6.7 g/kg from 17 wk to 21 wk of age so that
317 optimum growth performance can be allowed.

318 In our study, lowering dietary CP reduced fecal **AEE** digestibility at some points in the
319 growth process (11 wk and 21 wk of age), but the amount of **AEE** digested did not differ
320 significantly between treatments because the pigs fed low CP diets had slightly numerically
321 higher ADFI than did the pigs fed HP diets, which led them to digest more DM at 21 wk of age
322 compared to their counterparts fed high CP diets. This may be explained by an improvement of
323 the non-structural carbohydrate fraction (e.g. starch) digestion, given that the amount of AEE
324 digested did not differ between treatments and the amounts of CP and NDF digested were lower
325 in pigs fed low CP diets. The pH of slurry from pigs fed low CP diets was lower than that of the

326 slurry from pigs fed high CP diets, and low pH mitigates the release of ammonia (Morazán et al.,
327 2014).

328 In our experiment, dietary CP manipulation did not have a significant effect on carcass yield,
329 but it did increase BFT and therefore, carcass value (which is primarily based on its lean content)
330 decreased slightly. Other studies have reported similar results (e.g. Kerr et al., 1995, 2003;
331 Madrid et al., 2013; Wood et al., 2013), but they did not explanations for the results. Assuming
332 that pig's lean growth potential and dietary protein:energy ratio are the primary factors that
333 influence the rates of protein and lipid deposition, the increase in BFT might be a result of more
334 efficient utilization of energy because of a reduction in heat loss through catabolism and urinary
335 excretion of excess dietary N (Kerr et al., 2003; Madrid et al., 2013). Alternatively, reduced
336 productive performance might have been because the reduction in dietary CP did not allow the
337 required dietary ratios of sulfur AA and threonine relative to lysine , which increase with pig's
338 age (Tuitoek et al., 1997). Although low CP diets can reduce nitrogen emissions and improve
339 eating quality simultaneously (Wood et al., 2013), the economic margins that result under current
340 market conditions make this dietary manipulation an infeasible nutritional strategy.

341 ***Effect of increasing dietary NDF by adding sugar-beet pulp***

342 In the present study, high dietary NDF reduced ADFI at the end of the finishing period, but it
343 did not reduce the G:F ratio or energy efficiency, although carcass yield tended to be reduced and
344 BFT increased. It has been hypothesized that dietary fiber does not have a significant effect on
345 growth performance, which implies that pigs can tolerate a wide range of dietary fiber levels, if
346 dietary energy density is adequate (Baird et al., 1975; Beaulieu et al., 2009; Gutiérrez et al.,
347 2013). In our study, the slight decrease in carcass yield might have occurred because of an

348 increase in intestinal content and/or increased organ development, although the effect was
349 negligible after the usual pre-slaughter fasting periods (12 to 24 h) used (Santomá, 1997).

350 The effect of dietary NDF on growth performance and carcass traits might be conditioned by
351 the diet CP level, because adding extra dietary AA above requirements to pigs fed low CP and
352 high NDF (from ethanol co-products sources) diets increased carcass leanness, but reduced
353 growth performance (ADFI and ADG) (Jha et al., 2013). In fact, high fiber intake increases
354 threonine requirements because this AA is a main constituent of mucin protein, which can be
355 secreted into the intestinal lumen as a function of fermentable fiber flow (Zhu et al., 2005).

356 Increasing dietary NDF did not lower slurry pH (see also Shriver et al., 2003); however,
357 some studies have shown that high fiber diets can reduce excreta pH (Lynch et al., 2008). In our
358 study, fecal output was highest in pigs that were fed a high soluble fiber diet. Inevitably,
359 increased intake of dietary fiber influences bowel habits because of the mechanical action and
360 water-holding properties of fiber, which increases the bulk of the colon and feces (Bach Knudsen
361 and Hansen, 1991).

362 Although an increase in dietary NDF led to a higher DM digestibility coefficient at 11 wk
363 and 16 wk of age, the amount of DM, OM and CHO digested at the end of the finishing period
364 was lowest in high NDF diets. In addition, an increase in dietary NDF led to concomitant
365 increase in apparent fecal AEE digestibility. Noblet and Shi (1993) reported a curvilinear
366 relationship between dietary AEE and apparent fecal AEE digestibility, which is reduced when
367 the fiber content of the diet is >200 g NDF/kg. In our study, the fiber content of HF diets was
368 below that threshold. Furthermore, the use of a basal diet composed of natural ingredients that
369 contained dietary fiber (barley, wheat and soybean meal) and dietary lipids might have

370 diminished the potential negative impact of dietary fiber from sugar-beet pulp on nutrient
371 digestibility.

