Raising Fine Hogs in the Northwest

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

This is the fifth of a series of articles by two men well informed upon what the hog can do for the Northwest.

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

NEARLY fifty experiments in pig feeding have been carried on at the Oregon Experiment Station in the last twenty years. In some cases the results have been unsatisfactory, and in others it has been necessary to duplicate the experiment a number of times before correct results could be determined. Nevertheless a number of important problems relating to the feeding of pigs, especially regarding the fattening for market, have been worked out. It will be impracticable to give a full account of each experiment, but the principal points investigated will be noted briefly.

The grain required for 100 pounds gain during the fattening stage has been a little less than that required at the eastern stations. The Oregon station has found the average to be about 450 pounds as compared with 500 pounds in the east. There are perhaps two reasons for this; first, a balanced ration has been fed in nearly all cases; second, the pigs have been fed at an earlier age. The western markets demand pigs weighing about 200 pounds, while the eastern markets prefer a pig weighing nearly 300 pounds. On exactly the same feed it will take about 50 pounds more feed to make 100 pounds gain on the larger pigs.

Ground Grain.

Ground grain has in all cases proved more economical than whole grain. This result has also been confirmed by experiments conducted by eastern stations with small grains, although eastern stations have found it unprofitable to grind corn.

Skim milk has been fed in a large number of cases as a supplement to wheat or barley, and in comparison with these grains fed alone. The gains were in all cases larger and more economical. The pigs ate better, gained more rapidly, were better finished, and brought a higher price at the close of the experiment.

Experiments Are Told.

Leaving out one experiment where the results were evidently abnormally high, and one where they were abnormally low, it was found that from 159 to 393 pounds of skim milk were required to take the place of 100 pounds of wheat or barley.

The average amount was 271 pounds. This does not apply to feeding pigs on skim milk alone, but to feeding 5 to 15 pounds per day in addition to a full grain ration. The proportion of milk to grain for the most economical gains was 3 pounds of milk to 1 pound of grain, or thereabouts. With grain at $1.25 per 100 pounds the milk might be figured to have a value of about 46 cents per 100 pounds.

This estimate would not, however, be strictly correct for two reasons. In the first place the skim milk ration was compared with a ration of straight grain, which abundant evidence has shown to be not an economical ration, and also some other supplement might have been purchased which would have given equal results at less cost than milk at 46 cents.

For example, tankage at 2½ cents per pound would have been as cheap as milk at 20 cents per 100 pounds. In the second place, the straight grain ration may have been fed at a financial loss and any profit that may have been made from the mixed ration would depend upon the cost of 271 pounds of milk being less than the cost of 100 pounds of grain.

Wheat Versus Barley.

Wheat compared with barley gave approximately the same results on the average. They were compared in a number of cases, both when fed alone and when mixed with skim milk. The chemical composition of the two grains would indicate that the wheat might be the better when fed alone and the barley when supplemented with milk, but the results were rather to the contrary. Averaging all of the results, it required 432 pounds of barley alone to make 100 pounds gain; 337 pounds of barley and 278 pounds of milk; 475 pounds of wheat alone, and 309 pounds of wheat and 264 pounds of milk. It is believed that further experiments, conducted on a larger scale, will show less difference between the two gains. Most of these experiments were conducted upon a comparatively small scale, where perhaps the individuality of a single pig might have influenced the results.

Tankage and barley vs. barley alone showed that the pigs getting the tankage made 54 per cent more gain, and that 100 pounds of the tankage took the place of 413 pounds of barley. However, it must be borne in mind that tankage and barley, a balanced ration, were fed against barley alone, which forms an unbalanced ration.

