

RECENT PROSPERITY OF WILD BOAR COMMERCIALIZATION IN JAPAN

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Trading and hunting of Japanese Wild boar (*Sus scrofa leucomystax*) in the 20th century were studied by questionnaires to 419 hunter groups of 34 prefectures with Wild boar. Before World War 2, Wild boar was not popular game animal and traded in several restricted prefectures. However, after the high economic growth period since 1960, Wild boar meat has become popular especially in tourist resorts. At present, 49% hunter groups trade the animals with various dealers (Fig. 1) and the big market channels have developed all over Japan; they consist of retail stores in every prefecture, whole sale stores and brokers in 70% prefectures (Fig. 2). Increasing demand lifted up the commercial value to more than 1,000 U.S.\$ per animal. This situation has stimulated a rise

in number of Wild boar hunters and improved the hunting methods. At present 57% of hunter groups use wired leg traps. This method has never been popular because it needs troublesome labor for patrolling traps. However, extension of roads in montane areas and spread of radio telemetry have improved this methods easy and effective; single hunters can harvest many wild boars from broad areas. This method is also preferred by dealers, because it does not damage animal body but only one leg. As the Japanese game law set up no limit and no control of the Wild boar trade, this species may be decreased rapidly in near future by strong hunting pressure caused by recent increasing demand.

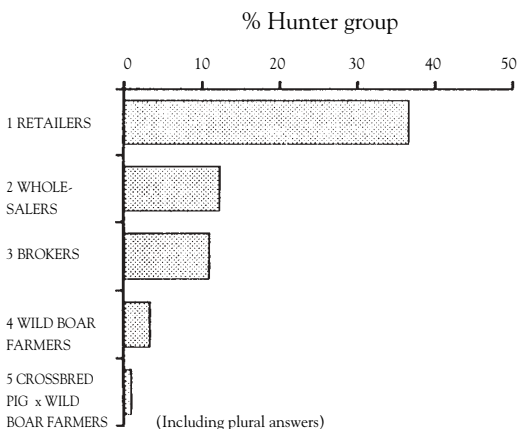


Figure 1 - Dealers with which hunter groups trade harvested wild boars in Japan.

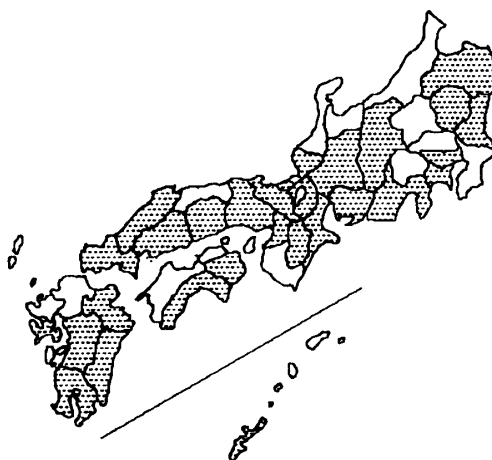


Figure 2 - Present distribution of prefectures with wholesale stores or brokers in Japan.