

PORK PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION IN SUB SAHARA AFRICA: THE CASE OF GHANA

Anna R. Barnes

Department of Animal Science

University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana.

Keywords: Pork, Consumer perception, National Production; Pork production in future.

Introduction

The primary purpose of raising pigs is for meat and in this respect, pig has been found to be the most efficient of all livestock in converting feedstuff inedible to man to high protein food. Pork therefore plays a very important role in the lives of majority of people in many of the developed countries. Consumption of meat in such countries is quite high. The pig has been controversial animal throughout history leading to man having love/hate relationship with the pig. Though pork is very rich in protein, vitamins etc. it appears to have little or no place in many Ghanaian homes. To find out how much various factors affect production and consumption of pork, a survey was conducted to identify the factors that militate against increased pork production and consumption in Ghana.

Survey Areas and Data Collection

The survey/study covered the whole country i.e. Northern and Southern sectors. A questionnaire was personally administered and information sought among others were:

- The level of pork production and consumption in the study area.
- The availability and form of pork
- Consumer's preference scale for meat
- Reasons for rejection of pork or otherwise.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Pig Production Systems

Two major production systems were noted and these were intensive and semi-intensive which constituted 67% and 33% respectively. Pigs were intensively raised only around urban areas with average herd size of 57. The easy accessibility to the farms from heavily populated towns and cities was the primary reason for locating pig farms in urban areas. Expansion of towns and cities sometimes push such piggeries to the hinter land and when this happens, the farmer starts to lose interest in the business. Intensive pig rearing is economically viable on the periphery of the large cities and towns because of availability of industrial by-products.

The semi-intensive system of production however prevailed mostly in the rural areas with average herd size of 15 animals. Under this system, the farmers provide only night or sleeping accommodation is often located near farmer's dwelling home. Similar findings have been reported in Taiwan by Hsia (1986), and seasonal confinement in the north and Middle Belt of Nigeria, Bourn, Wint and Woolley (1994).

Pork Production Level

According to F.A.O. (1987) pork is the most widely produced meat in the world, both in the developed and developing regions as shown in Table 1. On the African continent however pigs constitute the least proportion of total livestock population.

Table 1: Pork Production Data From Developed and Developing Regions

| Pork Production | Developed Regions | Developing Region |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|
| Total Meat Production (x 10 ³ mt) | 89,553 | 52,750 |
| Total Pork Production (x 10 ³ mt) | 33,743 | 21,453 |
| Pork as percentage of Total Meat Production | 38 | 41 |
| Number of Pigs (x10 ⁶) | 336 | 443 |
| Pork Production/million Pigs (x 10 ³ mt) | 100 | 48 |
| Average Carcass Yield (kg) | 77 | 60 |
| Off take (% age slaughtered) | 129 | 83 |

They form only 2.2% of the livestock population of about 551.4 million (FAO 1987) and in West African Sub-region, pig population again is 3.5% of the total population of 129.6 million livestock as shown in Table 2.

In Ghana, the situation is no different as pigs constitute 9.8% of the total of 7.15 million livestock. This figure has decreased 5.8% according to 1994 available Livestock Population Census.

Table 2: Percentage of various Livestock Species in Africa (FAO 1987)

| Region | Total L'stock Population x10 ⁶ | % Pigs | % Cattle | % Sheep | % Goat |
|--------------|--|--------|----------|---------|--------|
| Africa | 551,407 | 2.2 | 32.9 | 35.4 | 29.5 |
| West Africa | 129,589 | 3.5 | 25.0 | 29.7 | 41.8 |
| Ghana | 7,151 | 9.8 | 17.5 | 33.6 | 39.1 |
| Ghana (1994) | 5,987 | 5.8 | 20.3 | 37.0 | 36.8 |

With regard to National livestock meat production however, pork has invariably ranked second to beef as seen in Table 3.

Table 3: Trends in National Meat Production over 4 - year period

| Species | 1987 | | 1988 | | 1989 | | 1990 | |
|------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| | Prod. | Proptn | Prod. | Proptn | Prod. | Proptn | Prod. | Proptn |
| Cattle | 15,661 | 34.5 | 15,328 | 32.6 | 15,213 | 29.7 | 15,140 | 29.0 |
| Sheep | 8,948 | 19.7 | 9,207 | 19.6 | 9,954 | 19.4 | 9,919 | 19.0 |
| Goats | 7,128 | 15.2 | 7,168 | 15.3 | 8,863 | 17.3 | 9,136 | 17.5 |
| Pigs | 7,979 | 17.6 | 9,567 | 20.4 | 11,172 | 21.8 | 11,590 | 22.2 |
| Poultry | 5,688 | 12.5 | 5,688 | 12.1 | 6,084 | 11.8 | 6,421 | 12.2 |
| Estimated Nat. Production | 45,404 | 100 | 46,958 | 100 | 51,286 | 100 | 52,206 | 100 |

Contrarily to popular belief, the survey revealed that pork is one of the major sources of animal protein readily available in the markets of the Northern Sector of the country. Ruminants are maintained by household for security, prestige or a repository of wealth. Cattle is also used as dowry among some ethnic communities in the North.

Of the average 100 people interviewed in each of 10 districts in both Northern and Southern sectors of the country, 81% of respondents consumed pork and 19% indicated complete abstinence from pork. Sixty two percent of the pork consumers however preferred beef, chicken mutton or chevon to pork. They would however readily consume cured and smoked pork or pork sausage. Of the 19% respondents who indicated complete abstinence from pork, the reason they gave are as follows:

1. Religious barriers - 42%;
2. Pigs are dirty and source of disease - 21%;
3. In explicable spiritual beliefs - 11%;
4. Traditional or customary reasons - 5%;
5. Fatness of pork - 11%;
6. Rejection of pork for no apparent reason - 10%

Operators of 78% of 90 farms visited (concurrently with market survey on pork consumption) indicated that marketing of pigs was a problem. It was revealed that festive occasions like X'mas, Easter etc. led to high demand of pork and its products.

Pork products definitely attracts more consumers as evident in 1986 when the first ever National Pork Show was held. A great number of people who visited the Show realized for the first time that bacon, ham and sausages were pork products. The object of the show was to expose the average Ghanaian to pork and the variety of pork products as well as improving Pork position as a competitive protein source. The demand for pork and pork products shot up. The pig census a year after the pork show revealed a shortfall of 14.8% [468653 (1986) to 398949 (1987)] but thereafter the pig population picked up because apparently many people went into pig population.

Ghana produces only 20% of its annual meat requirement and out of this pork contributes 3-3.5%. Sheep = 2.5%, goats = 1.3%, poultry = 2.6 and the rest = 10% by cattle. A sound pig production policy/programme for Ghana is very necessary.

It seems there is still disagreement among experts regarding solution to the problem of animal protein intake in Africa on the whole from the animal production point of view. F.A.O's indicative World Plan for Agricultural Development for instance suggested that the increased demand for meat would have to be met from pigs and poultry because of their quick returns. Because of the high nutrient density of pork, it can be effective in the battle against malnutrition faced by many people in the sub sahara Africa.

REFERENCES

- Bourn, D. Wint W.; Blench, R. and Wolley E. 1994. Nigerian Livestock resources survey. World Animal Review 78: 49.58.
- Food And Agriculture Organization 1987. Livestock and Human Population in West Africa.
- Hsia, L.C. 1986: The boom in Taiwan's Pork Industry. Pigs. Misset International, Vol. 2 No. 2.