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A Survey of Pig Production Systems in the Rain Forest of the Pacific Coast of Colombia

Abstract -

A questionnaire-based survey was conducted in small-scale pig farms in the rain forest of the Colombian Pacific coast in order to study aspects of reproduction, nutrition and productivity. A total of 124 farmers was interviewed. They owned, on average, 13.6 pigs, including 2.3 sows, mainly of the Zungo breed. Pigs are reared in extensive systems and are allowed to wander freely in search of food. The sows produce, on average, 9.6 piglets/litter but, owing to poor sanitary conditions, 1.5 are born dead and only 6.3 are weaned alive. Two-thirds of the sows have five litters or more and the boars are also kept for a long time. This leads to high consanguinity rates within the herd and low productivity. Diets are based on maize, banana, tubers (taro, cassava) and fruits (peach palm, among others), and are rich in energy but poor in protein and minerals. The lack of protein and mineral sources appears to be the main limiting factor of these extensive production systems. Tree forages could partially solve the problem but are used by only 2% of the farmers. It is concluded that decreasing inbreeding, better piglet management and provision of balanced diets are areas that require immediate improvement.

Keywords

Colombia - nutrition - pig - production system - productivity - rain forest

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