

SWINE PRODUCTION IN GHANA

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The consumption of Pork in Ghana is assuming ever increasing dimensions. This state of affairs has come about as a result of the relaxation in the religious taboo on consumption of pork and pork products. It was estimated (Oppong 1976) that pigs form 8% of the total number of animals slaughtered for food in Ghana.

There are basically two types of pigs:- the local black pig and the exotic pig represented by the large white breed of pigs. Other exotic pigs that have been imported into the country from Europe at one time or the other have included the Berkshire, Large Black, Middle white and Essex. By far the large white pig has been the most successful surpassing the other breeds in climatic adaptation, disease resistance and tolerance. Artificial insemination using imported swine semen is practically non-existent and importation of new blood to improve pigs in Ghana has been through the importation of whole animals.

HUSBANDRY

Two systems of husbandry prevails in this country. One is the extensive system of free range practised commonly in the villages. Here, pigs (Local Black Pigs) are traditionally kept as scavengers and raised merely as means of utilizing food wastes of the village dwellers, on the pigs' own ability to fend for themselves. Breeding in this type of husbandry is uncontrolled and piglet mortality and endoparasitism are very high. Slaughter of mature pigs is based primarily on an "on the spot need for cash" rather than an economic "cropping" of farm produce. The pigs are however hardy and appear to withstand some of the debilitating diseases affecting imported pigs. To date, there is little or no record of disease pattern in the local black pig as those that die are buried without Veterinary consultation and post mortem examination.

The intensive system involves primarily the recently imported breeds of pigs represented by the large white. Commercial pig producers use this breed and good clean water and formulated rations are supplied. Breeding is controlled and attempts at record keeping are made. Fatteners or growers, old sows and boars are occasionally culled and slaughtered at Government slaughter houses where the meat is inspected. Most of such farms are located in the large urban centres of Southern Ghana and the transitional forest zones of Ashanti and Brong Ahafo Regions. Disease monitoring is quite manageable with this type of husbandry and records on disease prevalence currently available are those from pigs on this type of management.

DISEASES

A survey of post mortem diagnosis in pigs over the past 3 years (1972-1980) indicates that pneumonia of varied causes (usually of bacterial origin) is the predominant cause of death in young pigs. Bacteria commonly isolated from diseased pigs submitted for necropsy have included Pasteurella spp; E. Coli; Salmonella spp; Bordetella bronchi-

septica, Streptococcus and Haemophilus parasuis. Nutritional myopathy characterised by degenerative changes in heart musculature are seen. Various manifestation of iron deficiency are encountered.

A summary of common conditions diagnosed in pigs in Ghana is indicated below:

Pneumonia
Enteritis of Varied causes (E. Coli,
Clostridium, Coccidiosis etc.)
Helminthiasis
Glasser's disease
Osteochondrosis
Oedema disease
Erysepales
Gastric Ulcers
Starvation/Malnutrition
Jowl abscess
Baby pig anaemia.

A careful examination of this list indicates the absence of viral diseases. The apparent lack of viral diseases does not mean absence of these diseases but possibly lack of adequate diagnostic facilities for the isolation and identification of viral disease agents.

Ascaris suum is by far the most predominant helminth affecting swine all over the country. This in part is due to inefficient systems of waste disposal, irregular supply of anthelmintics and finally poor nutritional status rendering pigs susceptible to heavy worm infestations.

Incidence of Cysticercosis was found to be around 3% at the Accra abattoir with infected animals coming from known enzootic areas (Oppong 1973). Sarpong (1972) recorded the incidence of Stephanurus dentatus (kidney worm) to be 33% in the local black pig. Mange is common. Babesiosis does occur but not at major levels (Amanfu, unpublished observations).

Efforts to improve swine production in Ghana must include proper nutrition, effective disease control, and importation or development of new breeds to improve blood lines. In importing new breeds of swine from overseas, care must be taken so that diseases which have hitherto not been reported here or are not significant problems are not imported into the country. These diseases may include Pseudorabies or Aujeszky's disease, Transmissible Gastroenteritis (TGE) and Haemophilus para-haemolyticus infections.

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