

Problems and prospects of pig breeding, sheep breeding and other branches of livestock production in connection with the war in Ukraine

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Abstract. The main problems of Ukrainian livestock production as a result of hostilities and the Russian occupation were and still are the destruction or failure of livestock premises, equipment, technical vehicles, farm infrastructure, destruction or loss of livestock. The death, departure from the combat zone of the service personnel, specialists and management of farms, problems with providing livestock enterprises with fuel and lubricants, electricity, natural gas, etc., also had a negative impact. Expropriation, confiscation, theft of animals, products, vehicles, fodder, consumables, equipment by the invaders led to the curtailment of production. It became impossible to carry out sowing, cultivation and purchase of fodder crops, to carry out normal sales of products and financial activities. All this led to a significant reduction in the number of farm animals and their productivity. Ukrainian livestock breeders are finding effective ways out of a critical situation or reducing negative consequences. Thus, Russia's blockade of the sea transportation of Ukrainian grain led to the use of a larger amount of grain feed inside Ukraine for breeding pigs and birds. Therefore, the number of pigs has already been increasing and currently amounts to about 5.3 million heads. Scientists have suggested implementing measures to restore animal husbandry and the fodder base by involving in the production of agricultural lands that were affected by hostilities. It is proposed to use sheep and goats in the development of territories abandoned as a result of military operations. These animals are planned to graze on fields that are not cultivated.

Key words: livestock, pigs, sheep, fodder, war

Introduction

Animal husbandry of Ukraine fell into a critical situation during the war. Already in the spring of 2022, the Russian troops captured a huge Ukrainian territory, which in peacetime was the home to many livestock farms. At the same time, both small farms and large agricultural holdings were affected.

Materials and methods

The object of the study was livestock breeding in Ukraine during the Russian-Ukrainian war for the period 2022-2024. The dynamics of the animal population of various species and production equipment based on open sources have been studied. Prospective ways of the response of animal breeders to critical situations have been worked out and highlighted.

Results and discussion

The main problems of animal husbandry during the occupation were and remain today:

- ✓ destruction or disabling of livestock facilities, equipment, technical vehicles, farm infrastructure as a result of hostilities (Fig. 1);
- ✓ destruction or loss of farm animals that entered the war zone;
- ✓ the death, departure from the combat zone of service personnel, specialists and management of farms, or the inability of employees to perform their official duties;
- ✓ problems with providing livestock enterprises with fuel and lubricants, electricity, natural gas, etc.;
- ✓ expropriation, confiscation, theft of animals, products, vehicles, fodder, consumables, equipment and other things by invaders;
- ✓ the impossibility of planting, growing and purchasing fodder crops, which led to the reduction or elimination of the animal population, even if the premises and equipment of the farm were not affected;
- ✓ territories that are mined or saturated with explosive devices, and therefore unsuitable for agricultural production;
- ✓ violation of product sales channels;
- ✓ financial collapse in the zone of occupation, which led to the termination of commodity-monetary relations in a large part of the occupied territory and the “gray zone”.

The above and many other negative factors caused by the war led to a significant reduction in the number of farm animals and their productivity in Ukraine. This applies to all branches of livestock without exception.

In particular, as of January 1, 2023, the pig population in Ukraine has decreased by 11.8% compared to the pre-war level, mostly due to the war, and amounted to 4.95 million heads. As of the same date, the number of cattle and cows has decreased by about 10% compared to the pre-war period.

Unfortunately, the war continues, and the situation may worsen further. However, in order to, at least partially keep the situation under control, certain measures are already being developed and implemented. These measures can contribute to the improvement of the situation in animal husbandry, clearing of territories from explosive objects, as well as their restoration and development as soon as possible.



Fig. 1. Ukrainian livestock farm damaged by the war.

In particular, Russia's blockade of sea transportation of Ukrainian grain, especially in 2022, led to the use of a larger amount of grain feed inside Ukraine. Therefore, the number of pigs is already increasing and currently amounts to about 5.3 million heads. Similar trends are also observed with regard to the poultry population. At present, a number of scientists have suggested implementing measures to restore livestock and fodder base by involving in the production of agricultural lands affected by hostilities.

In particular, former agricultural land in or near war zones usually occupies huge areas. Their examination and demining by relevant specialists (Fig. 2), despite the lack of personnel, are being gradually carried out. However, it is difficult to guarantee complete security. At the same time, weeds grow profusely in abandoned fields every year. Together with the remnants of vegetation from past years, wild plants form thickets that are difficult to pass through. These thickets complicate both the survey of the areas and their further use.

Scientists and animal breeders suggest using sheep and goats in the development of territories abandoned as a result of military operations. These animals are planned to graze on fields that are not cultivated. This will make it possible to attract the vegetative mass of plants, growing on their own, to livestock production. The biological and economic features of these animals contribute to this. Thus, their ability to process low-quality vegetative forages with a high fiber content makes it possible to effectively use wild herbage. (Шабля, Шабля, Задорожна, 2024). Herding and the ability to make long transitions facilitate grazing and provide better clearing of fields from vegetation. A minimum need for equipment and maintenance personnel allows you to significantly minimize costs.



Fig. 2. Fields neglected due to the war in the process of demining.

An additional incentive for the development of animal husbandry in Ukraine this year can be a separate state budget subsidy to farmers from de-occupied territories and those territories where hostilities have ended. In addition, a special budget subsidy is provided for keeping animals.

Conclusions

The Russian-Ukrainian war led to a number of significant problems in the livestock industry of Ukraine, such as the destruction of infrastructure, a decrease in the number of animals and others. However, after the initial shock, Ukrainian livestock farmers have been gradually recovering and now there is a tendency to restore some industries.

Literature

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