

# Livestock species for urban conditions: the case of Haiti

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This page describes briefly the trends and practices of pig husbandry in urban area and especially in and around Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

## Rationale

Goats, sheep, cows, horses, camels, chickens, buffaloes, pigeons and many other types of animals can be found in cities around the world. Each of these animals has its specific advantages and disadvantages. Particularly small animals are adaptable to backyard conditions, they require little capital to start with, it is easy to sell them and they reproduce fast. Aquaculture represents an interesting diversification of agriculture at the periphery of cities. In Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), fish are fed rice bran and slaughterhouse residues or manure are used as fertilisers to produce feed. Tilapia culture in Southeast Asia is presently both spreading and intensifying. In Thailand, periurban enterprises use processing wastes and other inputs from cities.

### **Pig farming**

in urban areas is common in many countries, except in places where Islam or Jewish religion is prominently present. Pig keeping adapts well to being a mostly family-type activity, where the role of women is very important, both in collecting household waste and in looking after the animals. Pig production implies a significant reuse of household waste as a feed, but the waste of commercial enterprises (bakery, market vegetable and fruit leftovers) and industrial (brewery, abattoir) activities is also quite welcome. Pig farming allows households to generate supplementary income in peri-urban squatter settlements (slums) in for instance Montevideo (Uruguay) and Port-au-Prince (Haiti). In these areas the activity is generally linked to the widespread practice of collecting, sorting and selling of household waste to the local recycling industry.

Most pig breeders are small producers, with one or two sows, who raise the animals from birth to fattening prior to slaughtering. Usually they sell both suckling pigs (slaughtered or alive) to intermediaries, slaughterhouses or directly to consumers. Others are more specialised: some raise the animals from their birth until they are weaned and sell them to fatteners, either slaughtered or as suckling pigs. Still others only fatten the animals (up to 90-120 kg) until they are sold or slaughtered. In large scale commercial units it is common to keep pigs until they reach a specific standard weight; for subsistence and semi-commercial purposes the pigs tend to be slaughtered when the owners need money. Typical problems associated with pig keeping are the fear that they spread diseases, that particularly young piglets are driven over by cars, or that pigs cause noise and public nuisance. The typical way to cope with these issues is to provide housing, to reduce the number of pigs so as to make them survive and grow on local waste, and to keep them in a hygienic way. Crossbreeding is often done, but this tends to be useful only for the commercial growers since the resulting animals have generally a different body composition (for instance less fat) and flavour than what is liked locally.

## Trends and practices of pig

# husbandry in and around Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Port-au-Prince is experiencing an enormous population growth and has almost reached 2.5 million inhabitants, mainly due to migration from rural areas. Surrounding towns and villages have been overgrown by the city resulting in a giant metropolis, which still has certain rural characteristics. Pigs and goats are widely raised and a common sight roaming around scavenging for feed. As such, in Haiti, pork is the most popular and expensive meat. The majority of the population can hardly afford fresh meat; they buy mostly cheap fifth quarter parts (ears, pettitoes) imported from the United States. Particularly, the elite who can afford the prices for meat of international quality standards in supermarkets constitute a niche market for fresh pork. Four types of pig producers can be distinguished:

Fortunately, Haitians usually deep fry pork before consumption preventing outbreaks of diseases like cysticercosis.

Table 1 gives an overview of these four categories and their main characteristics. Several governmental and non-governmental organisations are involved in improving pig production. Some activities focus on reintroducing indigenous Creole pigs. These animals, well adapted to local conditions (feed, management) and very well liked by the consumers, were almost all stamped out as a measure against African Swine Fever in the seventies and eighties. Exotic breeds (Duroc, Large White) that replaced those local ones are not suitable and perform weakly. Since as a result of the stamping out local genetic resources are lacking, a new indigenous breed, very similar in performance and character to the original Creole pig, has been created by crossbreeding animals from Guadeloupe, China and France. Other activities include:

**Table 1**

: Categories of pig producers in Port au Prince, Haiti

<b>Number of farmers</b>	10-15	50-90	Hundreds	Thousands
<b>Number of animals</b>	70-90 sows	5-20 sows	< 5 sows	1-2 animals

	Yes		No	No
Pig farming  is main occupation		No; bakery, restaurant  or other business is		
<b>Breeds</b>	Exotic	Exotic	Local/exotic	Local/exotic
<b>Housing</b>	Concrete pens	Concrete pens	Tethered	None; animals scavenge

<b>Feed source</b>	Food waste, commercial feed	Fruit/vegetabl e waste,  wheat bran, brewery waste,  commercial feed	Forage, wheat bran,  kitchen waste, sometimes  commercial feed	Waste, forage
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<p><b>Reproduction</b></p>	<p>Reproductive cycle within farm;</p> <p>breeding organized with other</p> <p>large producers</p> <p>(exchange of boars)</p>	<p>Full cycle within farm,</p> <p>from each litter some piglets</p> <p>are sold for cash to keep</p> <p>business going</p>	<p>Cycle within farm, one-third</p> <p>of weaned piglets are sold,</p> <p>one-third are kept and one-</p> <p>third are given to relatives</p> <p>in the countryside who raise</p> <p>the animals at their own</p>	<p>At random</p>
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			expense and share the	
			profit with the owner	
<b>Production capacity</b>	20-30 fattened animals per week	30-120 fattened animals per year	3-6 fattened animals per year	< 1 animal per year

<p><b>Production</b></p>	<p>Commercial</p>	<p>Commercial, but stay</p> <p>in business only if</p> <p>profitable, adapt quickly</p> <p>to market changes</p>	<p>Subsistence; animals are</p> <p>fattened using extra feed</p> <p>to pay for education,</p> <p>weddings, funerals</p>	<p>Subsistence</p>
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<b>Market</b>	Supermarkets and processing	Supermarkets and processing	Local butchers, markets	Local butchers, markets
	facilities (salami, standard cuts)	facilities (salami, standard cuts)		



<p><b>Constraints</b></p>	<p>Consanguinity (lack of "new blood"), insufficient access to vaccines and drugs, high feed costs</p>	<p>Consanguinity , high piglet mortality, insufficient access to vaccines and drugs</p>	<p>Decreasing genetic potential (best animals are sold), diseases</p>	<p>Diseases (especially cisticercosis )</p>
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Yes