

The Pig and the Dairy

By John F. McConaghy

IT HAS long ago been accepted as an axiom "that the man who follows the plow is the man who feeds the world"; but development of the last quarter century has made a change in phraseology and we now amend by saying, "the hand that milks the cow is the hand that feeds the world." I care not whether you are in the dairy business as a producer of cream or as a creamery manager, you must admit the hog to a full partnership with the cow in the successful conduct of your business. This statement requires no statistics to prove its truth, and I have no intention of burdening the reader's patience with a vast array of figures compiled in such manner as to prove the accuracy of some preconceived opinion. The second-rate navigator, conscious of his incompetence, is continually taking his bearings, the incompetent carpenter has his compass and square continually in evidence, while the competent workman carries his measurements in his head and carries out his design with accuracy and dispatch, and for this reason I will as much as possible eschew figures and deal with concrete facts.

It is not necessary as is so often done by thoughtless writers to make extravagant claims as to the hog's ability to make a livelihood by digging fern and skunk cabbage roots, and while engaged in such enterprise he will also effectually remove the stumps off logged-off land. Nor will his arduous labors in anywise affect his profitable production of hams, bacon and lard. This and more is regularly dished up to the city dweller and has gone so long unchallenged it is now almost universally believed. It would, however, be a waste of time to take up seriously the absurd claims made by writers who should know better; sufficient to say that under proper conditions of feeding and breeding, of housing and management, and in view of its ability to consume, assimilate and convert into a finished product so many odds and ends found on every farm, by-products that but for the hog would otherwise be wasted. In view of all this so easily proven, is it not passing strange that in this great dairy country of ours we are compelled to draw on eastern packing houses for our hams and bacon.

There must be a reason for this, and if so, we are here to trace it. And we propose to trace it.

Is the pig so difficult of propagation?

Is the female so lacking in fecundity?

Is our climate inimical to his health and development?

To all of which we must answer, emphatically, "No." It is, therefore, now in order to discover the most practical methods for the propagation, feeding and general management of the porker from birth till he reaches his destination in the form of hams, bacon and lard. In raising hogs cheaply we must begin with the sow. She must be well fed in order to produce a good litter of strong, vigorous pigs. Oats is a splendid grain feed; corn is too fattening. Exercise and pure water are essential. The sows should be handled so one can go up to them at any time. November is a good time to have them farrow. The time of farrowing can be determined quite exactly; the milk shows in the teats four to six hours before. For twenty-four hours after, she requires no food except perhaps a little warm water if she develops thirst. When the little ones are five or six weeks old, begin feeding some grain feed like shorts or ground oats. A good way is to fence off their trough so the sow can't get to it. From seven to ten weeks they will be ready to wean, and right here I might add that the dairyman who conducts a winter dairy has a strangle-hold on the profitable production of pork and its products. He at less expense than any other can give the youngsters the necessary nourishment to carry them in good, thrifty condition through the winter months, and the breeder who does this is the one who will rake in the biggest checks when marketing time comes next year. Two things are essential to make the pigs grow fast through the cold weather—the right kind of feed and proper protection from the weather. It rests with the farmer whether he will turn off large fat porkers or whether he will have long-nosed runts eating off him until he learns to love them as much as he loves his poor relations. The absence of green feed in winter calls for some other feed or feeds to take its place. It is possible to have green feed until quite late, especially on the west side of the Cascade Mountain range; late sown rape has proven satisfactory when the winter is fairly moderate. A little alfalfa hay, or on the coast clover silage, fed in mangers, will prove a valuable addition; always provided there is a never-failing supply of fresh separator milk, warm and palatable. There are other methods, however. Some men let their hogs get real cold and hungry and then fill them up with a decoction chiefly composed of water. They are pleased to call this wintering their hogs cheaply, when as a matter of fact they are simply rupturing the muscles of the hog's stomach by over-gorging with thin slop. The successful hog growers will use system in managing their fall and winter hogs just as they do in the management of any other valuable stock. No matter how much nourishing food is given to them, they will not do well if not comfortably housed.

The A-shaped portable houses are very popular with some breeders; they are best without floors and must be placed on high ground where the dirt floor will be dry. It is well, however, to move the houses a few feet once in a while to let the sunlight sterilize the ground where the house stood. In a permanent house concrete is essential; dirt floors are impossible and plank is an abomination. The urine, excrement and feed work down through the cracks and in these dark recesses all kinds of germs thrive and multiply.

It will thus be seen that the dairyman by a judicious use of clover or alfalfa pasture can sell his skim milk to his hogs, as it were, at a price far in advance of that paid in any other local market; as at eight months old, his shoats, raised under the conditions outlined should average 200 to 250 pounds each at 12 cents per pound, or \$30 each; and in this connection, I would respectfully ask the farmer: Why sell your meat at 12 cents and buy it back at 25 cents, and pay for the heavy wrapping to boot? Has

curing hams and bacon become a lost art? Or has a fake training led the dairyman of today to believe that it is beneath his dignity to sell goods from the tail end of a cart? With abundant opportunity to produce as cheap as the cheapest meat of a quality unsurpassed, with alder and maple forests growing all around him to be had for the using, capable of imparting the most exquisite flavor to ham and bacon, I ask, in all candor, why not sell direct to the consumer at 20 or 25 cents and at one stroke double your income from your separator milk by selling it to your hog and disposing of that hog in a business-like manner? The world is slowly learning that he who puts his goods on the market in a perishable form (and I need hardly tell that the market for perishable goods is always glutted), he who insists in so doing will have piles of experience, but the other fellow will get all the money.

When a sow has shown herself to be a prolific breeder she should be retained as long as the reproductive qualities are maintained.

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