

## I. — CREATION AND WORKING OF NON SPECIALIZED PIG PRODUCTION UNITS

**Results of an inquiry into 106 farms  
with small sow herds as a supplementary production**

## 1. — Description of the farms, their environment and performance

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The sample of farms investigated cannot be considered as representative because of the criteria used to choose them, i.e. size of herd ranging from 10 to 25 sows and management control during 1977 and 1978. The size of the farms was large and exceeded the national average both respect to SAU\* as to the number of UGB\*\*.

A difference was found between the rearing farms (69) and the rearing fattening farms (37). The cattle stock was larger in the rearing than in the rearing-fattening farms.

Most farmers who intended to give up their pig production were rearers. A development of the production was especially observed among farmers whose agricultural area and cattle stock could not be increased.

Most farmers belonged to co-operation associations providing security and reliable prices. Farmers against these associations considered that the prices paid were too low and the expenses too high. The main problems encountered in the farms concerned the housing of the animals and the health of the piglets.

The technical results of the farms involved in the inquiry were similar to those of specialized farms of greater size. The profit margin per sow and per year was almost the same and because of the lower structural expenses the income of the work per sow and per year was higher in these small production units. However the working time being higher in these farms, the hourly income was almost similar for the two types of production units. This permits to point out once again the low profit earning capacity of rearing farms.

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## 2. — Herd management

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The experimental sample included 69 pig rearing farms and 37 rearing-fattening farms with an average herd size of 17.76 and 19.58 sows, respectively.

The performance recorded in the rearing farms were 17.4 piglets ( $\mu = 3.3$ ) per sow and

(\*) SAU = Agricultural area (farmland)

(\*\*) UGB = Stocking rate I,U/ha.

per year and in the rearing-fattening farms, 15.93 bacon pigs per sow and per year. The mean age at weaning was 38.4 and 38.7 days, respectively.

Most farmers used the grouped rearing system but without keeping regular intervals between groups. Multi-suckling was practised in particular in the rearing farms. It was noticed that the productivity was higher in the farms using the batch system. In that case the age at weaning (29.1d) was 10 days lower than in farms with a conventional management system. The number of places available in the piggeries for each physiological stage was very large and reduced the negative effects of an aleatory management. The dispersion of piggeries was inversely proportional to the size of the farms and the productivity of the rearing farms tended to decrease as this dispersion increased.

According to the farmer book-keeping, mainly commercial feedstuffs were used in rearing-fattening farms: they represented 69.6 and 78.4 p. 100 of the feeds consumed.

It was noticed that in the rearing-fattening farms, the profit margin increased when using cereals + a nitrogen-mineral-vitamin mixture and cereals + soybean + mineral-vitamin mixture instead of compound feeds.

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### 3. — Housing of animals and working conditions

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According to an inquiry into the housing and working conditions of 40 small pig rearing farms and rearing-fattening farms including 16.4 and 19.4 sows, respectively, the following conclusions could be drawn:

- the investments are small; redemption costs of rearing farms represent  $1/3$  and those of rearing-fattening farms  $1/2$  of those observed in specialized production units;
  - the housing conditions are more adapted to animals in rearing-fattening than in rearing farms;
    - in more than half of the cases, the pregnant sows were housed in huts with eating places;
    - farrowing pens were mostly placed in converted buildings;
    - fattening houses were generally well arranged;
  - working time recorded was almost the double of that of specialized production units. This parameter calculated per sow decreased when the size of the unit increased and it increased when the different houses were dispersed;
  - the income/hour was similar to that of the specialized production units, but the working conditions were more difficult.
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