

Raising Fine Hogs in the Northwest

Some Ideas on the Best Way to Breed and Produce the Farmers' Mortgage Lifters.

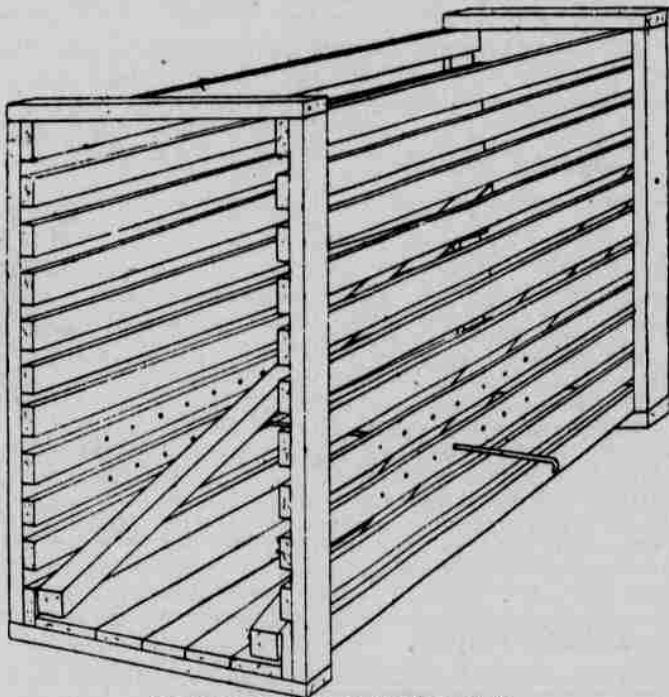
By JAMES E. WITHYCOMBE and E. L. POTTER.

There has been no more ardent enthusiast of the hog than James E. Withycombe, nor has there been any greater friend of the farmer. The article below, the first of a series concerning hogs, we believe will prove of general interest.

THE best device for feeding is a flat-bottomed trough about ten inches wide and five inches deep. This trough should run across the end of the pen next to the alley. It will extend in front of the door leading into the feed alley, but this will not be an

mistake with grades. He should not buy too many; four or five will be plenty. Many men have made failures by plunging abruptly into the hog industry on a large scale. A large hog farm, like any other large business, must be started modestly and built up from its own profits. One should not become excited about the stories he reads of the fabulous profits in hog raising. Hog raising is a good conservative and profitable business, with a very bright future in this state, but it is not a "get-rich-quick" scheme.

If possible the first sows should be bought in the winter, already bred. In this way it will not be necessary to buy a boar the first year, especially with only a few sows, and at the end of a year it will be an easier matter to



An Admirable Type of Breeding Crate.

inconvenience, as it is low and easy to step over. If made to extend only to the door it will not be large enough to accommodate the pigs the pens will properly hold. It is quite common in the corn belt to build a small feeding floor in the outside lot and put the trough on that. The corn is commonly fed in the ear and the ears are scattered about on the floor. Where small grain is fed such feeding floors are not so common, but they have a considerable advantage in forcing the pigs to get out into the open.

In Eastern Oregon and Eastern Washington where the hog lots are large and on dry, well-drained ground, such floors will be quite an advantage, and they entail no additional expense, since the house may be made smaller. A 6x8 pen with the feeding done outside will be as satisfactory as an 8x10 pen with the feeding done inside. Often where feeding is done in this manner the house is simply a long shed about 10 feet wide, with the roof sloping to the north and connecting pens on the south. The feed floors are then placed at the end of the lot farthest from the house. Where individual houses are used the feeding is usually done in this manner. Many of the best breeders follow this plan with their brood sows because of the exercise afforded. Its efficiency for fattening stock is rather doubtful.

In Western Oregon and Western Washington it is not desirable to have the pigs eating out in the rain and tilling back and forth in the mud.

Selection of the Sows.

To the beginner in the hog industry the purchase of good thrifty grade sows is recommended rather than pure bred. They will be cheaper and for economical production for the market will do just as well. No beginner should start into the pure bred hog business expecting to sell breeding stock until he has first thoroughly mastered the business of raising hogs for the market. In the first place he should have this knowledge in order to be familiar with the demands of his customers, and in the second place, pure bred hogs are expensive, and it is cheaper for the beginner to do his experimenting and make his

select the proper kind of a boar. The sow pigs will be old enough also to breed by that time, and may be bred to the new boar, whereas if they were his progeny it would not be desirable to breed back to him. Old sows are generally to be preferred to gilts, but the latter are usually much easier to obtain. Uniformity in sows is also much to be desired. For these reasons it is preferable to select from the same blood lines and even from the same breeder. Some farmers select from widely different herds in order that their sows may not be in any way related, but this is a mistake. It is preferable that all stock be closely related except the boar, which should be of unrelated, but similar blood lines.

The points to be considered in the selection of individual brood sows are: An over-fat condition should be avoided, but a marked readiness to fatten is always desired; length of body is considered an especially good point, but in general it must be remembered that any good qualities the pigs may have are to be inherited from the sows and the boar, and if the sows are coarse and roughly made the pigs are likely to inherit that tendency.

Selecting the Boar.

In selecting a boar the best should be secured—a first-class pure bred boar of the breed most suitable, and one good enough to head a pure bred herd. Especial care should be exercised in selecting a boar suitable for the sows. If the sows have produced one litter their value as breeders can be easily determined. It is a popular error to think that if the sows are faulty in some

respect the boar should be the opposite extreme, if the sows are rangy and leggy the boar with which they are mated should be the extremely short, low down, blocky type. This is a mistake. Boars should be selected which are as nearly perfect as possible in the point in which the sows are deficient, and not those which are just as bad in the other extreme. Perfection in any point is seldom obtained by breeding together two radical extremes. A good thrifty early spring pig may be used for breeding to bring pigs in the following spring, but an older boar is preferable.

If an old boar can be purchased, which some good breeder is about to discard, so much the better. A tried sire is always preferable to an untried one, and is usually purchased at less cost. A boar five or six years old should be just as good a breeder as he ever was and even more sure, providing he is active. He may, however, be a little heavy to use on young sows, thus necessitating a breeding crate. By putting the sows in this and carefully adjusting it to the size of the sows a very heavy boar may be used on light sows without danger. Some breeders use such a crate for all their sows. The construction and dimensions of such a crate are shown in cut.

Some farmers expect to get a boar for twelve or fifteen dollars. Such breeders never get very far in raising good hogs. A boar that is not worth around fifty dollars is not the proper kind. Plenty of boars can be bought for less, but not good ones. In buying sows about the usual market price per pound is customary for grades. Nice pure gilts run from \$50 up in this state. Many successful breeders prefer that their sows be pure or high grades of one breed, and that their boar be

pure of another breed. The cross bred pigs so produced are generally especially thrifty and easy to fatten.

A Few Hog Hints

If a young pig becomes chilled take it to the house and plunge it in warm water (as hot as you can bear your hand) several times, and then wrap in warm flannel and put in a warm place.

Young pigs are so partial toward foods rich in protein that they will acquire an excess of that element if given an opportunity, thereby stunting their growth.

No man that is inexperienced should undertake the business of raising hogs unless he expects to make a study of it, and to profit by his mistakes.

Ground oats, wheat bran and a little oil meal, together with some alfalfa or clover hay, will keep the brood sows from becoming feverish.

When pigs are given bad quarters they can't be expected to return good dollars.

It is a mistake if the hog is not fed in a clean place free from dust and mud.

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The Hum of the Blizzard Makes Me Smile

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