372 An increase in dietary NDF did not trigger remarkable differences in the carcass
373 classification based on lean content; therefore, this dietary manipulation did not have detrimental
374 effects on carcass income or economic margin, at least when the CP level in the diet was kept
375 high.

376 *Interaction effects of lowering dietary CP and increasing dietary NDF*

377 In our study, the interaction effect of dietary CP and NDF did not have a significant effect on
378 growth performance and carcass parameters; thus, reducing dietary CP has similar effects on
379 most of the studied traits, independent of the level of dietary NDF. In addition, the effects of
380 dietary NDF on productive parameters were also independent of the level of dietary CP. In
381 weaned piglets (9-18 kg BW) (Hermes et al., 2009) fed wheat bran and sugar-beet pulp, and in
382 growing-finishing pigs (30-115 kg BW) fed ethanol byproducts as fiber sources (Jha et al., 2013),
383 dietary CP and NDF affected ADFI and growth performance, independently.

384 Nevertheless, an increase in dietary NDF without a reduction in dietary CP led to a decrease
385 in whole-tract apparent CP digestion and an increase in the amount of DM excreted, which was
386 reflected by the physico-chemical characteristics of slurry (EC and density). Adding fiber to the
387 diet increases N retention in the large intestine, which increased microorganism growth, but leads
388 to an increase in fecal N output (Malmlöf and Hakansson, 1984). The influence of dietary fiber
389 on CP digestibility might be mediated by the flow of fermentable carbohydrates into the large
390 intestine, which in turn increases microbial growth and might induce the secretion of blood urea
391 into the large intestine for microbial protein synthesis (Shriver et al., 2003).

392 In our study, an increase in dietary NDF (170 g NDF/kg in HF diets by including 50 g/kg of
393 sugar-beet pulp and the cell wall contribution of the cereals used) had a negative effect on
394 apparent fecal CP digestibility when the feed had high CP (175 g CP/kg), but not when the feed
395 had low CP (125.5 g CP/kg). Some studies found that the negative correlation between whole-
396 tract CP digestibility and dietary fiber content (200 g/kg of sugar-beet pulp, which resulted in 185
397 g NDF/kg) was independent of dietary CP level (200 vs. 150 g CP/kg) (Lynch et al., 2008; in
398 pigs from 75 to 95 kg of BW), while others found a smaller but yet significant reduction in
399 whole-tract CP digestibility because of a high fiber content (177 g NDF/kg) in low CP diets (157
400 g CP/kg) (Zervas and Zijlstra, 2002; in pigs from 25 to 40 kg of BW).

401 Elevated dietary NDF can reduce apparent CP digestibility because of increases in
402 endogenous losses of AA (Schulze et al., 1994). In turn, dietary fat can increase apparent CP
403 digestibility (Imbeah and Sauer, 1991) because it reduces digesta passage rate and, thereby,
404 allows more time for proteolytic enzymes to hydrolyze dietary proteins (Kil et al., 2013), without
405 affecting endogenous losses of AA (de Lange et al., 1989). Therefore, in our study, the high AEE
406 content of the HF diets in phase II (12 to 16 wk of age) and III (17 to 21 wk of age), which was
407 necessary to allow an iso-energetic formulation, might have compensated for any negative effects
408 of dietary NDF on CP digestion.

409 Diet cost, carcass income and economic margin were lowest when the diet combined low CP
410 and high NDF levels. A reduction from 190 g/kg down to 123 g/kg in feed CP might be achieved
411 by substituting soybean meal and extruded soybean (from 197 kg/t down to 70 kg/t) by cereals
412 and synthetic AA (lysine, threonine, methionine, tryptophan and valine), which reduces feed
413 costs concomitantly (García-Launay et al., 2014). In our study, a reduction in dietary CP did not
414 reduce the feed cost when the NDF level was at normal range; however, formulating low CP feed

415 without an increase in the NDF level was a useful means of counterbalancing the deleterious
416 effects of low CP on economic margin.

