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9 **Abstract**

10 Livestock production depends on the utilization of nutrients, and when this is
11 accomplished, there is accelerated momentum toward growth with a low cost-to-feed ratio.
12 Public concern over the consumption of pork with antibiotic residues in animals fed antibiotic
13 growth promoters (AGP) has paved the way for using other natural additives to antibiotics,
14 such as herbs and their products, probiotics, prebiotics, etc. Numerous feed additives are
15 trending to achieve this goal, and a classic example is vitamins and minerals. Vitamins and
16 minerals represent a relatively small percentage of the diet, but they are critical to animal health,
17 well-being, and performance; both play a well-defined role in metabolism, and their
18 requirements can vary depending on the physiological stage of the animals. At the same time,
19 the absence of these vitamins and minerals in animal feed can impair the growth and
20 development of muscles and bones. Most commercial feeds contain vitamins and trace minerals
21 that meet nutrient requirements recommended by National Research Council and animal
22 feeding standards. However, the potential variability and bioavailability of vitamins and trace
23 elements in animal feeds remain controversial because daily feed intake varies, and vitamins
24 are degraded by transportation, storage, and processing. Accordingly, the requirement for
25 vitamins and minerals may need to be adjusted to reflect increased production levels, yet the
26 information presented on this topic is still limited. Therefore, this review focuses on the role
27 and function of different sources of minerals, the mode of action, the general need for micro
28 and macro minerals in non-ruminant diets, and how they improve animal performance.

29 **Keywords:** minerals, swine, growth performance, nutrient value.

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32 INTRODUCTION

33 In the last decade, there has been a significant increase in the efficiency of pork
34 production, which has been reflected in improved offspring growth, better feed conversion, and
35 higher reproductive performance of breeding herds. This type of pork production could change
36 dramatically in the coming years as the need to ensure food safety, minimize environmental
37 impacts, improve animal welfare, and optimize consumer health continues to improve the
38 production efficiency of pork and nutritional quality. Given the magnitude of productivity
39 changes between 2000 and 2010, most herds' basic genetics, management, and nutrition will
40 also change. Besides, many scientists point out the need for macro minerals such as calcium
41 (Ca), zinc oxide (ZnO), copper (Cu), and manganese (Mn) has remained the same; research
42 conducted primarily in the 1950s and 1960s has much to do with modern swine. For example,
43 the National Research Council [1] and the Agricultural Research Council [2] report that animal
44 diet estimating zinc requirements is complex and needs more explanation on interacting factors.
45 After several studies, they suggest that a dietary zinc level of 50 ppm (assuming that dietary
46 calcium does not exceed 0.75%) may be the best option for preventing deficiency and avoiding
47 hyperkeratosis or parakeratosis. In 1987, the Standing Committee on Agriculture [3] studied
48 adequate dietary zinc intake and recommended that 45 mg/kg might be optimal for growing
49 pigs and sows. Later, the National Research Council [4] reiterated that 50 ppm of dietary zinc
50 might be optimal for pigs at any production cycle. Since 2010, we have been using the exact
51 dosage of dietary zinc supplementation, based on studies conducted between 1960 – 1980 with
52 the primary aim of preventing parakeratosis due to zinc deficiency. The same fact withstands
53 for Ca, phosphorus (P), Mn, and Cu. The recommended daily intake of these minerals and the
54 estimated feed intake of pigs of different classes remained the same during the 20 years from
55 1979 to 1998 [1,4].

56 In young pigs, the zinc (Zn) content of the premix is not considered and corresponds
57 to the requirement due to the routine use of 3000 ppm of zinc oxide and the premix to control
58 *E. coli* scours. Considering that Ca, P, Zn, Cu, and Mn also become essential minerals for
59 structural development and physiological functions of growing and breeding pigs (Fig. 1).
60 Since minerals play an essential role in growth and reproduction, their presence can affect the
61 quality of the final product, which ultimately affects human health. In this review, therefore,
62 we would like to discuss the importance of minerals, different sources of mineral supplements,
63 their function and requirements, and how they help to improve pig performance for better
64 productivity.

