



Forecast for french pig production : contribution of the analysis of ” on-the-farm sow records ”

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Pig feed prices in the E.E.C.

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The behaviour of pig feed prices determines to a great extent the profitability of pig production and consequently the capacity of national farmers to maintain or develop their market share in the E.E.C.

During the last decade, significant differences appeared both in the dynamism of the branch and in the overall trends of pig feed prices.

Since 1975, the penetration rate of pig feed tends to stagnate in France whereas it increases in the Northern countries of the Common Market.

From 1977, on an average, annual increase in feed prices was 8 p. 100 in France versus 3 p. 100 in the Netherlands. A trend of price stability was observed in West Germany during this period.

These differences can be better understood through the diversity of situations in the animal feed industry of the member countries.

The most important elements which determine such divergencies are the nature of raw materials (cereals, substitutes, by-products), the access to international markets and the economic environment.

The study is focused on the trends of pig feed prices in France, in the Netherlands and West Germany.

The formulation of pig feed through linear programming using national raw material prices has made it possible to compare cost fluctuations and trends of the supplies for the feed industry.

The results of this analysis explain the more favorable trend of pig feed prices in Germany and in the Netherlands during recent years which represents a major asset for the producers of these countries.

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The national computerized programme for analysis of on-the-farm sow records now concerns a major part of the sows in French pig production farms. In 1981, more than one third of the market production was included in this programme.

The possibility to draw a representative sample from French pig herds had led to its use as a basis for production forecasts.

Several retrospective samples of different periods in two areas, Brittany and the rest of the country, were compared with the Controlled Indigenous Production.

Marked relationships were noted between the medium term production variations (cycle) and the number of weaned piglets registered in Brittany through the national programme.

When the time period from weaning to slaughtering is taken into account as well as an anticipation of cyclic fluctuations observed with herds included in the programme, a five month forecast can be carried out of the French pig production.