Tankage vs. skim milk is a comparison between two balanced rations. In 1910 two lots of pigs were fed, one on barley supplemented with 10 pounds of skim milk, and the other on barley with ½ pound of tankage. In order to make the rations of practically the same nutritive ratio, containing the same digestible nutrients, the pigs which were fed tankage also received about ¼ to ½ pound more barley per day than the other lot. The pigs in both lots made a gain of 1.9 pounds per day per pig, which is exceptionally good. The feed per pound of gain was also very low. The two rations therefore proved about equal, as might be expected from their composition. As to cost, the milk was a by-product of the farm and did not have a fixed market value. In this case 10 pounds of milk was equal to ½ pound of tankage and the ½ pound of barley. One-half pound of tankage costs 1¼ cents and the ½ pound of barley .62½ cents, a total of 1.87½ cents. The 10 pounds of milk had an equivalent feeding value and may therefore be considered to have a value of 1.87½ cents, or a value of 18¾ cents per hundred pounds as compared with tankage at $50 per ton and barley at $1.25 per 100 pounds.

Wheat and barley have been considered as good feed for fattening hogs, and are without doubt the best among all the cereals for this purpose. However, the experiments mentioned were undertaken for the purpose of determining the value of supplemental food that would constitute a more nearly balanced ration. The results show conclusively the economy of combining either skim milk or tankage with wheat or barley for fattening hogs.

Some Pointers On Best Bacon Type

Faulty Breeding Often Responsible When Hogs do Not Reach Packer's Ideal.

THE style of animal which best meets the bacon curer's ideal has often been spoken about, but the desired standard is not always reached, and this in many cases is due to faulty breeding.

To consider briefly one or two of the indications as to what is really a good bacon pig, we might start first from the head.

Here, length of snout, which partly includes length of jowl and the absence of loose flabbiness so frequently seen there, indicates as a rule a lengthy animal. The idea has been to reduce the cheap parts of the animal and to increase those which are dearer. On that account a light forehead is necessary, but it must not be at the expense of width of back or depth in the pig.

Narrow at Poll.

As a rule a pig narrow at the poll (between the ears) is not the widest on his top, nor is he the thriftiest of feeders. There may be exceptions to this rule, but it can be applied generally. The advantages of a prominent eye and a smooth unwrinkled jaw or cheek, as well as width between the eyes, are that they invariably indicate a smooth, lean-fleshed animal.

A short heavy head is invariably associated with a very round body and a wide and very fat back, altogether a very wasteful carcass. The neck should not be too long, otherwise it indicates weakness, and a short neck generally goes with a short side, which from the bacon point of view of course is not desirable. It is important to note the character of the middle piece.

The ribs should spring from the back, but they should not be entirely round. They should rather spring well and allow the animal to be turned out slightly flat from the sides. There will then be less wasteful fat on the top without decreasing the depth of the pig.

Maximum of Lean.

What is wanted is a pig that contains a maximum of lean meat and an undercut with as much streaky as possible. The loin should of course be covered and muscular, because so much depends on good development there. The rump should not be too straight, otherwise the hams will invariably be short. There should be no flabbiness about the hams and a well-carried tail puts finish to a pig, which helps it greatly at the time of sale to the butcher.

The quantity of bone should also be accompanied by strength of bone, because it is not possible to carry a heavy weight without substance. Round bone should be avoided as it indicates lack of breeding and is invariably associated with a fat carcass.

The pasterns should not be weak and the pig should be straight on its legs. This is likewise of great importance for exercise is necessary in the production of the best class of carcass.

These may seem small points yet they all indicate particular functions which the bacon pig is supposed to fulfill.

BRIEF DAIRY LORE.

The calf stall should be plentifully supplied with good, clean, dry bedding.

No dairyman should forget that his barn is a place where human food is produced.

Observe with care and note as a first point that a cow should have a large and ample sized body.

A brush or old whisk broom is handy to brush off loose hair and dirt from the udder before milking.

What the dairy industry needs most is an improved breed of dairymen instead of a new breed of cows.

The choice pure bred calf would be a splendid and most approprite gift for either the boy or the girl.

To a certain extent nature provides for the comfort and food supply of the dairy cow in the summer time, but if we depend too greatly upon nature in the winter time we may find our returns somewhat unsatisfactory.

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