SHORT COMMUNICATION

THE SALVAGE VALUE OF BOVINE FOETUSES IN SLAUGHTERED CATTLE WITHIN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Bovine foetuses recovered from abattoirs and slaughter slabs in Ogun State were previously discarded. Recently, a total of 327 skins of foetuses in the third trimester were tanned to produce leathers for the manufacture of 439 pairs of shoes which yielded a revenue of ₦33,124 for the State Government. The skins of foetuses in both the first and second trimesters were used in the manufacture of local drums. Foetal carcasses were processed as pet foods by dog and cat owners. Some foetal tissues could be preserved for use in the laboratories for research purposes. Such utilization of foetuses has reduced losses which they brought about when there was no need for them.

Key words: Bovine foetus, salvage value

INTRODUCTION

The report of foetal wastage in Ogun State abattoirs has been documented (Oyekunle *et al.*, 1992). The authors observed that one foetus was wasted for every 8 cattle slaughtered in the abattoirs between 1984 and 1989. Matthew *et al.* (1982) also reported the recovery of foetuses from slaughtered cattle in four zones (Kaduna, Jos, Enugu and Ibadan) in Nigeria. Similar study on foetal wastage in abattoir and slaughter slabs of Oyo State, Nigeria was also investigated (Abiola, 1996). Recovered foetuses from pregnant cattle used to be condemned by meat inspectors in the country. However, in recent times, three categories of people in Ogun State; viz-Leather tanners, pet owners and local drummers utilise such foetuses for commercial purposes depending on the age and size of the

foetus. This paper examines the salvage value of bovine foetuses recovered from abattoirs and slaughter slabs in Ogun State, Nigeria, between 1990 - 1994.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The salvage value of bovine foetuses in slaughtered cattle of Ogun State, Nigeria was monitored for five years (1990-1994). Details recorded were the total cattle slaughtered during the period which comprised bulls and cows. The pregnant cows slaughtered in the state were categorised into 3 stages of pregnancy i.e. first, second and third trimesters. User of skins of bovine foetuses were also categorised into 3 groups namely, leather tanners, local drummers and pet owners.. The number of skins tanned and revenue generated from the sale of shoes produced from skins of bovine foetuses were also investigated.

Data collected were analysed using descriptive analysis such as simple averages, ratios and percentages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of cattle slaughter-statistics in Ogun State, Nigeria between 1990-1994 are presented in Table 1. Total cattle slaughtered were 90,417 out of which 50,802 were bulls (56.19%) while 39,615 were cows (43.81%) giving a sex ratio of 1.28 to 1 for bulls and cows slaughtered. Wehke *et al.* (1992) reported a sex ratio of 2.81 to 1 for bulls and cows slaughtered in major abattoirs of Port-Harcourt in Rivers State of Nigeria. Out of the 39,615 cows slaughtered in Ogun State during the period under review, 9,675 were pregnant (24.42%). The number of pregnant cows in the first trimester was 6,229, second

TABLE 1: CATTLE SLAUGHTER STATISTICS IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA (1990 - 1994)

Years	Total Cattle Slaughtered	No. of Bulls Slaughtered	No. of Pregnant Cows Slaughtered	Stages of Pregnancy		
				First Trimester	Second Trimester	Third Trimester
1990	20,511	10,658	1,977	1,186	494	297
1991	20,402	11,828	1,886	1,225	377	284
1992	22,551	13,311	2,679	1,875	536	268
1993	15,613	8,433	1,795	1,067	449	269
1994	11,340	6,572	1,338	866	267	205
Total	90,417	50,802	9,675	6,229	2,123	1,323
Mean	18,083.40	10,160.40	1,935.00	1,245.80	424.60	264.60
S.E.	1,895.78	1,118.33	215.69	168.91	47.31	15.80

Source: Veterinary Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, Ogun State, Nigeria, 1995

trimester was 2,123 while third trimester was 1,323. The major concern about the slaughtering of pregnant cows is the enormous foetal wastage and the reduction in cattle population. Other economic implications associated with slaughtering of pregnant cows were reported by Oyekunle *et. al.* (1992) and Abiola (1996). The effects of inadvertent slaughtering of pregnant ruminants on the meat industry have been investigated. Wythes *et. al.*, (1990) indicated that pregnancy in slaughter cows significantly reduced both carcass weight and meat yield. The incidences of dark cutting from pregnant heifers has been documented (Kreikemeier *et. al.*, 1993).

Results of skins tanned, shoes produced and revenue realised during the period of study are presented in Table 2. The only skins tanned in the state were mainly from bovine foetuses with hairs on. Such skins were

usually obtained from the third trimester foetuses. Skins of bovine foetuses with hairs on are preferred to the hides and skins of mature animals because the former cannot be infected with parasitic diseases like mange and streptothricosis. However, skins from first and second trimester foetuses were used mainly for the manufacture of local drums. A total of 327 bovine foetus skins were tanned to produce leathers for the manufacture of 439 pairs of shoes between 1990-1994. Total revenue realised was ₦33,124 for the State Government in 5 years. After the removal of skins, foetal carcasses were usually processed as pet foods by boiling in salt solution. Although slaughtering of pregnant animals should not be encouraged, where such cases occur accidentally, tissues from recovered foetuses can be prepared and sold to laboratories for research purposes to generate further income.

TABLE 2: SKIN AND LEATHER DEVELOPMENT FROM BOVINE FOETUS IN OGUN STATE

Years	Number of Skins Tanned	Pair of Shoe Produced	Revenue Realised (N)
1990	91	131	7,217
1991	102	135	8,556
1992	49	85	6,293
1993	10	25	3,408
1994	75	63	7,650
Total	327	439	33,124
Mean	65.40	87.80	6,504.80
S.E.	15.34	19.39	822.56

Source: Hides, Skins and Leather Development Project, Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, Ogun State, Nigeria, 1995

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