417 In conclusion, reducing dietary CP and adding synthetic AA to the feed did not affect the
418 growth performance of pigs from 6 wk to 11 wk of age; thereafter, however, to avoid impairing
419 production parameters and excess carcass fatness in pigs from 12 wk to 21 wk of age it was more
420 feasible to increase dietary NDF and maintain a constant energy density. An increase in dietary
421 NDF in low CP feed did not reduce whole-tract CP digestibility, which suggests that this dietary
422 manipulation would only be useful for shifting the balance of nitrogen excretion from urine to
423 feces at the high dietary CP levels. Although the low CP and high NDF diet was least expensive,
424 to avoid detrimental effects on the economic margin of growing-finishing pigs, a reduction in
425 dietary CP should not be coupled with an increase in dietary NDF.

426

427

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549 **Table 1.** Ingredients and additives (g/kg) of the three-phase experimental diets, differing in CP content (high, HP vs. low, LP) and/or
 550 NDF content (normal, NF vs. high, HF) from 6 to 21 wk of age.

Item	Feeding phase											
	I (6 to 11 wk of age)				II (12 to 16 wk of age)				III (17 to 21 wk of age)			
	HP		LP		HP		LP		HP		LP	
	NF	HF	NF	HF	NF	HF	NF	HF	NF	HF	NF	HF
Barley	267	193	203	253	276	297	268	301	274	217	253	398
Soybean meal, 47% CP	265	266	217	199	246	186	156	102	226	114	90	16
Sorghum	260	52	151	59	205		227	-	200	-	101	-
Wheat	152	379	375	382	205	296	288	298	199	201	396	201
Rapeseed meal 00	-	-	-	-	-	70	-	78	-	100	-	81
Maize	-	-	-	-	-	16	-	95	60	173	101	152
Sunflower meal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	80	-	36
Sugar beet pulp	-	53	-	50	-	53	-	50	-	50	-	50
Soybean oil	-	3.1	-	3.2	-	8.6	-	6.9	-	9.9	-	8.7
Blended animal-vegetable fat 3/5	31	30	31	31	31	40	30	40	23	40	31	40
Calcium carbonate	8.9	2.8	-	2.0	5.9	2.5	0.8	0.8	7.0	4.3	13.5	4.2
Monocalcium phosphate	5.5	9.0	9.1	8.1	6.3	6.1	7.5	7.1	4.2	3.4	6.3	5.5
Sepiolite	-	-	-	-	8.4	4.1	4.2	3.3	-	-	-	-
Vitamin-mineral premix ¹	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5
Rehydra Pro [®] (organic acids and surfactant)	-	-	-	-	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	-	-	-	-
Sodium chloride	2.1	1.8	2.1	2.1	1.9	2.0	2.1	1.9	2.2	1.9	2.2	1.9
L-Lys, (CP 50%)	3.57	2.51	3.66	1.63	-	-	1.40	0.90	-	-	1.53	1.40
DL-Met, 88%	0.50	1.60	-	1.73	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
L-Thr	0.30	1.10	3.96	1.22	-	5.29	-	-	-	-	-	-
L-Trp	-	1.08	-	1.21	-	-	-	0.82	-	0.50	-	-

551 ¹ The vitamin and mineral premix for pigs between 6 and 11 wk of age (CN-A. Piglets Enz + Phy 0.5%) contained (per kg of complete
 552 diet): 8,000 IU of vitamin A; 800 IU of vitamin D₃; 40 mg of α -tocopherol; 2.4×10^{-2} mg of vitamin B₁₂; 0.8 mg of vitamin B₁; 1.6 mg

553 of vitamin B₆; 4 mg of vitamin B₂; 1.2 mg of vitamin K₃; 16 mg of nicotinic acid; 8 mg of pantothenic acid; 280 mg of choline; 0.08
554 mg of biotin; 0.4 mg of folic acid; 72 mg of Fe (FeCO₃); 0.32 mg of I (KI); 0.16 mg of Co (CoSO₄·7H₂O); 128 mg of Cu
555 (CuSO₄·5H₂O); 23.8 mg of Mn (MnO); 80 mg of Zn (ZnO); 0.24 mg of Se (Na₂O₃Se); 0.264 mg of citric acid; 600 FYT 6-phytase;
556 2,000 BGU of endo-(1,4)- β-glucanase; 4,800 FXU of endo-(1,4)- β-xylanase; 0.264 mg of ethoxyquin.

