

Information on Raising Hogs in Northwest

Greatest Returns Per Dollar of Investment When Kept on Diversified Farms.



George E. Samson.

The following able article on "Swine on the Diversified Farm" was prepared for Farm and Home Magazine Section by George E. Samson, swine specialist of Oregon Agricultural College.

SWINE have made the greatest return for each dollar invested when kept in small numbers on the mixed or diversified farm. The reasons are not hard to discover when we consider the items of expense which enter into swine raising.

The items of shelter, service, feed and fattening remain about the same per pig regardless of the number of sows kept, with the possible advantage to the large scale producer in the case of fattening pigs. But the cost of maintaining the sow is much less in the case of the small producer.

On every farm is a certain amount of waste or by-product material, which in most cases is nearly adequate to the needs of one sow during part of the year; and on most farms there is sufficient material to maintain two or more sows during part of the year, but not sufficient for one during the rest of the year. On the diversified farm, the waste products are naturally distributed a little more throughout a greater part of the year than on a specialized farm; and herein lies one advantage for the man with a mixed farm.

Lessening Risk of Loss.

Another item is the less risk of loss from disease in the case of the diversified farm carrying a few hogs. More shifting of pastures is possible where but few pigs are kept, and thus less



Poland Chinas on Diversified Farm of Thos. W. Brunk, Salem, Oregon.

likelihood of pollution of the soil and spread of disease is encountered.

The man who is depending on a few dairy cows for part of his income frequently asks us: "How many pigs will be most profitable to keep on a farm where five cows are milked and the cream sent to the creamery, the skim milk being available for pig feeding?"

Assuming an average of 15 pounds of skim milk daily from each cow, we have 75 pounds of skim milk per day. Since weaning pigs make the greatest return for skim milk and since these make most satisfactory returns when receiving not to exceed 10 pounds per

hundred of live weight, of 50-pound pigs it would require 15 to consume the skim milk to the best advantage. This would be approximately two litters of pigs.

Since the fattening pigs pay relatively less for the skim milk than do younger pigs it is obviously advantageous to have some younger pigs coming on as others are being finished for market, and this is another point for the mixed farmer. His sows may produce two litters each year, with every chance of increasing the profit from the pigs.

Use For Small Potatoes.

The farmer who raises a few acres of potatoes each year will find that the pigs will pay him a better price for small potatoes than any other stock or market. While no great item, the 15 to 25 cents per hundred which the pigs will pay for an otherwise waste product are in no wise to be despised.

In the orchard, too, pigs will consume cast fruit and destroy some insect pests which otherwise would live over to the next year to infest the new crop. Cull fruits, pomace and fruit seeds are all eaten by mature swine and afford some nutriment, though swine should not be expected to subsist entirely on such stuff. In the fall of the year farmers who have more or less oak trees on their farms frequently find acorns in abundance, and these which but for the pigs are useless, are much relished, and very nutritious to swine. Around the straw stacks of threshing yards there is generally more or less grain which the pigs may secure and clean up better than any stock on the farm.

The man who is engaged to a greater or less extent in truck farming generally finds that a greater or smaller quantity of material accrues from day to day which cannot be sold and which but for the pigs would be hard to get rid of. Practically anything which is good for human food is good for pig feed. Hence these waste products will return something to their owner instead of being a dead loss.

The Specialized Farmer.

From what has been said it might at first seem that the specialized farmer engaged in any particular line of farming would have these same products and have them in greater quantities, hence the question may be asked why should not the specialized farmer engage in pig feeding on a larger scale than a diversified farmer. The answer is clear. The specialized farmer has these products, but each of them comes during a comparatively short time of the year. In the case of diversified farming one or the other of them occurs at pretty nearly every time of the year, so that the maintenance of the sow may be decreased very materially, not through a short period of the year, but through the entire year, and since this item is the largest one to be considered in connection with pig raising it is evident that the diversified farmer has a very material advantage over the specialized farmer in producing pigs at a profit.

Method of Feeding

"THE self-feeder is a result of an attempt to decrease the labor cost incident to pork production," says Professor G. R. Samson of the animal husbandry department, Oregon Agricultural College. "The increased cost of labor is an added problem in profitable swine feeding. Indeed the problems have increased so fast there are as many for us to solve as there were for our grandfathers."

"By use of the self-feeder a correct ration can be put into the bins to last a week or more as soon as the lot of pigs are on full feed. But slight attention need be paid to feeding them for several days. An extension of the system has been made with a view to eliminate the labor of mixing feed. Several self-feeders are provided in which the ground grains and tankage are placed so that the pigs are allowed to balance their own rations. This is a good idea for the pigs make as economical use of their feed taken in this cafeteria style as the frugal New England house wife makes of her limited larder.

"At the Oregon station, self-feeders containing balanced rations are fed and in several tests have given gains more economical than has hand feeding. The system has been tried with a mixture of barley and tankage, wheat and tankage, and shorts and tankage. The saving in labor over that of hand feeding was a considerable item in producing a hundred pounds of pork."

Fattening Experiment

Williams Bros., of Wallowa, Ore., have large scales on their farm, and with these weighed their hogs and the grain fed to them during a recent fattening experiment. This was done in the fall of the year. Using mainly ground barley they found it required approximately five pounds of this to make a pound of gain.

Next they fed white French sugar beets in connection with the barley. In the fall they put up one hundred and sixty head of hogs and fed them for sixty days. With two and one-third pounds of barley and what beets the hogs would eat cleanly, they made one pound of gain. In another similar experiment with eighty-six head of hogs fed twenty-one days, with 2.32 pounds of barley and 5.46 pounds of beets, they got one pound of gain.

Showing that hogs can be profitably fed, a number of farm records in feeding were quoted by Mr. Hunter. Upon November 7, 1911, Mr. W. H. Steen put in the fattening pen ninety-nine head of hogs. The feeding period extended to January 15th. During this period of sixty-nine days, 3.92 pounds of rolled wheat were required to make one pound of gain. The wheat fed was worth 73 cents per bushel, this being the price received for the balance of the crop. At the price for which he sold his hogs—\$6.40 a hundred—Mr. Steen received 98 cents a bushel for the grain he had fed.

During the winter of 1911-12, Mr. Steen fed ninety September pigs. The feeding period extended from weaning

time, November 24, to February 9, or seventy-seven days. These were fed chopped wheat in a self-feeder. The amount of grain necessary to produce a pound of gain was 3.44 pounds. With hogs worth 6 cents a pound, this gave him \$1.04½ a bushel for his wheat. During the last three weeks of the feeding period, the hogs had a little alfalfa hay in addition to the grain.

In the fall of 1908—October 24th—Mr. P. W. Cox, of Whitman county, put 182 head of hogs—after weighing them—in a small lot to fatten. They were fed ground red wheat in a self-feeder. On November 20th they were sold and were again weighed, the gain being 14,268 pounds. At five and one-half cents a pound, the price of pork then, the increase was worth \$784.74. Seven hundred and forty-one bushels of wheat were fed. After deducting \$9.50 for coal used in chopping the wheat, a profit of \$1.04 a bushel was the result. This estimate does not take into consideration the labor used in chopping the grain.

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