Understanding gender relations of smallholder farmers to improve pig feeding in Uganda

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Background

- Pig production is rapidly growing in Uganda, but generally research on pig production systems is just beginning.
- Information lacks particularly on gender-based constraints and benefits experienced by pig-keeping households.

Objectives

- This study focused mainly on smallholder farmers with predominantly 1-3 pigs in rural areas of Masaka and Kamuli counties, Uganda.
- We aimed to understand current gender relations, and how they
  - dictate access to and control of land, labor, purchases and sales of pigs, and
  - influence the pig production system as a whole.

Research approach

- Gender-segregated focus group discussions (FGD) guided by the Feed Assessment Tool (FEAST, http://www.irit.org/feast) and unstructured individual interviews in two sub-counties of each of Masaka and Kamuli counties in June and December 2014 were used for information gathering.

Pigs can be a burden for women

- Pig management
  Often the wife is in charge of all the pigs’ management (feeding, cleaning and ensuring health) in the homestead, irrespective of ownership.

- Feeding
  Mostly, women gather the feeds and, hence, do the feeding.

- Culturally, men hardly feed pigs, even if they may own one or two, which are fed together with the women’s pigs and that of the child/youth if there is any.

- Pigs typically feed on collected herbs, weeds, and crop and kitchen left overs. In Masaka, women estimated that they collected more forages than men thought (Fig. 2).

- Time to collect feeds can be as short as 30 minutes in the rainy season when vegetable is abundant; but, it can take up to 4 hours during the dry season.

Women face challenges

- Land ownership and use
  Men traditionally own the land.

- Men grant women land for cultivating staples and vegetables for the family’s subsistence.

- Planting forages to improve pig feeding
  Pig-keeping women have to negotiate with their husband owners to obtain spaces for planting forages.

- Our hypothesis is that men may consider planted forages as a crop and could participate more in feeding pigs in the future.

Women/family benefit from pigs

- Pig ownership
  In a pig-keeping household, pigs can belong to husband, wife and, at times, teenagers.

- Income
  Whoever owns pigs keeps the income from sales irrespective of gender.

- Most of women’s incomes from pigs go to family expenditures, while men’s and young people’s incomes more often go to their personal needs.

- Expenditures for family welfare
  The highest expenditure serviced by income from pigs is education in most households, followed by health. Thus, women pig farmers contribute substantially to family welfare.

- Women attributed pigs’ contribution to family incomes to 20% and above, while men estimated lower percentages (Fig. 1).

Women and Men

- Women and men’s contributions to pig feeding.

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