557 The vitamin and mineral premix for pigs between 12 and 16 wk of age (SETNAMIX™ fattening C/C 0.2% FIT-500 VIT E15)
558 contained (per kg of complete diet): 6,250 IU of vitamin A; 1,920 IU of vitamin D₃; 14.4 mg of α-tocopherol; 1.7 x 10⁻² mg of vitamin
559 B₁₂; 1.44 mg of vitamin B₆; 3.84 mg of vitamin B₂; 17.28 mg of nicotinic acid; 8.64 mg of calcium pantothenate; 36 mg of choline
560 chloride; 16.6 mg of betaine anhydrous; 96 mg of Fe (FeCO₃); 0.96 mg of I (KI); 0.19 mg of Co (2CoCO₃·3Co(OH)₂·H₂O); 14.4 mg of
561 Cu (CuSO₄·5H₂O); 48 mg of Mn (MnO); 105.6 mg of Zn (ZnO); 0.97% CaCO₃; 0.21 mg of Se (Na₂O₃Se); 1.92 mg of butyl-
562 hydroxytoluene; 6.62 mg of citric acid; 0.19 mg of sodium citrate; 192 mg of sepiolite; 480 FTU of 6-phytase; 1.9 g of vitamin mineral
563 premix; 0.5 g of Belfeed B 220® (xylanase) and 2 g of Toxidex® (mycotoxin inhibitor).

564 The vitamin and mineral premix for pigs between 17 and 21 wk of age (NE-Fattening 0.2%) contained (per kg of complete diet): 6,500
565 IU of vitamin A; 2,000 IU of vitamin D₃; 15 mg of α-tocopherol; 1.8 x 10⁻² mg of vitamin B₁₂; 1.5 mg of vitamin B₆; 4 mg of vitamin
566 B₂; 18 mg of nicotinic acid; 9 mg of calcium pantothenate; 37.5 mg of choline chloride; 17.28 mg of betaine anhydrous; 100 mg of Fe
567 (FeCO₃); 1 mg of I (KI); 0.198 mg of Co (2CoCO₃·3Co(OH)₂·H₂O); 15 mg of Cu (CuSO₄·5H₂O); 50 mg of Mn (MnO); 110 mg of Zn
568 (ZnO); 0.97% CaCO₃; 0.22 mg of Se (Na₂O₃Se); 2 mg of butyl-hydroxytoluene; 6.9 mg of citric acid; 0.2 mg of sodium citrate; 200
569 mg of sepiolite; 500 FTU of 6-phytase; 2 g of vitamin mineral premix; 0.5 g of Belfeed B 220® (xylanase) and 2 g of Toxidex®
570 (mycotoxin inhibitor).

571

572 **Table 2.** Energy and nutrient composition of the experimental diets, differing in CP content (high, HP vs. low, LP) and/or NDF
 573 content (normal, NF vs. high, HF) from 6 to 21 wk of age (three-phase feeding program) (g/kg as-fed basis).

Item	I (6 to 11 wk of age)				II (12 to 16 wk of age)				III (17 to 21 wk of age)			
	HP		LP		HP		LP		HP		LP	
	NF	HF	NF	HF	NF	HF	NF	HF	NF	HF	NF	HF
<i>Calculated values</i>												
ME, ¹ kcal/kg			3,300				3,300				3,300	
NE, ¹ kcal/kg			2,425				2,425				2,425	
SID Lys ¹	10.1		8.6		7.9		6.5		7.3		5.0	
Dig N:SID Lys ¹	23.6		23.0		26.1		27.1		30.5		30.2	
SID Met ¹	3.6		3.1		2.5		2.2		2.6		1.9	
SID Met + Cys ¹	5.5		5.0		5.3		4.6		5.4		4.1	
SID Thr ¹	6.8		7.8		8.3		4.5		5.5		3.6	
SID Trp ¹	2.7		2.5		2.0		2.0		2.2		1.3	
<i>Analyzed values</i>												
DM	891.0		887.0		883.0		883.0		890.0		887.0	
CP	197.5		172.0		173.0		151.5		175		125.5	
Total Lys	13.8		11.6		10.3		9.1		10.0		6.7	
NDF	120.0	140.6	123.2	153.7	130.0	173.5	125.7	162.3	122.6	174.7	134.6	166.5
ADF	36.2	40.6	35.4	43.1	44.3	50.7	32.0	51.5	35.0	66.4	30.6	56.3
CF	27.1	25.6	20.7	29.3	27.0	38.6	23.3	38.8	28.3	55.2	25.9	47.1
Starch	380.1	382.9	379.6	398.8	384.0	374.0	444.3	380.2	416.8	360.9	471.9	425.8
AEE ²	49.0	49.7	47.8	47.8	49.2	60.4	44.8	64.2	41.9	66.8	46.1	60.0
Ash	66.1	55.5	48.1	50.7	66.9	44.2	46.0	47.7	46.5	48.2	62.6	46.3
P	6.4	6.6	5.8	6.4	6.1	6.0	5.7	6.1	5.2	5.5	4.8	5.5
K	7.1	7.4	5.5	6.6	6.2	6.0	5.3	5.3	6.0	5.9	4.3	4.5

