

**CHARACTERISTICS OF PIGS UNDER COMMUNAL PRODUCTION  
SYSTEMS IN RESOURCE-POOR FARMING AREAS OF VHEMBE DISTRICT  
IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

By

**KHATHUTSHELO ROBERT MATHEGU**

Dissertation submitted in the fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree

**MASTER'S IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

in the

Centre for Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation  
School of Agriculture, Rural Development and Forestry

**UNIVERSITY OF VENDA**

2010

**UNIVEN LIBRARY**

Library Item : 20103590



UNIVERSITY OF VENDA  
LIBRARY

## ABSTRACT

Although pig production systems have been characterized, there is inadequate information on the production status of indigenous pigs in the smallholder sector; especially in South Africa. This study sought to address this problem through characterizing smallholder pig production systems in Limpopo Province. The main purpose of this study was to investigate the socio-economic and biological characteristics of smallholder pig production systems. A total sample of 100 respondents, representing households which kept pigs at the time of the study, spread over six village areas was drawn. Data were collected from the respondents through the use of structured questionnaire. Weighing of piglets was also conducted and heart girth measurements were recorded as well.

The results show that most producers were above the age of 45 years. The elderly farmers have their own way of production practices and cannot easily accept new innovations aimed at improving pig production. The results demonstrate that indigenous pigs farming play an important role in supplying meat for households' consumption (48 %) and providing cash (41 %) when such a need arises. Pigs were raised within the vicinity of the homestead and management was responsibilities of women and children. These findings could be attributed to the fact that keeping pigs in rural areas is not considered as an economic enterprise and there is a need to shift the minds of producers to consider this kind of farming as another way for them to earn an income.

There were many constraints reported as limiting factors in raising pigs. Lack of knowledge and unavailability of quality feeds were amongst the constraints mentioned. Most respondents (49 %) had had no formal education whilst the level of education of 30 % of producers was predominantly of primary. The lower level of education amongst resource-poor farmers raising pigs could have a negative impact towards acceptance of any new method that could improve the production systems. Record keeping and growth rate measurements were not practiced in the study areas.