65 **SOURCE AND FUNCTIONS OF MINERALS IN SWINE NUTRITION**

66 Minerals are essential for the proper growth, productivity, and health of all farm
67 animals (Fig.2). In particular, sodium chloride (NaCl), Ca, P, sulfur, potassium (K), Mn, Fe
68 (iron), Cu, Co, iodine (I), ZnO, Mg (Magnesium), and Se (selenium) serve as essential minerals
69 for sustainable animal development. However, Cu, Co, I, Zn, and Se are considered to be highly
70 toxic when added to livestock diets in excess [5]. Minerals constitute only a tiny portion in pig
71 feed, but significantly improve their growth performance, health status, and productivity.
72 Typically, pigs require fifteen minerals in their diet; however, macro-minerals should be
73 supplied significantly to improve their performance. Such macro-minerals are Ca, P, sodium
74 (Na), chlorine (Cl), K, and Mg [6]. Approximately 5% of a pig's body weight is composed of
75 minerals. Though these minerals are present in most feed grains, some contain inadequate
76 levels to meet the requirements of pigs. Therefore, it is necessary to use additional minerals to
77 balance the diet as they play an essential role in the digestion and structure of chromosomes,
78 nerves, bones, hair, and milk, as well as in the metabolism of proteins, fats, and carbohydrates.
79 It is also essential for most of the body's primary metabolic reactions, making it an important

80 factor in growth, reproduction, and disease resistance. The efficiency of mineral intake always
81 depends on the availability, source, and concentration of minerals used in the diet, as their
82 interactions may vary depending on the health and needs of the individual animal. To date,
83 most pigs are kept in confinement and rely mainly on daily feed, which provides more minerals
84 to meet daily needs, and therefore it should be added to the diet arbitrarily.

85 Mg is considered one of the seven most essential macro-minerals in the diet of
86 livestock because it plays a critical role as a cofactor for more than 300 enzymes [7]. This Mg
87 is widely distributed in green leafy vegetables, nuts, seeds, dried beans, and whole grains [8].
88 It is also found in feed ingredients such as wheat bran, dried yeast, flaxseed, cottonseed, and
89 green pastures. The average Mg content (g/kg DM) in cereals is estimated to be 1.1-1.3 g, while
90 only 3.0-5.8 g in oil and fish meal containing 1.7-2.5 g [9]. Unlike Ca, Mg is readily available
91 to ruminants (grazers) compared to non-ruminants. As for additives, oxides, carbonates, and
92 sulfates are highly available sources of Mg for livestock [10]. Mainly, Mg oxide (MgO) is used
93 as the highest mineral Mg source in feeds, and the MgO usually guarantees adequate uptake of
94 Mg ions. Administration of Mg supplements is a best practice to improve the performance of
95 livestock, especially fertility and yield. Previously, Gao et al. [11] study demonstrated that the
96 inclusion of 150–300 mg/kg Mg supplementation increased the conception rate of sows by 11-
97 15% and shortened the weaning to estrus interval in gilts by nine days.

98 Macro-minerals are a group of mineral elements that animals require in their diet to
99 perform numerous physiological functions. Deficiencies of these elements in the animal's diet
100 can lead to disease or dysfunction and must be addressed immediately. Ca and Mg are
101 nutritionally essential minerals, especially Ca is a divalent extracellular cation, while Mg is an
102 intracellular cation. Therefore, the cellular function of animals must be maintained by precise
103 regulation to achieve better gastrointestinal absorption, renal reabsorption, and exchange with

104 bone tissue in both cases. Most Ca supplements in swine diets are from inorganic sources
105 because of inadequate Ca concentrations in the grain. In recent years, calcium carbonate
106 (CaCO₃) has been used extensively as a source of Ca in swine feed. It is usually obtained from
107 pure limestone deposits (> 95% CaCO₃) with Ca content between 36-38% and low impurities
108 or trace traces of other minerals. These limestones have a granular appearance and are
109 processed (extracted, selected, separated from impurities, coarsely crushed, and ground) and
110 sorted by particle size to be used as a Ca source. Small fractions such as < 1.4 mm (~90%), <
111 1.0 mm (~8-9%), and < 0.5 mm (< 1%) are commonly used in swine feed. Ca readily interacts
112 with various minerals in sediments such as P, sulfur, Zn, Cu, Mg, I, Mn, and Co. The ionic
113 nature of these elements promotes the formation of insoluble complexes that precipitate and
114 hinder their absorption and utilization in the gut. This Ca is considered a macro-mineral
115 because it is present in the diet in amounts greater than 100 ppm. Cereals, oilseed meals, and
116 many other plant components have very high and low Ca concentrations compared to animal
117 proteins such as fish meal, meat and bone meal, and inorganic minerals such as limestone,
118 CaCO₃, and Ca₃(PO₄)₂. Therefore, the demand for Ca has increased in modern sows with
119 larger litters and higher milk production. Previously, Gao et al [11] reported that dietary Ca
120 plays an essential role in the skeletal development of sows in late gestation. However,
121 according to Miller et al [12], dietary calcium concentration in milk and other mineral elements
122 is influenced by diet. In addition, Khoushabi et al [13] reported that higher mineral requirement
123 (Ca) in late gestation affects colostrum synthesis by the mammary gland. In 1990, Mahan [14]
124 said that high performance and prolonged farrowing time in sows are associated with a
125 hypocalcemic response. Lower calcium availability reduces litter size, prolongs farrowing time,
126 leads to more stillbirths, and causes skeletal problems in piglets.