574 ¹ME, NE and Standardized ileal digestible (SID) AA content calculated according to FEDNA (2010); Dig N = fecal digestible N,
 575 calculated from the analyzed N content, the fecal N digestibility and ileal Lys digestibility of the feed ingredients (FEDNA, 2010).

576 ²AEE = acid hydrolyzed ether extract

577 **Table 3.** Growth performance [BW, ADG, ADFI, G:F and calculated energy efficiency] in growing-finishing pigs as affected by
 578 dietary CP (high, HP vs. low, LP) and/or NDF content (normal, NF vs. high, HF) from 6 to 21 wk of age.

Item	CP		NDF		SEM	P-value	
	HP	LP	NF	HF		CP*Phase	NDF*Phase
ADFI (6 to 11 wk of age), kg/d	1.21	1.26	1.25	1.22			
ADFI (12 to 16 wk of age), kg/d	2.27	2.29	2.33	2.23	0.036	0.3724	0.0426
ADFI (17 to 21 wk of age), kg/d	2.87	2.85	2.94 ^x	2.78 ^y			
Overall ADFI, kg/d	2.12	2.13	2.17 ^x	2.07 ^y	0.029	0.7304	0.0186
Initial BW (at 6 wk of age), kg	13.7	13.9	13.9	13.7			
BW (at 12 wk of age), kg	39.1	38.2	39.2	38.0	1.38	<.0001	0.1055
BW (at 17 wk of age), kg	75.1 ^a	70.5 ^b	74.3	71.4			
Final BW, kg	114.6 ^a	102.8 ^b	110.9	106.5			
ADG (6 to 11 wk of age), g/d	756	718	750	725			
ADG (12 to 16 wk of age), g/d	1,007 ^a	889 ^b	982	915	28.0	0.0012	0.7226
ADG (17 to 21 wk of age), g/d	1,125 ^a	892 ^b	1,030	988			
Overall ADG, g/d	963 ^a	833 ^b	920	876	17.8	<.0001	0.0757
G:F (6 to 11 wk of age), g/g	0.53	0.48	0.52	0.49			
G:F (12 to 16 wk of age), g/g	0.44 ^a	0.38 ^b	0.41	0.40	0.076	0.0131	0.8865
G:F (17 to 21 wk of age), g/g	0.36 ^a	0.30 ^b	0.33	0.32			
Overall G:F, g/g	0.43 ^a	0.37 ^b	0.40	0.39	0.055	<.0001	0.3707
ME intake / ME requirements ¹ (6 to 11 wk of age)	1.02	1.01	0.99	1.05			
ME intake / ME requirements (12 to 16 wk of age)	1.16 ^b	1.27 ^a	1.21	1.23	0.025	<.0001	0.5293
ME intake / ME requirements (17 to 21 wk of age)	1.26 ^b	1.42 ^a	1.32	1.36			
Overall ME intake / ME requirements	1.15 ^b	1.23 ^a	1.17	1.21	0.019	0.0036	0.1442

579 Within each row, means without a common superscript letters (CP: ^{a, b} and NDF level: ^{x, y}) differ ($P < 0.05$).

580 ¹ ME requirements = ME need for maintenance + ME need for growth (FEDNA, 2013).

581 **Table 4.** Apparent whole-tract digestibility coefficients (%) and amount of nutrients digested (kg or g/d) in growing-finishing
 582 pigs as affected by CP (high, HP vs. low, LP) and/or NDF content (normal, NF vs. high, HF) from 6 to 21 wk of age.

