

Report on research and training in animal science at Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania: 1969 to 1990

R. L. Kurwijila and M. Mgheni

Department of Animal Science and Production, Sokoine University of Agriculture, PO Box 3004 Morogoro, Tanzania

University level training in agriculture started at Morogoro in 1969. Training in animal production aspects at BSc level has until now been part of a 3-year BSc Agriculture degree with optional specialization during the final year of study. As part of the curriculum review exercise we have carried out a detailed analysis of our past record of research and training with a view to restructuring our programmes to accommodate changing needs and developments in animal production in Tanzania in the years ahead.

All BSc undergraduates undertake a special research project in the final year. Between 1977 and 1989, postgraduate training at MSc and PhD level has been conducted successfully as a sandwich programme between Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) and the Agricultural University of Norway at Ås.

Since January 1990, the MSc programme has been fully transferred to SUA with a biennial intake of 12 graduate students. The BSc programme is currently under review to accommodate a 4-year BSc study in Animal Science with an intake of about 35 students per year. Data on training output (1969 to 1990) was obtained from University records while a list of BSc, MSc and PhD dissertations was compiled from library archives and classified according to researcher category, animal species/research objectives and research discipline.

Since 1969, over 200 undergraduates have been trained in the Animal Science option. Over 50 candidates have graduated at MSc level while 14 have been awarded PhDs through coursework and research. Out of MSc and PhD graduates, 18% are deployed in University teaching, 27% in research and training institutions, 24% in government ministries and another 24% in public and private companies. While employers are satisfied with job performance

of postgraduates, they feel undergraduates are not adequately prepared to undertake practical jobs in the field. Studies on the use of locally available foodstuffs, including pasture and forages, have been the main thrust of thesis research. Dairy cattle and poultry have been the most researched animal species followed by pigs and goats mostly in connexion with feeding experiments. At all levels of the research and training hierarchy, foodstuff evaluation and animal nutrition has received the highest attention while breeding work has been limited to PhD research. Non-conventional animal species such as guinea-fowl, turkeys, ducks etc., as well as fish, have not received attention at the Department of Animal Science and Production and are not given emphasis in the existing curricula.

Apart from academic degree research, a number of development-oriented research projects have been initiated by individual staff and or the department and financed by various international donor agencies. Most of these projects have as their main objectives the introduction into the rural farming communities, of various technical interventions and packages which have emanated from the research that has been carried out at the university or elsewhere.

The frequency of academic degree research activities that have been devoted to any particular discipline is a reflexion of perceived priorities by staff/student, academic staff specializations and available resources in terms of, time, finance, animal and laboratory facilities. Improved training and research output is expected in future as a result of upgrading of facilities currently in progress following the full transfer of the MSc programme to SUA, revision of taught curricula for both BSc and MSc programmes and formulation of research priorities based on a national research masterplan.