127 Micro-mineral copper has a metabolic response that includes cellular respiration,
128 tissue pigmentation, hemoglobin formation, and connective tissue development. CU is

129 absorbed mainly in the upper gastrointestinal tract, especially the duodenum, but some Cu is
130 absorbed in the stomach. Cu has been reported to have antimicrobial effects when administered
131 at concentrations above pharmacological requirements (100-250 ppm) [15]. It is also an
132 essential component of several metalloenzymes, including cytochrome C oxidase, lysyl
133 oxidase, cytosolic Cu-Zn superoxide dismutase (SOD1), extracellular Cu-Zn superoxide
134 dismutase 3 (SOD3), monoamine oxidase, and tyrosinase [16]. This Cu in pig feed comes from
135 plant or animal ingredients or mineral supplements. The most commonly used cereal grains
136 and their by-products in swine diets contain 4.4 to 38.4 mg/kg Cu on a per-feeding basis.
137 However, the Cu content of individual plant feed ingredients varies depending on variety, soil
138 type, maturity, and climatic conditions during growth [17]. Oilseed meals, including soybean,
139 cottonseed, and flaxseed, generally have higher Cu concentrations than cereal grains [18].
140 Copper in dairy products such as skim milk, lactose, casein, and whey powder ranges from
141 0.10 to 6 mg/kg [19].

142 Minerals can perform various functions on farm animals. They can form the structural
143 components of body organs and tissues, exemplified by Ca, P, and Mg; bones and teeth are
144 exemplified by silicon, while muscle protein is exemplified by P and S. Moreover, Zn and P
145 can provide structural stability to the molecules and membranes they also comprise an
146 electrolyte in body fluids and tissues and are involved in maintaining osmotic pressure, acid-
147 base balance, membrane permeability, and transmission of nerve impulses [20]. Sodium,
148 potassium, chloride, calcium, and magnesium in the blood, cerebrospinal fluid, and gastric
149 juice are the best examples of this physiological function. In addition, they can act as catalysts
150 in enzymes and endocrine systems, as structural components and specific components of
151 metalloenzymes and hormones, or as activators (coenzymes) in these systems. Since the late
152 1990s, the number and diversity of identified metalloenzymes and coenzymes have increased.
153 The activities can be anabolic or catabolic, life-promoting (oxidants), or life-protective

154 (antioxidants) [20]. It can also regulate cell replication and differentiation. Thereby, Ca affects
155 signal transduction, and selenocysteine affects gene transcription.

156 **MINERALS REQUIREMENT FOR PIG PERFORMANCE**

157 Mineral requirements are challenging to determine, and most assessments are based
158 on the minimum amounts needed to overcome deficiencies, not necessarily for productivity or
159 immunity [21]. Several studies have been conducted over the past 40 years to determine the
160 mineral requirements of genotypes and feeding systems that differ significantly from modern
161 commercial swine operations. The EU government has primarily become the benchmark for
162 limiting mineral intake to reduce pollution. As a result, the use of Cu and Zn in pig feeding has
163 been severely restricted recently. However, the industry views these two minerals as cost-
164 effective for promoting growth and reducing post-weaning diarrhea. In 1998, the NRC [4]
165 recommended that 400 mg/kg Mg was optimal for swine. In livestock, diarrhea was the most
166 apparent effect of high Mg intake. However, Van Heugten [22] reported that pigs fed high Mg
167 supplements (i.e., seven times the minimum requirement) had dramatically reduced feed intake
168 and weight gain.