Item	Age (wk)	CP		NDF		SEM	P-value	
		HP	LP	NF	HF		CP*Phase	NDF*Phase
DM digestibility coefficient, %	11	95.33 ^a	94.23 ^b	94.34 ^y	95.22 ^x	0.189	0.0014	0.0063
	16	94.39	94.61	94.10 ^y	94.91 ^x			
	21	94.40	94.00	94.27	94.12			
Digested DM, kg/d	11	1.46	1.52	1.47	1.52	0.031	0.0102	<.0001
	16	2.28	2.35	2.37 ^x	2.27 ^y			
	21	2.43 ^b	2.62 ^a	2.62 ^x	2.43 ^y			
OM digestibility coefficient, %	11	82.75	80.14	80.73	82.16	0.544	0.0744	0.3147
	16	83.34	83.05	82.64	83.75			
	21	84.74	83.71	84.25	84.20			
Digested OM, kg/d	11	1.03	1.11	1.05	1.09	0.028	0.4991	0.0005
	16	1.73	1.74	1.74	1.73			
	21	2.13	2.18	2.25 ^x	2.06 ^y			
Ether extract (EE) digestibility coefficient, %	11	63.34 ^a	54.55 ^b	55.19 ^y	62.70 ^x	1.374	0.011	0.0035
	16	68.88	68.66	63.69 ^y	73.85 ^x			
	21	67.92 ^a	63.80 ^b	57.39 ^y	74.33 ^x			
Digested EE, g/d	11	46.40	43.02	41.57	47.84	2.432	0.4649	<.0001
	16	93.85	94.77	75.87 ^y	112.75 ^x			
	21	110.87	105.94	80.79 ^y	136.02 ^x			
Carbohydrates (CHO) digestibility coefficient, %	11	86.82 ^a	84.37 ^b	85.06	86.14	0.417	0.0319	0.0006
	16	87.15	86.67	86.95	86.87			
	21	87.54	86.80	88.23 ^x	86.13 ^y			
Digested CHO, kg/d	11	0.76 ^b	0.86 ^a	0.78	0.82	0.022	0.0428	<.0001
	16	1.31	1.37	1.36	1.33			
	21	1.61 ^b	1.78 ^a	1.82 ^x	1.58 ^y			

583 Within each row, means without a common superscript letters (CP: ^{a, b} and NDF level: ^{x, y}) differ ($P < 0.05$).

584 **Table 5.** Carcass parameters in growing-finishing pigs as affected by dietary CP (high, HP vs.
 585 low, LP) and/or NDF content (normal, NF vs. high, HF).

Item	CP		NDF		<i>P</i> -value ¹	
	HP	LP	NF	HF	CP	NDF
Carcass wt, kg	75.42	73.61	75.89	75.13	0.71	0.12
Carcass yield, %	71.79	71.02	71.30	70.49	0.66	0.09
BFT (3 rd -4 th last ribs), mm	13.51 ^b	16.06 ^a	14.09 ^y	15.47 ^x	<0.001	0.03
Carcass classification ²	95.7% R, 4.3% O	79.2% R, 20.8% O	87.5% R, 12.5% O	87.0% R, 13.0% O	0.09	0.95

586 Within each row and effect (CP or NDF), means without a common superscript letters (^{a, b}) differ
 587 (*P* < 0.05).

588 ¹Interaction CP x NDF = all the parameters with *P* > 0.25.

589 ²According to SEUROP (BOE, 2011): R = 45.1 to 50% lean meat; O = 40 to 45% lean meat.

590 BFT: Backfat thickness

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609 **Figure Legends**

610 **Figure 1.** Average whole-tract CP digestibility (%) (Fig. 1a), amount of CP digested (g/d) (Fig.
611 1b), NDF digestibility (%) (Fig. 1c), and amount of NDF digested (g/d) (Fig. 1d), as affected by
612 the interaction between dietary CP (high, HP vs. low, LP) and NDF content (normal, NF vs. high,
613 HF) ($P < 0.01$) in growing-finishing pigs from 6 to 21 wk of age. Above each bar, different letters
614 (^{a, b}) indicate significant differences among diets ($P < 0.05$). Error bars = SEM.

615
616 **Figure 2.** Fecal output on a DM basis in growing-finishing pigs as affected by dietary CP (high,
617 HP vs. low, LP) (Fig. 2a) and/or NDF content (normal, NF vs. high, HF) (Fig. 2b). Above each
618 bar, different letters indicate significant differences ($P < 0.05$) between dietary CP level (^{a, b}) or
619 NDF level (^{x, y}). Error bars = SEM.

