

Brood Sows.

This subject is brought to mind by the oft recurrence in the papers of complaints of sows destroying their pigs, says a correspondent in an exchange. We wonder if it ever comes to the minds of these parties that the old-time razor-back or wopds hog was never known, where she had the liberty of woodlands, to destroy her pigs? When we consider this matter, we must conclude that she had the kind of food necessary to keep her system in proper condition; hence we come to the subject in consideration. Now, we believe that the kind of food consumed, and the kind of flesh laid on, have much to do with the value of the litter. For want of room we cannot give our brood sows the range of our pasture fields during the winter months, and it is of these months that we want to speak now. Nor have we a timber range for them. Being thus limited, we have for years kept our sows during the winter months in the large feed lot at the barn, where we feed the horses and cows fodder, and often clover hay, during the day. This lot is so small in area that the horses cannot turn it into a racing park when they feel like running. We have never had a sow injured by the horses or cows. If the lot was large enough for the horses to take a run when they wish, we would expect them to run over the sows and injure them. The cows are fed one feed each day, of whole corn, and have for the other feed bran, and for roughage clover hay and fodder; they have the run of the barn lot during the day. The sows glean from all their droppings, and, besides the undigested corn, they get much good from the other food fed the cows. When we feed clover hay in the racks in the lot, the sows eat many of the leaves and heads of the clover, and, besides, they eat fodder and chew the juices out of the cornstalks, refusing the coarse fibre. Last winter we had no clover hay to feed in the lot, and the sows were deprived of this very necessary roughage, which, on account of the high per cent. of albuminoids it contains, is a very necessary article of food while they are in farrow. While they relish and consume large quantities of fodder, it does not contain the necessary food

properties to properly nourish the system. To meet this want, we fed our same brood sows about one-half bushel of ship stuff and middlings once a day. They also got a part ration of whole corn.

The best way to feed the corn is to shell it over the stalks about the feed racks. There are two objects in this—we want them to eat the corn slowly, masticating each grain, which they must do when they gather it out of the stalks. If fed ear corn, in their greed for the lion's share, they will swallow many grains without chewing them, and they are voided unbroken, and as a result the filthy habit of working over their own droppings is soon developed.

When the corn is shelled they are compelled to take much more exercise in gathering up the grains than they do when eating ear corn. We do not ring them while in the lot. With their noses free they save us much hard work when they search among the stalks for their corn by breaking up the stalks and fining the manure. And the exercise while doing this would equal their efforts in gathering roots and nuts in the wood lot, had they such privileges.

We could feed corn in such quantities that they would not care to exercise to get every grain, and a whole corn ration would be cheaper than the mill food, and much less trouble to feed, but in this matter the money value of food is not the only point to be considered. Their systems demand more than is found in the corn; hence we find it profitable to buy and feed the bran and middlings. We like to have a sow in high flesh when she feeds her pigs, but we want to know what kind of flesh it is. We do not want corn fat, for from it we should only expect disaster. But we do want a muscular flesh, such as a sow will lay on when she has a variety of food. The corn fat tends to develop obesity and sluggishness, while a healthy flesh developed from properly compounded rations tends to sprightliness and exercise. When they come to farrow we like to have them in high flesh, what most farmers would call fat, too fat. With the treatment outlined our sows give us no trouble at farrowing time, and save plenty of pigs.