

The status of sow welfare in selected districts of Uganda

Michel Dione¹, Peter Oba², Zachary Nsadh³, Asmare Kassahun⁴, Theodore Knight-Jones⁵ and Rebecca Doyle^{5,6}

¹Animal and Human Health Program, International Livestock Research Institute, Dakar, Senegal

²Animal and Human Health Program, International Livestock Research Institute, Kampala, Uganda

³College of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Biosecurity, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda

⁴Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Hawassa University, Hawassa, Ethiopia

⁵International Livestock Research Institute, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

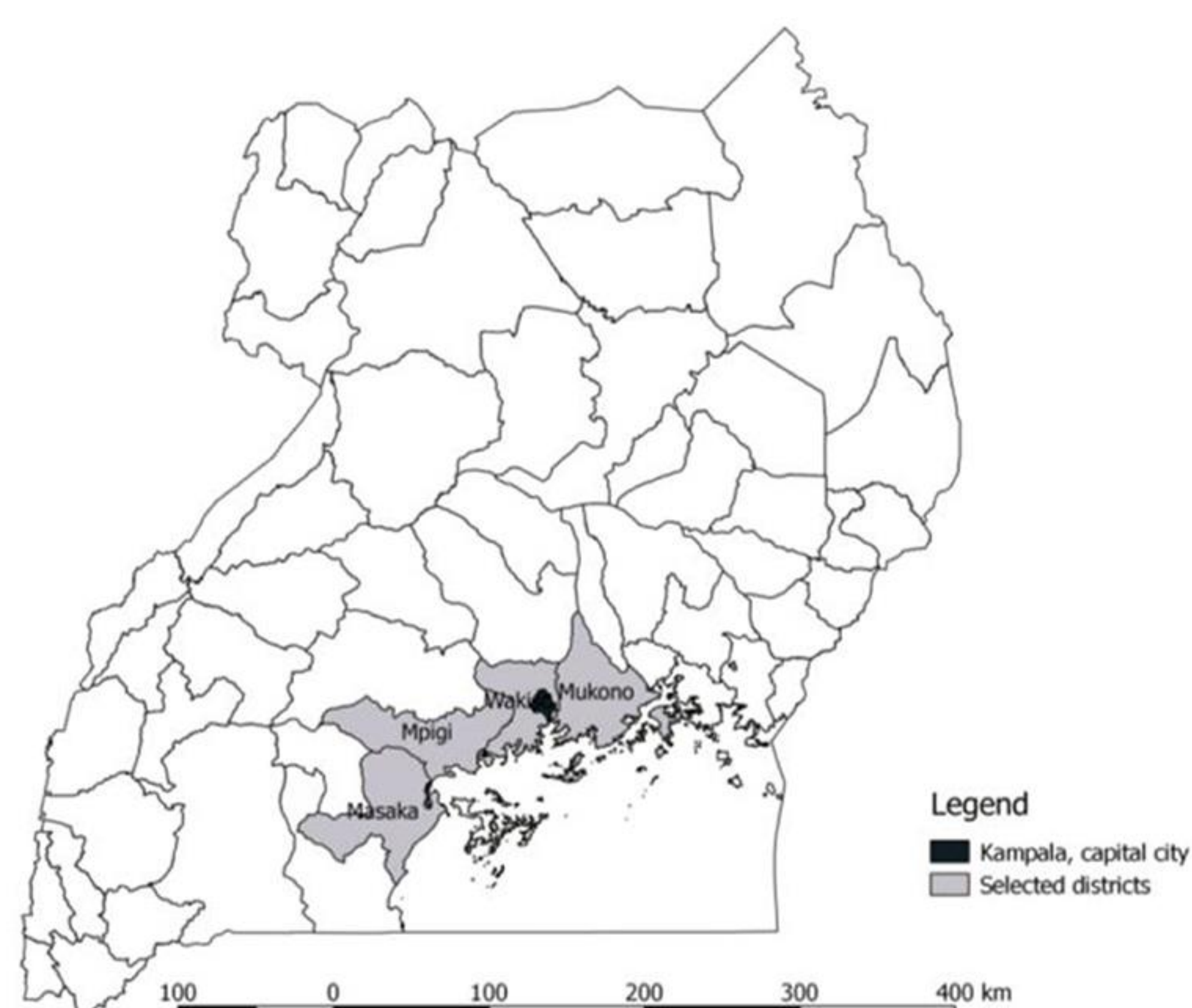
⁶The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, University of Edinburgh, UK

Introduction

- Pig production has dramatically increased over the last three decades in Uganda, owing to the growing demand for pork.
- Large informal sector characterized by mainly backyard systems with small stock of animals that are kept free-roaming or tethered.
- Low productivity from limited resources and veterinary support.
- Compromised animal welfare leads to reduced productivity.

Purpose

- Assess the status of pig welfare in smallholder pig farms in selected districts in Uganda.
- Baseline for assessing impacts of interventions on pig welfare, health and productivity in the project areas.



Findings

- Across all farms, sow mortality in the last 12 months was reported to be 2.5% (95% CI: 1.7, 4.8%).
- Animal-based indicators identified 9% (CI: 6.1, 13.7%) of sows with scouring/diarrhea, 7.6% (4.7, 11.5%) with lameness and 92% (CI: 85.1, 96.7%) of dry or lactating sows were found to be 'skinny' with a body condition score of 1 or 2.
- In addition, piglet mortality was as high as 10.2% (CI: 8.5, 12.9%).
- A total of 19% of sows were partially or completely restricted from free movement inside pens.
- 93% of sows had continuous access to water, but only 48.8% of the water supplies were clean.



International Symposium of Veterinary Epidemiology and Economics, 7–12 August 2022, Halifax, Canada

Methods

- Cross-sectional survey in Masaka, Mukono, Mpigi and Wakiso districts
- 270 pig farms: 3,561 pigs
- Welfare indicators: resource-based (housing and water supply), animal-based (pig body condition and physical injuries), and management-based (records of morbidity and mortality)

Findings

- Twenty per cent of farms reported sows experiencing stillbirths, 15% reported ill thrift, 12.5% reported respiratory disease and 10.8% reported gastrointestinal disease.
- Wakiso District registered the lowest pig mortality which was significantly lower compared to the other three districts.

Conclusion

- Ugandan pigs are exposed to severe undernutrition, dirty water, high mortality, physical injuries, poor housing, and health challenges (stillbirth, ill thrift and gastrointestinal disorders).
- Meaningful change to farmer livelihoods and pig welfare can be made by designing simple interventions that target improve housing structures, provision of cooling facilities especially during hot periods (heat stress) and bedding materials.
- The findings represent a benchmark for the assessment of the effect of such interventions designed to improve farm health and productivity.

Michel Dione

m.dione@cgiar.org

International Livestock Research Institute

Dakar, Senegal

This project was funded by IFAD and supported by the CGIAR Research Program on Livestock



This document is licensed for use under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence. August 2022

ILRI thanks all donors and organizations which globally support its work through their contributions to the [CGIAR Trust Fund](#).