620
621 **Figure 3.** Density (kg/m^3) (Fig. 3a) and electrical conductivity (EC) (dS/m) (Fig. 3b) of slurry
622 from growing-finishing pigs (6 to 21 wk of age) as affected by the interaction between dietary CP
623 (high, HP vs. low, LP) and NDF content (normal, NF vs. high, HF) ($P < 0.01$). Above each bar,
624 different letters (^{a, b}) indicate significant differences among diets ($P < 0.05$). Error bars = SEM.

625
626 **Figure 4.** Diet cost, carcass income and economic gross margin of different nutritional strategies
627 for growing-finishing pigs differing in dietary CP (high, HP vs. low, LP) and NDF content
628 (normal, NF vs. high, HF). To account for changes in market price over time, the results were
629 assessed as a proportion of the lowest outcome (shown as 100%). ^{a-c} Means without a common
630 letters differ ($P < 0.05$). Error bars = SEM.

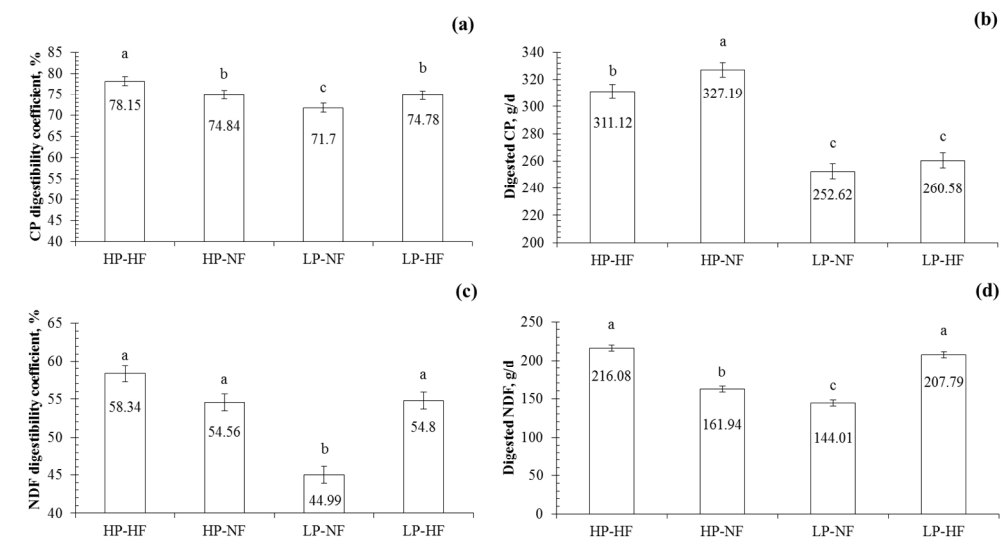


Figure 1. Average whole-tract CP digestibility (%) (Fig. 1a), amount of CP digested (g/d) (Fig. 1b), NDF digestibility (%) (Fig. 1c), and amount of NDF digested (g/d) (Fig. 1d), as affected by the interaction between dietary CP (high, HP vs. low, LP) and NDF content (normal, NF vs. high, HF) ($P < 0.01$) in growing-finishing pigs from 6 to 21 wk of age. Above each bar, different letters (a, b) indicate significant differences among diets ($P < 0.05$). Error bars = SEM.

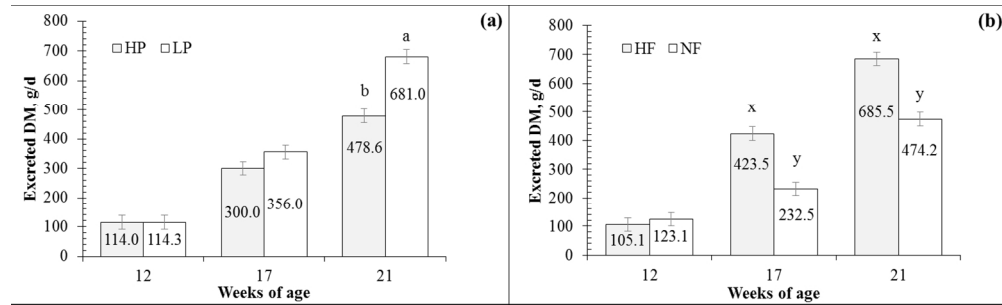


Figure 2. Fecal output on a DM basis in growing-finishing pigs as affected by dietary CP (high, HP vs. low, LP) (Fig. 2a) and/or NDF content (normal, NF vs. high, HF) (Fig. 2b). Above each bar, different letters indicate significant differences ($P < 0.05$) between dietary CP level (a, b) or NDF level (x, y). Error bars = SEM.

