

A SUCCESSFUL PIG FARMER

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Mrs Agnes Tegura is a member of the Mogae Nambuga clan whose land is located on the edge of Mount Hagen township.

In 1969, Mrs Tegura purchased 3.6 ha of land from the Onambi clan. The land is next to the Kindeng Land Settlement Scheme in the Wahgi Valley. She also farms 3.6 ha which previously belonged to her father.

Mrs Tegura is a successful farmer. She has used the earnings from her farm business to buy trucks, and now, with her husband Joseph Tegura, also operates a successful trucking business.

Her commercial agricultural business includes pig-raising, sweet potato, peanut and coffee production. She also grows cabbages, pumpkins, taro, winged bean, pineapples and pawpaws for sale in the Mount Hagen market.

When possible, Mrs Tegura sells the farm produce in the market herself. She is helped

by four women from her family. Six labourers do the heavier farm work such as digging drains and building fences.

Mrs Tegura says that pigs, peanuts and sweet potato are her most important agricultural enterprises. Of these the pig-raising requires most attention and at the same time provides most income. Her 75 pigs are managed in the traditional way, grazed on grass fallow during the day, fed cooked sweet potato in the evening and housed at night.

It is interesting that Mrs Tegura, who is a very successful pig farmer, is grazing her pigs while many blockholders on the land settlement scheme next to her farm have been enthusiastic about permanently housed pigs. In fact, most of these intensive piggeries have proved unsuccessful.*

* R.P. Freund. Bank Loans. Do they promote development. 1976 Waigani Seminar paper.



Agnes Tegura

Mrs Tegura supports her choice of the grazing method of pig raising with some interesting opinions on permanently housed pigs. She believes that permanently housed pigs require too high a level of management particularly in feeding and the control of external parasites. The water needed for adequate hygiene in cement-floored piggeries is often not available. The result is more disease and external parasites in permanently housed pigs.

Mrs Tegura also says that the use of protein concentrate produces meat which is unsuitable for the local market. Such meat must be eaten soon after being removed from the mumu or it will become rotten. On the other hand, meat from village grazed pigs fed only sweet potato will keep for two or three days after being cooked. Also, the feeding of protein concentrate produces a tender skin. This means the use of leg ropes causes injuries.

However, Mrs Tegura does prefer the crossbred of the European and Papua New

Guinean pig breeds because they grow faster and larger than either of the parent breeds, in village conditions.

Fencing is becoming more important in the area where Mrs Tegura has her farm. The larger numbers of people and gardens (and pigs) now are resulting in more damage to gardens than in the past. In her opinion the fairly large capital expense of building a pig wire fence is money well spent. The pig wire fence needs less labour to build, less labour to maintain, and lasts longer than a bush materials fence. (The pig wire fence used on the farm covers about 0.5 ha and is moved around the farm as required.)

As well as caring for her farm and trucking business, Mrs Tegura finds time to attend regular meetings of the Melpa Area Authority and the PNG Transport Commission. In addition, she has taught the staff and students of Vudal Field Station something about the traditional culture of highlands food crops such as sweet potato and winged bean.



Mrs Tegura's pigs graze in a grass paddock, and are fed cooked sweet potato in the evening.