

Full Length Research Paper

Incidence of Cattle Fetal Wastage Slaughtered at Sokoto Modern Abattoir, Sokoto State, Nigeria

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A study was conducted at the Sokoto Modern Abattoir, Sokoto North- Western Nigeria for nine (9) months to investigate fetal wastage and determine age at which such fetuses were recovered using crown rump length (CRL) of the fetuses within the study period. A total of 44,114 cattle were slaughtered within the study period with 24, 345 (55.2%) bulls and 19, 796 (44.8%) cow respectively. Of the former 1, 292 (6.5%) were pregnant, thus resulting in the recovery of 1, 292 fetuses. Classification of the fetuses recovered showed 686 (53.1) to be males and 606 (46.9%) female. Using measurement of the crown rump length in their (fetuses) age estimation showed that, 61 (4.7%) fetuses were within their first trimesters, 111 (86%) of the fetuses were within their second trimesters and 120 (9.3%) of the fetuses were within their third trimesters. After evisceration, the female reproductive tracts were examined through palpation especially from the body of uterus cranially through the uterine horns and gravid uteri were exposed to remove the fetus. The crown rump length were measured and used to determine gestational age. External genital structures like vulva opening, labiae and scrotum, prepuce pouch, penis were used to classify the fetuses into female and male respectively. These biometric data were documented daily for the period of the study before being analyzed. Result shown that more bulls were slaughtered when compared to cows, more male fetuses recovered with those recovered during the second trimester being the highest followed by those recovered at third trimester and the first trimester being the least.

Key words: Gestation, trimester, crown rump length, fetus, cattle.

INTRODUCTION

The conversion of beast to meat is the major activity taking place daily at abattoirs across the world. This is to meet the demand for wholesome meat ensuring attainment of protein requirement of man. The act is not without some unethical practice amongst which is the slaughter of pregnant animals. Slaughtering pregnant animals is not only unethical but contributes to the bane in livestock development of any nation. These animals are ignorantly and most often arrogantly slaughtered to

meet economic needs of their owners.

The daily 35g/person Food and Agriculture Organization/World Health Organization (FAO/WHO) 1983 animal protein requirement is still not tenable for an average Nigerian that consumes less than 10g of daily. This cannot be unconnected with the diminishing production output of the national herd (Oyenuga 1987). Animals mostly slaughtered for consumption in our abattoirs are cattle, sheep and goat. Others include poultry, pigs' rabbit and some captured from games popularly referred to as bush meat (Alabi, 1993).

Conceptual wastages with some at advanced stages of gestation resulting in the slaughter of pregnant animals (cows) are a common avoidable practice in abattoirs if

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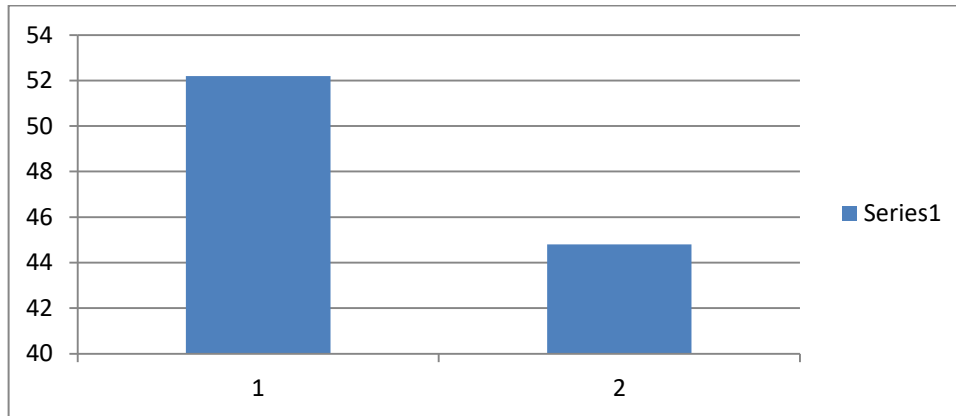


Table 1: Monthly records of cattle slaughtered between April and December 2013 at Sokoto Modern Abattoir

S/NO	Month	NCS	NBS	NCOS
1	April	3960	2100	1860
2	May	4557	2387	2170
3	June	4380	2070	2310
4	July	4402	2697	1705
5	August	7038	4899	2139
6	September	4301	2100	2201
7	October	5115	2542	2573
8	November	5370	2760	2610
9	December	4991	2790	2201

Keys: NCS: Number of cattle slaughtered; NBS: Number of bulls slaughtered; NCOS: Number of cows slaughtered

Table 2: Monthly records of fetuses recovered during the study period and their sexes

S/NO	Month	MF	FF
1	April	62	62
2	May	74	60
3	June	87	86
4	July	95	75
5	August	56	50
6	September	89	71
7	October	73	70
8	November	82	74
9	December	68	58
	Total	686	606

Keys: MF: Male fetuses; FF: Female Fetuses

proper sanctions are put in place and properly enforced. Previous information on fetal wastages is available but there is dearth of information on subsequent age determination of such wastages, this therefore informed the need to carry out this research.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Daily record of slaughtering activities of cows at the Sokoto Modern Abattoir was carried out for nine months from April through December. At post mortem after



Plate I: Photograph showing picture of a recovered fetus

Table 3: Monthly numbers of fetuses recovered at different gestational period (trimester) and their percentages during the study period

S/NO	Gestational Period	Number	Percentage (%)
1	First trimester	61	4.7
2	Second trimester	1111	86
3	Third trimester	120	9.3
	TOTAL	1292	100

evisceration of cow carcasses, the whole female reproductive tract were examined and palpated and those with apparent evidence pregnancy evidenced by palpation of hard mass within the uterus or enlargement were incised with scalpel blade through hysterotomy. Conspectuses were removed and the crown rump length measured with measuring tape and documented. External genital organs such as scrotum, prepuce, penis and vulva opening, labiae were respectively used to classify the recovered fetus(es) as male and female respectively. Photographic documentation of recovered fetus(es) was obtained.

RESULTS

During the study period under review a total of 44,114 cattle were slaughtered, with 24,345 (55.2%) bulls and 19,796 (44.8%) cows. The number of pregnant cows were 1,292 (6.5%) and equals the number of fetuses recovered during the period under review.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The total number of cattle slaughtered at the Sokoto Modern Abattoir during the study period was 44,114 giving an average of 163 and average of 4,901 cattle being slaughtered daily and monthly respectively. This is higher than the figure of 145.9 and 3,778 obtained for daily and monthly slaughter by (Oduguwa *et al* 2013) in Abeokuta abattoir, record of 7 per day and 195 cattle slaughtered daily and monthly recorded at Gboko abattoir (Odoh *et al* 2008).

During the study period, 6.5% of cows slaughtered were pregnant this result is very close to the 7.8% pregnant cows slaughtered obtained in a study by (Oyekunle *et al* 1992) and Abdulkadir *et al* (2008) who reported 7.73% but less than 10.7% reported by Oduguwa *et al* (2013).

The unethical practice of slaughtering pregnant animals especially cow still persist despite effort by researcher to bring the notice of the unwholesome act to the stakeholders. In our study we discovered that more bulls

were slaughtered than the cows, this is attributed to more values attached to the cows than the bulls as most cattle slaughtered in our abattoirs were mostly purchased from local herdsmen.

This study also revealed more fetuses were recovered at second trimester of pregnancy followed by third and first trimester being the least.

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