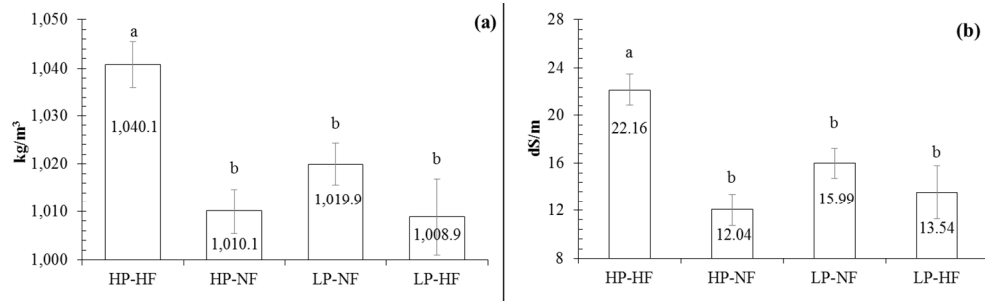


Figure 3. Density (kg/m³) (Fig. 3a) and electrical conductivity (EC) (dS/m) (Fig. 3b) of slurry from growing-finishing pigs (6 to 21 wk of age) as affected by the interaction between dietary CP (high, HP vs. low, LP) and NDF content (normal, NF vs. high, HF) ($P < 0.01$). Above each bar, different letters (a, b) indicate significant differences among diets ($P < 0.05$). Error bars = SEM.

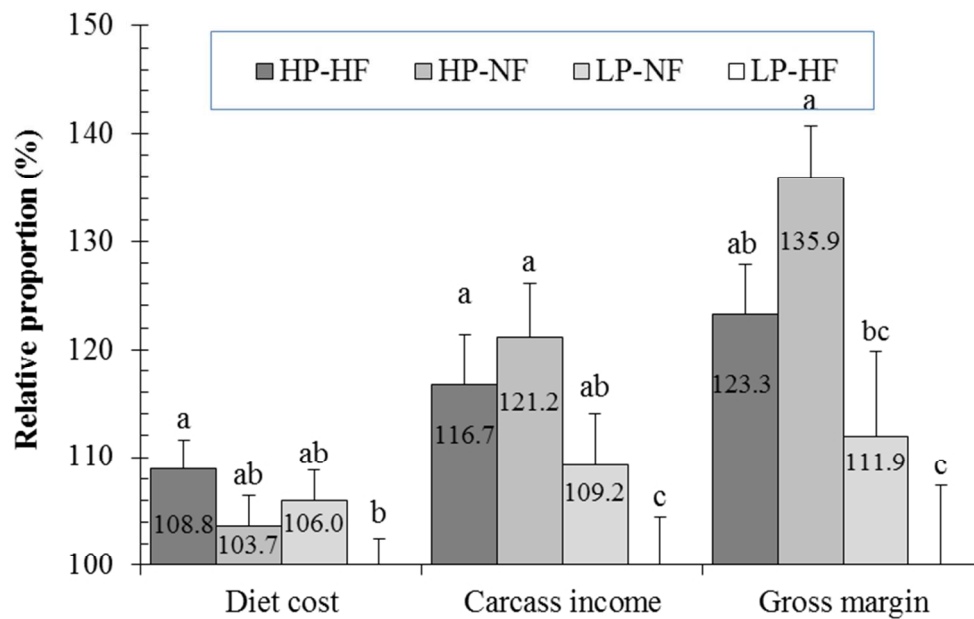


Figure 4. Diet cost, carcass income and economic gross margin of different nutritional strategies for growing-finishing pigs differing in dietary CP (high, HP vs. low, LP) and NDF content (normal, NF vs. high, HF). To account for changes in market price over time, the results were assessed as a proportion of the lowest outcome (shown as 100%). a-c Means without a common letters differ ($P < 0.05$). Error bars = SEM.