169 Nutritional factors and age influence the Cu requirements in pigs. Newborn pigs
170 typically require 5 to 10 mg Cu per kg of feed for normal metabolism [23]; as pigs age increase,
171 Cu requirements may decrease. However, Kim et al. [24] demonstrate that 75 to 250 mg/kg of
172 Cu supplement could increase growth performance and reduce diarrhea incidence in growing
173 and weaning pigs, respectively. Similarly, Lorenzen and Smith. [25] reported that primiparous
174 and multiparous sows require 10 mg Cu per kg feed supplement during gestation. According
175 to NRC [19], feeding high levels of Cu, i.e., 60 mg Cu per kg, during pregnancy and lactation
176 improves the reproductive performance of sows compared to sows fed diets containing 6 mg/kg
177 Cu (Table 1). However, Cromwell et al [26] found that sows fed diets containing 250 mg/kg

178 Cu from CuSO₄ had lower shedding rates, farrowed larger litters of pigs, and had heavier pigs
179 at birth and weaning compared to sows fed diets without added Cu.

180 **FACTORS THAT AFFECT MINERAL REQUIREMENT IN PIGS**

181 Understanding the principles of genetics, environment, herd health, management, and
182 nutrition is more important for effective and profitable swine production because these sectors'
183 output may touch the production volume and profitability [27]. In addition, numerous factors
184 affect the mineral need of animals, including weather conditions, breeding, the chemical form
185 of elements, and mineral intake. For instance, McDowell [28] addressed that livestock gains
186 weight rapidly during the wet season because energy and protein supplies are adequate, and
187 thus mineral requirements are high but in the dry season, animals with insufficient protein and
188 energy lose weight, which reduces mineral requirements. For successful breeding, pigs require
189 certain minerals. Chromium is required for insulin production, which affects progesterone
190 production and follicle stimulation, and luteinizing hormone. Both hormones are needed to
191 regulate ovulation, which greatly impacts fertility and litter size [29]. Manganese is required
192 for progesterone production, and iron and chromium are required for hormone functions that
193 affect fetal survival during pregnancy. Additionally, breeding sows can often lack mineral
194 intake, especially when tissue reserves are worn-out [29]. Thus, uterine capacity, which
195 determines the number of piglets born, requires an adequate dietary intake of selenium, iron,
196 and chromium. Furthermore, Zn has become an essential nutrient for many physiological
197 processes in the organism, supporting health and good growth and development. The major
198 functions of Zn on a cellular level are to catch free radicals and to prevent lipid peroxidation
199 as part of the antioxidant system. At the same time, zinc deficit in pigs may reduce the pork
200 quality after slaughter and processing [30].

201 **EFFICACY OF MINERALS SUPPLEMENT IN PIGS**

202 Zinc oxide is inexpensive and may be the best alternative to antibiotics to control
203 diarrhea after weaning. Therefore, dietary supplementation with ZnO is commonly used 2 to 3
204 weeks after weaning. However, excessive Zn concentrations in feces are of concern due to the
205 environmental impact. Therefore, many studies have been conducted to evaluate the use of
206 Bioplex™ Zn as a possible substitute for ZnO due to its higher bioavailability. In 2003, Close
207 [21] studied the immune response to pathogens and disease prevention by maintaining healthy
208 epithelial tissue in pigs fed diets containing zinc. However, ZnO is known to alter the diversity
209 of the microbiota in the gastrointestinal tract [31]. In light of efforts to limit or ban the use of
210 antibiotics in swine diets, it is critical to learn more about how zinc affects the gut microbiota
211 and its function; thus, it may contribute to the development of feeding strategies to benefit
212 animals in a cost-effective and eco-friendly environment. Bone is the principal deposit of
213 calcium, containing more than 90% of the body, whereas the remaining 1% is essential for cell
214 metabolism, blood clotting, enzyme activation, and neuromuscular action [32]. In most animals,
215 calcium is absorbed in the duodenum and jejunum [33]. Vitamin D plays a vital role in the
216 absorption and metabolism of calcium and phosphorus [34]. Moreover, calcium absorption is
217 an active and passive process mediated by vitamin D [35]. In pigs, calcium absorption is
218 increased by vitamin D, decreased by high dietary fat content, decreased by acidic dietary pH,
219 and decreased by phyto-P. More recently, calcium carbonate has been widely used as a
220 supplemental calcium source [36] because of its low cost and buffering capacity. Dietary
221 calcium and phosphorus levels have been reported to affect reproduction and, thus longevity
222 of sows [37]. Previous studies have reported that dietary calcium content can affect glucose
223 and lipid metabolism [11].

