

Agriculture.

Shall We Raise Bacon Hogs?

THIS question, of such great importance to the Canadian farmer, can best be answered by considering the future outlook and possibilities for profitable bacon production. It is well known to all that pork production stands among the great industries of Canada and the United States. In the latter, the largest percentage of hogs raised are of the fat type. As they have a good home market for this kind of pork, no doubt it is more profitable for the American farmer to raise the fat rather than the bacon hog. This is more particularly the case in the corn regions. Not so, however, with the Canadian farmer; he must look for a market across the Atlantic. In Great Britain, which is the most important pork market, the demand at present is for bacon, therefore, to get the highest prices in this market, the supply must be calculated to meet this demand. It must not be forgotten that other countries are raising pork and competing in this market, and they are sending in large quantities of bacon. If we expect to hold a position there, we *must* raise bacon hogs. If we would beat our competitors we must produce a better article than they, and it has been proved that Canadian farmers can do this. Our bacon brings in the British market from fifty to sixty per cent. more per pound than the American bacon. It is also fast gaining the ascendancy over the best Danish product. The demand is always good for a first-class article, therefore to produce such should be our aim.

But, says the farmer, I get no more for raising the bacon hog than for the fat one. While this is true in many cases, yet it is not so in all. In many parts of the country the buyers make no discrimination in price between the two types. But why is this, if the bacon hog brings a better price in the foreign market. It is due partly to the scarcity of good bacon pigs, and partly that the buyers may fill their own pocket books. The packer, to keep up his industry, must have some sort of pigs, and consequently a large number of fat pigs have to be bought. This kind of pork brings a low price in the British market, especially at times of an over-

supply, which frequently occur. This often brings a loss to the packer, and consequently to make up, he pays the buyers less, even for really good bacon hogs. The buyer, again, to secure his profit, buys usually by the herd, making no discrimination between the fat and the bacon types, but paying the same price per pound for each. Thus the farmer who raises bacon hogs gets no more per pound than he who raises the fat type.

While the future of our pork trade should influence more of our farmers to enter into the production of bacon, yet with most farmers it is largely a question of profit. At present, then, would it not be best to strive to overcome some of the obstacles that are keeping down the profit which the bacon hog should bring the farmer? To do this, we must raise hogs more suitable for bacon of the best quality. This will enable the packer to give better prices. Secondly, we must do away with the middle man and send our animals directly to the packer. This will save the buyers profit.

To produce the best form of animal, we must select for our own use the breed that comes nearest the bacon type. To produce the best quality we must feed the proper foods. So much, however, has been said on these points recently that it would be inexpedient to dwell upon them here.

Lastly, then, we have to consider how we may get rid of the buyer. Farmers have co-operated in other industries in which they are engaged; why not do so in this? If a number in each locality would club together with the determination to produce first-class bacon hogs, they could accomplish a great deal. They could have their pigs ready for the market about the same time, and then by hiring a car, could ship direct to the packer. Each man should have his own lot branded or marked in some way so that the packer could easily distinguish them and pay according to the merits of each man's produce. This, besides doing away with the middle man, would encourage better work among the farmers. A co-operative system would also enable all to obtain better information regarding breeding, feeding, etc., than each