

Assam's pig sub-sector: Current status, constraints and opportunities

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The International Livestock Research Institute has published a report on pig production in Assam, India. Based on a comprehensive study of the pig sub-sector the report identifies clear opportunities for improvement of pig production and marketing to contribute to livelihood improvements in the State.

Executive summary

Production constraints and opportunities

Inadequate knowledge about feeding, health care and breeding management was given by producers as their major constraint to improving production. Current extension programs were said to be ineffective and limited in their reach. Required are needs-based, client-oriented programs using participatory methods and action-research to improve the capacity of pig producers to make more effective use of available feed resources, to maintain their pigs in good health and to breed productive crosses. The programs should be designed with the aim of improving production through incremental steps achievable within the limits of current household resources, especially feed and female labour. Particular attention should be given to learning from the current best practices of successful small-scale low-external input producers.

Recommendation 1

Recommendation 2

Recommendation 3

Marketing and consumption constraints and opportunities

While households faced constraints to pig production, the market for their pigs generally worked efficiently with attractive prices for producers and reasonable margins for market agents. But rent-seeking (hidden expenses?, i.e. bribes) by police added to marketing costs during the transport of piglets, slaughter pigs and pork, thereby increasing the price of outputs and reducing profits for

producers. We recommend that there should be an awareness program to overcome this problem involving all participants in the market chain: producers, traders, police and other officials.

Recommendation 4

Recommendation 5

5.1

Carry out a risk assessment along the production-to-consumption value chain of pork to identify critical intervention points to improve meat hygiene and food safety.

5.2

Support training for a quality assurance program to address the deficiencies in the management of pigs, their slaughter and the handling of pork in order to improve meat hygiene and food safety.

Recommendation 6

Carry out a study of consumer preferences and perceptions of pork quality ? including aspects of taste, appearance and composition ? to inform private investment and public planning.

Policy and institutional constraints and opportunities

As was discussed in relation to production, principal amongst the constraints faced by current and potential pig producers was their lack of access to technical information, reflecting the ineffectiveness of the publicly-funded production and veterinary extension services. It was pointed out that innovative, community-based programs are required using participatory methods implemented by staff oriented towards the needs of their clients. This approach will require a mindset change by government officials, an increased role by non-government organizations (NGOs) and building upon local social infrastructure, e.g. successful SHGs. To achieve that, two complementary institutional mechanisms are recommended.

Recommendation 7

Recommendation 8



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