

# **Reproductive performance of sows in rural communities of Busia and Kakamega Districts, Western Kenya**

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## **Abstract**

This study provided baseline performance of breeding pigs information on local sow productivity that was previously lacking. The objective was to investigate performance of breeding pigs in rural smallholder communities of Western Kenya. A random sample of 288 smallholder farms in Busia and Kakamega districts was selected pigs. The farms were visited three times in the course of the study period, 2006 to 2008. Data on management and productivity were gathered by means of questionnaires administered to sow owners. The average number of sows owned per farm was  $1.3 \pm 0.6$ . Sows were bred for an average of  $2.18 \pm 1.08$  days during one estrus. Sows were  $12.1 \pm 4.5$  months old when they farrowed for the first time. They were bred  $1.9 \pm 1.6$  month after piglets were weaned. Sources of breeding boars included borrowed boars from the neighbourhood (77%), farmers' own boars (14%), group-owned boars (0.4%) and those that were free roaming (2%). The average litter size was  $7.8 \pm 2.6$  while the average number weaned was  $6.8 \pm 3.1$ . Piglets were weaned at  $5.4 \pm 3.3$  weeks of age. Piglets were reportedly cheaper in Busia (USD  $6.36 \pm 0.71$ ) than they were in Kakamega (USD  $9.71 \pm 2.18$ ) ( $p < 0.05$ ). Factors that are likely to influence performance of both sows and boars in the villages are discussed.