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A preliminary investigation on Guinea Pigs (*Cavia porcellus*) under Sri Lankan farm conditions

A study was conducted to observe the management standards of guinea pigs and to evaluate their performance under Sri Lankan mid country farm conditions. A group of fifteen males and ten female guinea pigs were selected for the study. Quantities of feed (Guinea grass, broiler finisher) and water consumed were measured daily during the experimental period of two months. The growth parameters (body weight, length and height) were recorded at three days interval up to two months. The carcass parameters were taken from a group of twenty - five guinea pigs.

Among the growth parameters, two sexes showed no significant difference in body weight throughout the experimental period except at the final stage ($p < 0.05$). Irrespective of the sex, the increase of body weight at early stage of growth was significant ($p < 0.05$) and later became non-significant.

During the growth, the height and length of male guinea pigs were significantly higher than those of females. Age x Sex interaction had no significant effect on growth parameters except for height where the interaction was significant.

The feeding pattern of guinea pigs revealed that a large proportion (67% on dry matter basis) of feed requirement can be replaced by grass. However, the total feed intake and daily water requirement changed according to the body weight.

The high dressing percentage of guinea pigs (44.5%) which is comparable with the of rabbits and goats, shows their potential as a meat producer.