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Abstract

Free-range pig farming is common amongst the small-scale farmers in western Kenya. In order to determine the characteristics of this type of production system, a cross-sectional questionnaire survey on farm characteristics and management was collected from 182 farmers in Busia District. The mean farm size was one acre, while the mean number of pigs per farm was 3.6. Pigs were mainly kept as a source of income (98%) and majority were of cross breed variety (64%). The production systems included farrow to weaner (12%), porker to finisher (36%), and mixed (46%). Sixty five percent (65%) of the pigs were tethered and housing was not provided in 61% of the farms. Most of the feeds were sourced locally. Lack of castration and delayed weaning of pigs was observed on 49% and 30% of the farms, respectively. The main production constraints included pig diseases (81%) and high cost or lack of feed (81%).
Haematopinus suis
 infestations and worm infections were considered to be the most important diseases by 71% and 55% of the farmers, respectively. Farmers had moderate knowledge on parasitic disease diagnosis with 31% and 62% not having a history of either deworming or spraying pigs with acaricides, respectively. Marketing constraints were common amongst the farmers and included poor prices and inadequate market information. In conclusion, the production system was characterized as low-input with an income objective. Future research and development approaches should focus on the integration of free-range farmers into the country?s market chains through access to extension services.

Keywords Smallholder systems - Free range - Pigs - Kenya

Yes