



AWARENESS AND NEEDS OF PIG FARMERS IN KERALA

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Abstract

A survey study was conducted to evaluate the awareness of pig farmers on scientific pig rearing and management. A well-designed questionnaire and personal interview was used for collecting the information. The results revealed that the farmers knew about deworming, iron injection, sanitation, waste disposal and castration but lacked awareness on vaccination and ectoparasite control. Apart from pig farming, farmers were interested in integrated farming, biogas production, expansion of farm and management through cooperative societies' assistance. Digestive disorder was found to be the major problem in pig farming and piglet mortality was mainly due to 'Mastitis Metritis Agalactia' (MMA) of the dam, scours, crushing and nutritional deficiency. The prime concern of farmers regarding training was on breeding management rather than on health, feeding and meat processing. The constraints in pig production systems were lack of financial support followed by the unavailability of stock and social risk factor.

Key words: *Pig farming, awareness, training, constraints*

Pig farming is a profitable livestock enterprise in Kerala because of food habits and abundant sources of swill. Among the different livestock, pigs are most prolific and contribute

significantly to the economic development and food security. Majority of the pig farmers follow unconventional feeding consisting of organic wastes of animal and plant origin. Though this practice is found cost effective, farmers face many problems like incidence of diseases, lowered performance of dam and nutritional deficiency. The potential pig farming can be exploited by creating awareness among farmers on scientific pig rearing and management, which will ultimately provide gainful income and nutritional security to the society. Hence this survey was conducted to study the awareness of pig farming and problems faced by the farmers in rural areas of Kerala state.

Materials and Methods

A survey work was conducted to study the impact of scientific management practices and health problems encountered in pig rearing in different agroclimatic zones of Kerala. Stratified random sampling method was employed to select 200 farmers from five different agroclimatic zones viz., South, Central, North, High range and Coastal zones. A well-designed questionnaire and personal interview supplemented the survey. The scientific management viz., deworming, vaccination, iron injection, sanitation, control of ectoparasites, waste disposal, castration, health problems, training requirement, interested activities and constraints in pig rearing were evaluated.

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Results and Discussion

Scientific Management Practices

The study on scientific management practices adapted by the pig farmers showed that they lacked awareness (Table 1) in vaccination and control of ectoparasites. But deworming, iron injection, sanitation, waste disposal and castration were scientifically followed in higher proportion among the respondents. This was in close agreement with the results of Harikumar (2001). These results reflect that the scientific practices *viz.* deworming, iron injection, sanitation, waste disposal and castration were seriously attended to, than the preventive measures like vaccination and spraying of ectoparasiticide. This might be due to the awareness of pig farmers on the importance of hygiene on economic production. Moreover, pigs were mainly reared as fatteners and were disposed at eight to ten months of age, hence the farmers were least bothered about the preventive measures.

Apart from the pig farming, farmers showed interest on allied activities like integrated farming, biogas production, expansion of farm and management through cooperative societies' assistance. As early as in 1977, FAO recommended that integration of livestock and fish raising with crop production should be revitalised and reoriented to meet the changing needs of small farmers in Asia. Santhakumar (2000), reported that integrated farming in India was proved to be efficient by adopting simple and easy

technology involving meagre input. The main purpose of integrated farming approach was to enhance the income and to recycle the resources for pig production.

Health Management Practices

The health management practices of pig farmers in different agroclimatic zones (Table 2), revealed that digestive disorder was the major problem in pigs. Piglet mortality was mainly due to 'Mastitis Metritis Agalactia' (MMA) of the dam, scour, crushing and nutritional deficiency. The findings of the study were in agreement with the reports of Srinongkote *et al.* (1992), Wagner and Polly (1997) and Duru *et al.* (1999). The digestive disorders could be attributed to the poor quality of the swill at the time of feeding. The skin and respiratory problems of pigs encountered in this study could be due to unhygienic practices. In addition, the deficiency diseases might be due to the unbalanced nutrients of the swill feed. Sixty to eighty per cent of the farmers sought veterinary help for treatment and this reflects the literacy and awareness of the farmers with respect to health management practices.

Training Requirements

The training requirements of pig farmers (Table 3) showed that they required training on breeding management rather than on health, feeding and meat processing. Agwu (1999) also indicated that the poor know-how on breeding and management was one of the major problems associated with pig production. The demand for quality piglets, its impact on

Table 1. Scientific management practices adapted by pig farmers

Adaptation of scientific practices	South	Central	North	Highrange	Coastal
Deworming	69.6	74	64.7	63.16	56.3
Vaccination	17.4	24	11.8	5.3	6.3
Iron injection	63	62	52.9	63.1	50
Sanitation	53.2	56	76.5	31.6	53.1
Spraying ectoparasiticide	13	32	11.8	18.4	15.6
Waste disposal	26.1	54	79.4	68.4	43.8
Integration	69.6	84	79.4	89.5	81.3
Castration	52.2	76	47.1	44.7	43.8
Interest in activities					
Integrated farming	80.4	84	82.4	84.2	87.5
Co-operative society	56.5	76	41.2	44.7	50
Meat plant	13	24	52.9	57.9	12.5
Biogas	76.1	80	85.3	71.1	81.3
Farrowing house	69.6	74	61.8	78.9	68.8
Expansion	60.9	58	76.5	76.3	56.3

(values in percentage)

Table 2. Health management practices followed by pig farmers

Occurrence of disease type	South	Central	North	Highrange	Coastal
Digestive disorder	80.4	76	61.8	63.2	65.6
Skin problem	39.1	32	23.5	15.2	15.9
Respiratory disease	19.6	12	17.6	17.4	13.6
Deficiency	10.9	14	11.8	6.5	9.1
Sudden death	8.7	16	8.8	8.7	13.6
Reasons for piglet mortality					
MMA	82.8	83.9	83.3	79.1	88.9
Scour	75.9	77.4	77.8	70.8	83.3
Crushing	65.5	64.5	66.7	58.3	66.7
Deficiency	41.4	54.8	50	37.5	50
Seeking treatment from whom					
Veterinary surgeon	74	76	82	74	84
Livestock inspector	17	16	12	18	9
Experienced farmer	9	8	6	8	7

(values in percentage)

the production performance and the profit through sale of piglet as a breeding stock, indicate the need for such training to pig farmers of Kerala.

Constraints

The study on the constraints (Table 4) in pig production systems showed that lack of financial support was the major constraint (56 to 68 %) followed by the unavailability of stock (18 to 29 %) and social risk factor (14 to 17 %). This was in accordance with the findings of Harikumar (2001) who reported that the constraints of the pig farmers were

financial, social and shortage in the availability of piglets. Duru *et al.* (1999) also reported that lack of capital investment was one among the major constraints in pig production. Since most of the pig farmers were marginal farmers they could not afford higher capital investment on pig rearing. The need for construction of pig pens, warrants financial support from external sources. The unavailability of stock and social factor were less important constraints in Kerala, probably due to adequate supply of quality piglets from private/ organised sectors and due to high proportion of pork consumers respectively.

Table 3. Training requirements of pig farmers

Type	South	Central	North	High range	Coastal
Breeding	61	60	56	58	53
Feeding	9	8	9	8	6
Health	22	24	26	24	21
Meat processing	7	8	9	10	10

(values in percentage)

Table 4. Constraints of pig farmers

Constraints	South	Central	North	Highrange	Coastal
Financial	61	60	56	68	56
Unavailability of stock	22	24	29	18	28
Social	17	16	15	14	16

(values in percentage)

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