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PRESS RELEASE

First piglets produced using Artificial Insemination Technology

Makerere University College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CAES) has successfully helped a pig farmer located in KIRA town council to produce twelve 12 piglets by using Artificial Insemination technology in pigs. The first delivery was reported on the 13th November 2011. Other pigs were inseminated and are still under the gestation period.

The research work has been going on for two and half years at Makerere University Research Institute Kabanyolo (MUARIK) as a pilot project to evaluate the performance of Artificial Insemination technology in pigs in Uganda. Despite the fact that Artificial Insemination in pigs is widely practiced elsewhere, it has not been successfully implemented in Uganda due to lack of skilled manpower and technical preservation of the semen.

As a result piggery farmers in Uganda have been facing challenges of accessing quality and disease free boars (male pig) to fertilize the females and many times expose their sows (female pig) to diseases like the African swine fever.

It is against this background that a research team from the Department of Agricultural Production led by Prof. David Mutetikka with Dr. Leonard Kawule and Robert Natumanya as co-investigators embarked on this research to help piggery farmers in Uganda.

Investigators have succeeded in training boars for semen collection and established a *boar stud* at MUARIK with five trained boars for collection of good semen. The second breakthrough was the making of a *local diluent* that is able to keep boar semen for 3 to 4 days. Keeping boar semen before was a challenge but now we are able to keep semen. The third success story we are celebrating is the ability to inseminate a sow and produce piglets.

As a college, the next strategy is to roll the technology to the farmers. We are establishing a boar stud (Artificial Insemination unit) at MUARIK to collect, examine, package and distribute good genes to piggery farmers to reduce the risk of diseases.

Given the fact that piggery is a profitable business venture that can be practiced by both the rural and urban rich and poor, the college is set to promote the rearing of high quality breeds of pigs through careful selection of good boars to increase farmers' productivity and income.

In our effort to promote Agriculture and contribute towards addressing the problem of unemployment, we want to engage the youth at the level of senior six by training them to be able to administer this technology and to set up their own farms.

We call upon piggery farmers to adopt this technology as a cheaper and safer option than using boars that require lots of feeds and space on the farm and at times transmit diseases. Farmers who want this service are advised to first observe gilts/sows on heat (*Omusaloo* in Luganda) and call **0718085081 or 0752974737** as early as possible. For sows that have been weaned, start to observe or check for heat on the 3rd day after weaning, in the morning and evening. Sows should come on heat within a week after weaning. We also encourage every farmer to keep records of their pigs.

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