224 Similarly, Zang et al [38] found that magnesium supplementation significantly
225 shortened the interval between weaning and oestrus in gilts and sows ($P < 0.05$). It also
226 increases the number of piglets born, born alive, and weaned in sows. Digestibility of crude

227 fiber (secondary effect, $P < 0.05$) and crude protein ($P < 0.05$) in gilts and sows was
228 significantly affected by magnesium during late gestation and lactation. Serum prolactin levels
229 in sows and alkaline phosphate activity increased linearly with magnesium supplementation at
230 farrowing and weaning ($P < 0.05$). Magnesium levels in sow colostrum and piglet serum
231 increased after magnesium supplementation ($P < 0.05$). In addition, growth hormone levels in
232 the serum of lactating sow piglets increased linearly ($P < 0.05$). Yang et al [39] reported that a
233 diet supplemented with various calcium sources altered ADFI and partial gut microbial
234 composition in weanling piglets, but had little effect on gut microbial function.

235 Adding 0.015% to 0.03% magnesium to sow diets could positively affect the
236 reproductive parameters and serum mineral content [38]. Besides, sows that have passed three
237 parities exhibit lower mineral content in their blood compared to nonpregnant gilts [40, 41]. As
238 the sow's age increases, Ca and Mg stores in their body may decrease, making sows more
239 dependent on dietary minerals, indicating an average effect and the need for dietary
240 supplementation with high-quality soluble minerals [42]. Thus, adequate nutrition via the
241 placenta is critical for normal fetal development because the maternal-fetal interface acts as a
242 nutrient sensor that coordinates maternal nutrient supply and fetal metabolic needs [43,44].
243 Maternal mineral and vitamin status influence hormonal regulatory pathways linking maternal
244 metabolism to the fetoplacental unit [45]. A calcium-rich diet has been shown to suppress
245 calcitriol levels, thereby controlling lipogenesis and lipolysis. This affects lipid and energy
246 metabolism in sows, fatty acids and triglycerides in the umbilical cord and placenta, and mRNA
247 expression of the SLC2A2, FAS, FAB, CD36, and SCD genes, thereby affecting lipid and
248 energy metabolism in development. Fetus and the downregulation of agouti signaling proteins
249 [46, 47, 10].

250 Feeding 100 to 250 mg/kg Cu to weaning pigs improved ADG and ADFI [48,49].
251 Lower diarrhea incidence and higher feed conversion were also observed when a high
252 concentration of Cu was included in diets for weaning and growing pigs [50]. Adding 60 to
253 250 mg Cu per kg to sows' diets during late gestation and lactation reduces pre-weaning
254 mortality [51]. It increases the weaning weight of pigs (Wallace), presumably due to increased
255 milk production. The higher ADFI in pigs fed Cu may be due to Cu's role in upregulating
256 neuropeptide Y's mRNA expression [52], a neuropeptide considered to stimulate feed intake
257 [53]. One of the suspected mechanisms of Cu to improve growth performance is that Cu can
258 stimulate the activities of enzymes involved in nutrient digestion [54]. Adding high
259 concentrations of Cu increased lipase and phospholipase A activities in the small intestine [55],
260 which may lead to increased uptake of fatty acids and improved growth performance. In
261 addition, Cu alters the 3-dimensional structure of bacterial proteins, which prevents bacteria
262 from performing their normal functions [56]. In a previous study, Sterritt and Lester [57]
263 reported that copper disrupted enzyme structures and functions of bacteria by binding to S- or
264 carboxylate-containing groups and amino groups of proteins. A copper-rich diet did not
265 improve the growth performance of germ-free pigs, but the copper-rich diet increased ADG
266 and ADFI in conventionally raised pigs [58]. In addition, Wang et al [59] found that Cu-
267 enriched diets for weanling pigs decreased the number of enterococci in the stomach and
268 increased the lactobacillus population in the cecum of young pigs. The addition of 150 mg/kg
269 Cu in the form of Cu hydroxychloride to diets for growing pigs also decreased microbial protein
270 concentrations, probably due to the ability of Cu to inhibit the growth of microbes in the
271 digestive tract of pigs [50]. This suggests that the observed improvement in growth
272 performance in pigs fed Cu-supplemented diets is due to better digestibility and the presence
273 of good bacteria (lactobacillus).

