

Feeding Tests with Fish Meals

By

J. H. GRIDDALE, B. AGR.,

Director, Experimental Farms, Ottawa.

Fish meals for cattle and swine made at the experimental plant at Port Dover were sent to the Experimental Farm, at Ottawa, some months after the regular winter feeding experimental work had commenced. As nearly all available animals had been on some experimental feeds or treatment, they had thus acquired a lack of equality which prohibited the taking over of this experimental work and starting them immediately on fish meal, or on any other form of meal. For this reason, only a very limited number of animals could be selected to test the fish meals and the results of these tests were consequently of comparatively little value.

Five pure bred Ayrshire cows were selected for the testing of the dairy feed. These cows were all milking exceptionally well on the following rations: Clover hay, corn ensilage, mangels and meal composed of bran 4 parts, gluten 2 parts, dried distillers grains 2 parts, oil cake 1 part. The intention of this trial was to gradually accustom these animals to fish meal mixed with their regular meal ration and as soon as they acquired this taste, to replace gluten and oil cake with the fish meal for three weeks and then to revert to the original ration. The results were to be compiled from the last two weeks of each of the three periods of feeding. Although the cows were given a very small quantity of this fish meal each day for over two weeks, they persisted in refusing their grain altogether or picked out only the part which contained the least portion of this meal. Since these cows were both losing weight and decreasing in milk production, we finally cut them off this test. Undoubtedly, the cows could have been starved to a ration containing fish meal, but this was certainly not practicable.

The test of the fish meals for hogs was conducted under the same unfavourable circumstances as to animals available. However, two small lots of Berkshires were available for this work. One lot was fed the standard ration composed of shorts and corn, equal parts, plus 10 per cent. of fish meal; while the second lot had the same rations with an additional allowance of skim milk. Unfortunately, these two lots were not of exactly the same age, hence definite deductions could not be drawn.