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FEEDING YOUNG PIGS

Practical Hints or Dealing With the Junior Hog.

Begin With the Mother—Wean When Eight Weeks Old—A Good Ration Suggested — Winter Feeding and Quarters.

(Contributed by Ontario Department of Agriculture, Toronto.)

Liberal feeding on a well-balanced ration suited to the needs of the sow previous to the birth of the young is very essential if the little pigs are to be worth rearing and the sow in condition to supply ample milk for them. With the sow well nourished and given opportunity for exercise, she is the best equipped individual to undertake the task of rearing a litter. After the little pigs arrive, everything should be done for their comfort and safety if they are to succeed as feeders. Clean, light pens; dry yard or grass lot; abundant sunshine and a well fed mother, usually mean success to the little pigs. When the young learn to feed at four weeks, provision should be made whereby they can feed at a small trough in an enclosure away from the sow. Small quantities of sweet skim milk in which wheat shorts have been mixed should be fed in small quantities and often, feeding a little less than the pigs will actually take. Pigs that have been feeding from the trough for two weeks or more can be weaned without a very serious setback. The longer the pigs can remain with the sow the better it is for them, but such practice is not always profitable, so it is usual to wean the pigs when they are eight weeks old. Since pigs are hunting the ground surface or rooting for morsels of food, it is good practice to encourage such by scattering plump grain on the floor of the pen or yard. This causes the pig to take the exercise necessary to thrive.

Treatment at Weaning Age.

When the pigs have reached the weaning age of eight weeks, they should be completely separated from the sow. It is better to remove the sow and leave the young pigs in the pen that they have been used to for a week, that their troubles may not all come at once. When the pigs have quite forgotten their mother, an ideal home for them is a colony house situated in an alfalfa, red clover, rape or blue grass pasture yard, where water, a wallow hole and shade are amply supplied. If the young pigs must be kept in the pigery, then everything should be done to provide dryness, protection from insects, a living temperature, ample room, cleanliness, comfort, sunshine and a ration suited to their needs. Green feeds should form a fair percentage of the total ration for pigs whether fed as a soiling crop or as pasture. The following mixed grain ration has proven very satisfactory: Wheat middlings 25 pounds, shorts 25 pounds, finely ground oats 50 pounds, oil cake meal 5 pounds, meat meal 3 pounds. Pigs eight weeks old will require a pound or more per day. The quantity required for each day should be set apart and soaked for twelve hours or more, using no more water than is required for the soaking process. When ready to feed use five pounds of skim milk to each pound of meal. Feed sweet skim milk until the pigs are well weaned, then change to sour skim milk and continue to use such as long as possible.

Handling Them at Three Months.

After the pigs are three months old, buttermilk can be used instead of skim milk with equal advantage. A change in the grain ration is also desirable at this age, and is most easily provided by adding a more fattening grain to the mixture already suggested for the eight weeks' old pig. The following is very satisfactory: Corn or barley 25 pounds, shorts 50 pounds, wheat middlings 25 pounds, finely ground oats 50 pounds, oil cake meal 8 pounds. Soaking to soften and thereby increase digestibility should be practiced. The corn or barley portions of the ration should be increased gradually after the fourth month has passed to give the pig an opportunity to fatten during the last two months of its life should it be designed for the block. If intended for breeding purposes the feeding is practically the same up to the fifth month. "The intended for breeding purpose" stock should be developed on a ration carrying more bone and muscle forming material than the standard fattening rations. More alfalfa, red clover, sweet clover, rape or blue grass should be used.

Winter Feeding.

The success attained at pig feeding in the winter depends to a greater extent upon the skill of the feeder than does summer feeding when weather conditions are favorable. Comfortable quarters which may be under the strawstack or in an elaborate pen, some place that is dry and will stay dry, is the first necessity. A well balanced ration suited to winter conditions in that it will supply in so far as possible, something to take the place of grass and clover and "on the soil" conditions. Roots and sods are the most easily supplied substitutes. Room for exercise, and inducement to take such by scatter-

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