

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE

AND HOME MAGAZINE

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EDITORIAL.

The Bacon Industry.

The growing time, so much spoken and written of during the last few years, applies with no greater aptness to any other branch of Canadian agriculture than to the production of bacon hogs. Within the last decade, enormous strides have been made in export of hog meats. There was exported out of Canada, of bacon, hams and pork, during the years ending June 30th:

1890	-	-	-	-	\$645,360
1899	-	-	-	-	\$10,473,211

—an increase of \$9,827,851, or over 1,638 per cent., in nine years. Nor has the growth of trade been spasmodic, but of gradual development, brought about by the creation of its own demand, which could not have been without the co-operation of hog raisers, feeders and packers, in producing what the markets demand. It is true that when the supply is excessive, we hear of the lack of the proper type and weights, but the trouble in this direction is finding its own cure in the packers grading as they do the prices according to quality. The Canadian farmer is a business man, not slow to make changes that will result in greater profits in his business, but he is not the one to produce a more expensive product unless he gets a corresponding higher price for it. While earnest attention is being given to the production of the higher type of hog, we believe more deliberate consideration and experiment are devoted to the questions of cheaper foods, and more appropriate combinations of these. Along with the feeding of the hog is very closely associated his housing and yarding, which at the season of the year just upon us requires more attention than during the months that are past; in fact, the feeding and the care of fall and winter litters is about the most troublesome problem met with on the average hog-breeding farm to-day.

In order to get for our readers the best possible information upon this and other important branches of hog-raising, we secured from leading Canadian packing houses the names of farmers who supply them regularly with considerable quantities of bacon hogs of the correct type, free from objectionable features to the high-class trade. A number of these men have been heard from and their letters appear in the Stock Department of this issue, and will bear careful study. We are not surprised to notice the prominence given to the use of succulent and vegetable foods other than grain, also to the necessity for liberal exercise, especially for all breeding animals, and growing stock up to the finishing period and to the deferring of weaning the litters until they are well started in life. It will be noticed that all the breeders do not agree on some of the essential points, as, for instance, one writer, hailing from Wellington Co., recommends weaning at four weeks old and excluding roots and other coarse foods from the rations. It has occurred to us that if this writer sells 200-pound pigs, as he claims, at six months old, either his son or hired man manages their feeding and care, and does not report fully the methods employed.

The real value of succulent food for swine cannot be measured by simple gains in weights of pigs given such food. Undoubtedly, where animals are confined to a pure grain diet, the digestive tract is more torpid and sickness is more likely to occur than when succulent food is given. Then, the digestive organs are more active and natural in movement, and the body is better prepared to resist disease than when pure grain food is fed. The influence of this succulent food on sows in pig or suckling pigs cannot be measured by the scales, but the general testimony of practical feeders of experience is that such diet promotes easy parturition,

a generous milk flow and vigorous offspring. Pigs that are to be fattened in a short period of feeding do not perhaps need roots in their diet, though no doubt it would be to their advantage, but breeding stock, both male and female, and suckling sows, will certainly be materially benefited by summer pasturage and roots in winter.

In his work on "Feeds and Feeding," Henry quotes at considerable length certain Danish feeding experiments on pigs. In reference to the use of roots: In comparing mangels and grain, all the lots received skim milk or whey in addition to grain and roots, excepting two lots to which an equivalent of additional roots was given. It is shown that ten pounds of mangels more than equal and eight pounds about equal one pound of grain in trials. The quality of the pork produced by the different lots was very satisfactory. Even where one-fourth the daily feed was given in the form of mangels no ill effect was noted.

The preparation of foods is shown by the writers to be of importance, as well as the use of mixed grains, which we are persuaded is of greater importance than is generally supposed, making a better-balanced ration and promoting health and growth of bone and muscle. Fine grinding is favored, a number recommend soaking the chop for some time before feeding, and in one or two cases it is recommended to administer the feed in a warm condition. The methods of feeding roots, and the kinds preferred, also differ according to the practices of these men. Whole mangels are quite in favor, especially for a noon feed, but one writer estimates them as valuable more as an appetizer than a food.

