

CHARACTERIZATION AND EVALUATION OF INDIGENOUS BREEDS OF LIVESTOCK—II. PIGS

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Although the indigenous breed of pig constitutes about 80 per cent of the pig population in the country, it has only been subjected to very limited scientific evaluation. The data used in this study was obtained from a nucleus herd of indigenous pigs maintained at the Swine Production Unit of the University of Peradeniya.

The indigenous pig is small in size. The height at shoulders for adult males and females are 60.2 ± 0.9 and 49.3 ± 1.9 cm respectively. The adult body weights of males and females were 45.9 and 36.6 kg respectively. The pig is characterized by short legs that result in the abdomen being almost dragged on the ground in pregnant females and a pronounced snout. The predominant colours are black or darker shades of grey. Light tan coloured pigs with horizontal stripes are also occasionally seen, thus linking the origin of the indigenous breed to Asiatic wild pig (*Sus scrofa vittatus*) which still abounds the jungles of Sri Lanka.

The litter sizes at birth and weaning were 6.35 and 4.17, respectively. The mean body weights at birth, weaning and six months were 0.59, 5.14 and 14.71 kg for males and 0.53, 5.01 and 13.16 kg for females, respectively. Castration resulted in a faster growth rate of indigenous males. Considerable improvement in reproductive and growth traits can be expected by crossbreeding the indigenous pigs with exotic breeds such as Large White.