274 **CONCLUSION**

275 Dietary mineral concentrations are acceptable as long as the diet is palatable, does not
276 restrict feed intake, and has the advantage of being simple and relatively constant. However,
277 required dietary mineral concentrations are influenced by the efficiency of utilizing organic
278 components in the diet. The total phosphorus requirement of the livestock might increase as
279 production begins, but the proportion in the diet remains the same, while the calcium
280 concentration required increases about 10-fold. In addition, Mg supplementation is essential to
281 enhance farm animals' productive and reproductive performances. Regardless of whether the
282 requirement is expressed in quantity or concentration, it may be significantly affected by factors
283 limiting mineral uptake and utilization, remains debatable, and requires more detailed study.

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Table 1. Requirement level of minerals in swine nutrition			
Minerals	Requirement level	Animals	Reference
Magnesium	400 mg/kg diet	Swine	NRC, 1998 [4]
Copper	5 to 10 mg/ kg diet	Weaning Pigs	Hill et al., 1983 [23]
Copper	5 to 6 mg/kg diet	growing pigs	ARC, 1981 [2]
Copper	10 mg /kg diet	Gestation sows	Lorenzen and Smith, 1947 [25]
Copper	6 mg/kg diet	Lactation sows	NRC, 2012 [18]

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Fig. 1. Health benefits and beneficial application of Micro and Macro-Minerals in non-ruminant.

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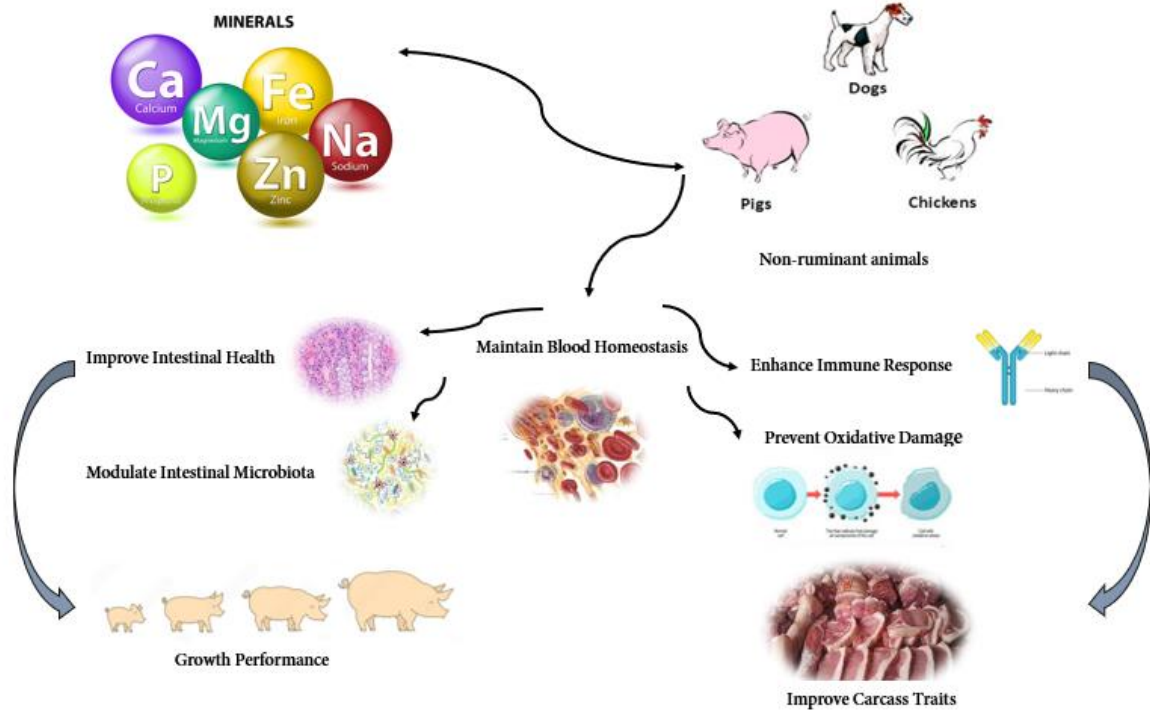


Fig. 2. Schematic view on the mode of action of the microminerals in non-ruminant diets.

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