

General Tips and Advice

- Grow fodder for pigs to reduce reliance on commercial feed, as local pigs typically have low Feed Conversion Ratios (FCR) and Average Daily Gains (ADG).
- Implement paddock rotation to prevent over-rooting and maintain pasture quality.
- Separate pigs by age and size rather than mixing them to improve management and reduce stress.

Pigs' protection from diseases

- Visitors should not be allowed entry, or must change clothes and shoes before entering.
- Feeding materials should be dedicated exclusively to pig use.
- Equipment should be used only for pig-raising purposes.
- Staff must change shoes and thoroughly wash hands before and after handling pigs.
- Boars should never be shared between groups.



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Our farmer's experience



Merci Farm, located in Laos, began its journey in late 2022 with the goal of helping smallholder farmers adopt sustainable agricultural practices. The name “Merci” (meaning “thank you” in French) reflects gratitude for the collaborative efforts that brought this farm to life. It functions both as a working farm and a permaculture learning garden, emphasizing eco-friendly farming methods that help local communities adapt to the impacts of climate change. The farm blends traditional Lao agricultural wisdom with modern, sustainable techniques.

Mr. Phaeng XAPHOKHAME, the farm’s owner, is passionate about sharing his knowledge. After learning about permaculture and organic farming in Australia, he returned to Laos to implement these practices.

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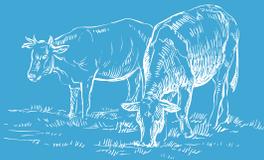
Technical Leaflet SEMI-INTENSIVE LOCAL PIG RAISING SYSTEM



Location of implementation
Luangprabang, Lao PDR

Agroecological system:

Zone	Main activities	Climate	Rainfalls	Temperature
Plain	rice/ vegetable	Seasonally tropical (rainy season: June to October)	~ 1300 mm/year	Avg max: 35°C - Avg min: 14°C



Introduction

Semi-intensive local pig raising system

This technical leaflet provides practical guidelines and practices for establishing and managing a semi-intensive local pig raising system. It covers aspects such as housing setup, paddock fencing, feeding strategies, and crop production to support pig nutrition. Emphasizing agroecological principles, this guide promotes environmentally friendly practices that maintain soil health, biodiversity, and resource efficiency. Designed for small to medium-scale farmers, the leaflet aims to optimize animal welfare, improve feed efficiency, and enhance farm productivity through cost-effective and well-planned methods.

Step 01: Pig Housing and Fencing



- Within the paddocks, allocate at least 40m² of space per piglet to support healthy growth and minimize stress.
- Welded iron mesh fencing is durable but often too expensive. Use electric fencing as a more cost-effective solution to subdivide paddocks. A fence height of approximately 1 meter is generally sufficient for piglets and growing pigs.
- Build a feed preparation unit (pig kitchen) for cooking or processing pig feed.

Step 02: Farm Crop Production



- To support sustainable pig feeding, grow a variety of crops on the farm such as maize, cassava, taro (from natural sources), banana trees (for stems and fruits), pumpkin, and forage legumes like stylo and Napier grass. Cassava and legume species are highly recommended due to their nutritional value.
- Pig feed should come from three sources: natural forage, farm-grown crops, and external market inputs. This combination ensures feed security, lowers costs, and enhances farm resilience.

Step 03: Feeding and Management



- Pigs are usually fed twice daily, in the morning and evening, with feeding frequency and quantity adjusted based on their age, weight, and production stage (e.g., growers, finishers, pregnant sows). The proportion of each feed type should be adjusted according to daily availability.
- Monitor how quickly pigs eat; if food remains after 5–7 minutes, the portion is too large and should be reduced.
- For young pigs and females before mating, add a small amount (about one handful) of commercial feed to their cooked food.
- When transitioning young pigs from maternal milk to cooked feed, diarrhea may occur; adding bananas or charcoal to their diet can help alleviate this issue.

Merci Farms' disposition

Pig housing

- Pig housing consists of 5 paddocks, each measuring 400 m². One with 10 piglets, 2 contains one pregnant females, another with 2 boars and the last one contains 3 rooms with 3 females waiting for mating.
- Initially started with 3 females and one boar for a cost of 20 000 000 Lak.

Farm grow-crop

- Estimated annual cost of 17 million (to be verified) for purchasing additional feed from external sources, including ham, rice bran, vitamins, commercial feed, and cooked food.
- Cultivation area includes 1 hectare of cassava and 2000 m² are allocated for maize cultivation.