

SEAG-Symposium, 27.-31.8.2001, Los Baños, The Philippines

“Resource Management:
Private-Public Partnership and Knowledge Sharing”

**Utilization of natural feed resources
for sustainable animal production in Cambodia.**

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Abstract

The main crops, cultivated by Cambodian farmers, along the Mekong river either for their own food supply or for sale in the country are maize, soy bean, green bean, red bean, sweet potato and cassava. Of these cassava and sweet potato are fast growing local crops of which the farmers only utilise the roots and tubers for human consumption, whereas the leaves and stems are thrown away. In comparison with other cultivated crops, cassava and sweet potato are relatively cheaper. The low market value and reported high nutritive value of the cassava leaves make them suitable as animal feed in a sustainable animal production system in the rural areas in Cambodia.

Laboratory Analyses carried out at the Martin-Luther-University in Halle (Germany) during June, 2001 confirmed that the cassava leaves have a high crude protein content (28,3 % in DM) and a high metabolisable energy content. Cassava leaf meal can be incorporated up to 20% in the chicken diet (Gomey et al., 1983 and Ravindran et al., 1986). The energy rich roots of sweet potato can replace maize up to a level of 40 % in the diet of growing pigs (Dominguez, 1992). Cassava- and sweet potato leaves as well as sugar cane leaves and their by-products can be utilised as feed supply for ruminants during the dry season.

The utilisation of natural feed resources can lead to reduced cost of production. On the other hand crossing of local races with exotic breeds to produce animals with higher genetic potential for production, simultaneously adapted to high temperatures (prevailing in the tropics), and with resistance against local diseases will improve performance if suitable feed is available. Both options, therefore, should be exploited simultaneously to synergistically contribute to increased production and respond to the demand of the free market and, consequently, to increase the family income of the farmers in Cambodia.

Keywords : Cassava; sweet potatoes; sugar cane; poultry; pig; ruminant