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ADDRESSING FOOD SAFETY AND ANIMAL HEALTH RISKS IN PIG VALUE CHAINS WITH ECONOMICS AND GENDER LENS: WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED FROM CASE STUDIES IN HUNG YEN AND NGHE AN?

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INTRODUCTION

The pig sector in Vietnam, consisting largely of smallholders, is undergoing dynamic transformation, opening up new opportunities but also exposing the key actors to new challenges. Food safety risk is an increasingly important concern driven by emerging demand for food quality attributes by a growing, highly urbanized consumer class with increasing purchasing power. In response, food systems change; however, the likely gendered implications of these changes, particularly on the health and food safety risks to different actors in the pig value chain, are as yet not well understood. This study aimed to characterize the pig value chain in Vietnam, using a gender lens and its implication in addressing animal health risks and food safety in the chain.

RESULTS

The smallholder pig value chain involves a range of actors from producers, pig traders, slaughter house operators, meat retailers, meat processors, all the way to consumers. Women are a dominant presence at each node of the chain, in varying degrees. In production, women represent half of family labor playing the main role, while they comprise more than 90% of meat retailers. At home, food and meat purchasing and cooking is handled by most women. Both men and women work in slaughterhouses, performing different tasks, although men dominate this node; men are also dominant in pig trading. Women farm at relatively smaller scale and have lower production costs; they also contribute about 1.5 times more labor than men in performing tasks related to breed selection, feeding, cleaning barns, and keeping records. Women-led pig production also exhibited relatively less sick pigs and lower pig mortality cost.

RESEARCH APPROACH

Focus group discussions were organized in 18 communes in Hung Yen and Nghe An provinces to map and characterize the pig value chains. Baseline surveys with more than 1000 actors of pig value chain were implemented to collect detailed information about value chain actors, their roles and functions, and information to evaluate value chain performance. Where applicable, FGDs and survey tools were gendered to understand men and women’s involvement in the pig value chain. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to analyze the data.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Women’s dominance in home-based work and men in far-away-from-home work and women’s significant participation in processing and distribution; and relative importance of women being disproportional to production scale. Men take on more responsibility for technical and heavier work such as vaccination, treating sick pigs. Given their dominant presence and various roles in production, processing, and retailing meat, women could have important roles to play in managing risk. This also implies that women, as do men, are likely exposed to human health hazards from their working environment, albeit with differential impacts. Understanding these risks and impacts will be useful in guiding and targeting interventions.

It is also essential to understand women’s communication means, social networks and languages to deliver appropriate information on the roles and responsibility of producers, retailers and consumers for safe pork. To promote safer pork value chains to different types and scale of producers, we need to understand incentives for both men and women, and identify appropriate communication means and messages that work for all. Better risk communication to all actors in the chain is crucial to better manage risks and engender food safety outcomes.

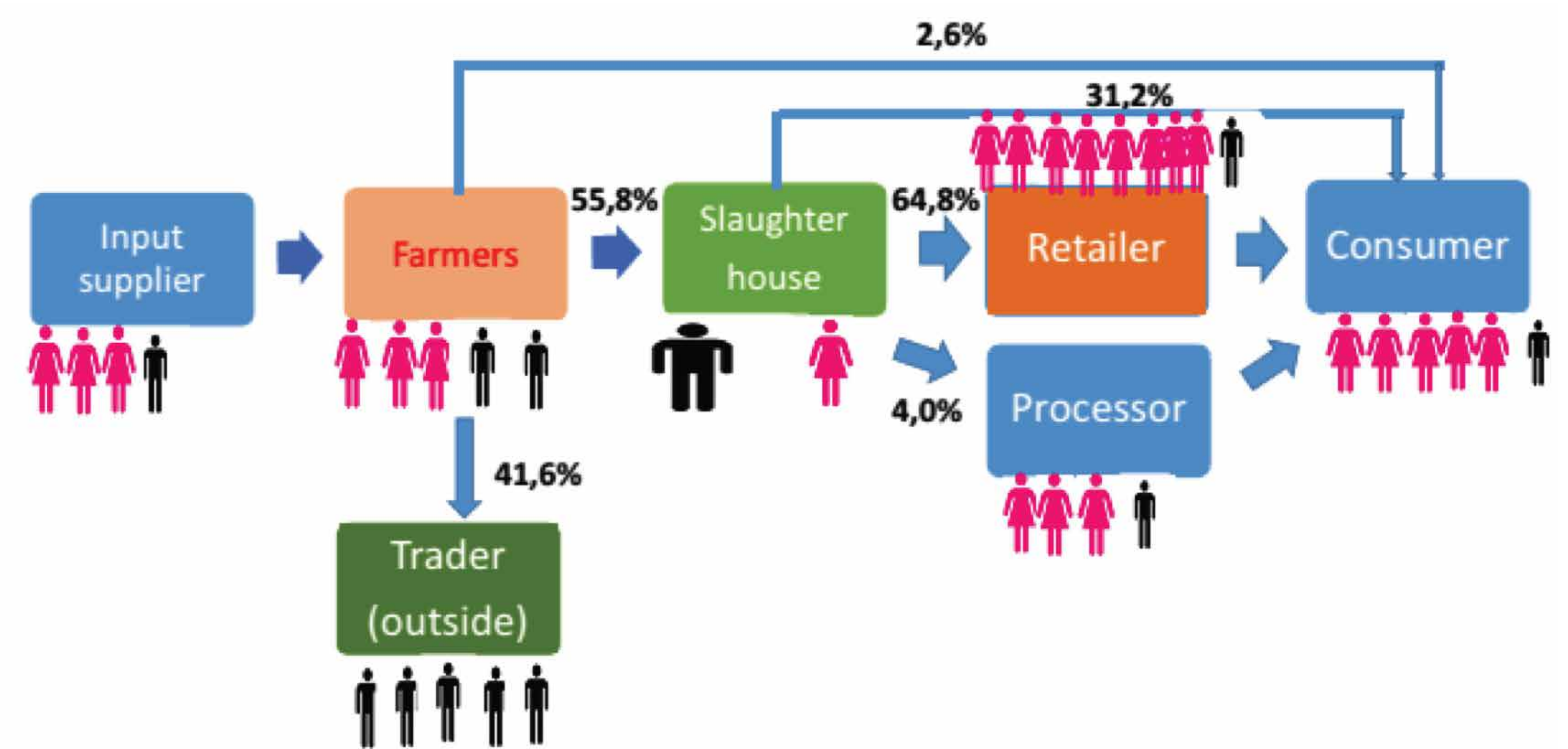


Figure 1: Gendered pig value chain in Vietnam (Smallholder)