It is remarkable to notice that grades or crosses are generally recommended, rather than pure-breds. This may be accounted for by the fact that pure-bred sows of good type generally cost more money than grades. The Tamworth sire is evidently a general favorite, but the blood of the Yorkshire, Berkshire and Chester White have their admirers, and it is important that only pure-bred sires be used.

The matter of hog-pen floors and walls is of no small moment, especially for winter quarters, as it seems to depend a good deal on these that the animals escape rheumatism and coughs. The wooden walls, with cement floors covered with lumber, are generally preferred, and a liberal use of bedding is recommended. One writer, who has had no trouble from rheumatism or other ailments in his pigs, allows them the run of a manure shed once a day for exercise.

While very little is said regarding the use of such condiments as sulphur, charcoal, salt, etc., we notice most of the writers recommend them in practice, some of them being mixed with the feed and others left where the hogs can help themselves. It is evident these products have a place in pig feeding, but we doubt the advisability of mixing them with the food, except perhaps charcoal (of which an excess can do no harm), as their virtue undoubtedly lies in their corrective influence. This being the case, the pig should be allowed his own discretion in their use, since it is the needs of the system that prompt the craving for them, while an excess is liable to derange the digestive organism.

Not in this issue, but in that for July 2nd, 1900, it will be remembered important evidence is given by Mr. E. D. Tillson on the subject of raising winter litters. After building a first-class new brick piggery, in which no expense was spared in making the place warm, dry, well lighted and ventilated, it was found that even in this seemingly model structure losses would occur in spite of the most careful management as to feeding, etc. This led to the use of small eight-by-eight feet outdoor pens in yards about fifty feet square. The sow and pigs are put into these when the youngsters are about three weeks old, and allowed free access to pen and

yard as desired. In cold weather a canvas covering is hung over the entrance of the pen to allow the pigs to pass in and out and still exclude the cold wind. Here the pigs keep healthy, thrive and grow rapidly, none of them ever dying except something very uncommon happens to them. Now, it is probable that certain readers have discovered other special or unusual methods of preventing winter loss or unthriftiness in winter or late fall litters, and we hope to hear of these and other precautions, not only to avoid loss, but to promote rapid gains and greater profits in producing hog products for the markets of the world.

Economy in Feeding.

The disposition to defer the day of commencing to draw on the winter store of provender is common to all farmers. While it is well to be careful that nothing is wasted, it is quite possible to be saving on one hand and wasteful on the other, with the result that the balance is against us. If the late fall months are favorable to the growth of grass, and the weather mild, as has been the case in most sections of Canada this year, there is, as a rule, little need of supplementing the pastures by a call on the winter stores, except in the case of milking cows, before the end of November. The coming of cool weather, and the consequent relief from the plague of flies which torture animals in summer, is in favor of the stock, and as long as the fields afford a fair bite of grass they may do well; but it should be remembered that young grass which comes up after autumn rains has not all the nutritive qualities of June grass, and when touched by frost it is still less nutritious, so that if it is desired to hold the flesh and condition that has been gained, there may be, and generally is, true economy in commencing to feed a little fodder before winter in real earnest sets in. Even access to a stack of straw is better than no provision to tide over the critical period between late autumn conditions and winter feeding, and animals, knowing instinctively the need of more substantial food than they can find in the fields, will help themselves to dry fodder if it is at all palatable and within their reach. Milking stock, of course, should be stabled at night when frost and cold weather comes, and fed a half ration at least, while cattle intended for beef should not be allowed to lose weight, which can only be regained by more expensive feeding later on. When hay is scarce, as is the case in many districts this year, the temptation is strong to put off the period of winter feeding longer than would otherwise be done. In this case, if a supply of ensilage or of cured cornstalks has been provided, the contingency is well met; but where such wise provision has not been made, the best use possible should be made of the straw and chaff in the barns as a substitute. To our mind, it is a good plan, where it is feasible, when threshing, to save the chaff separate from the straw, for early winter feeding, as any meal that is fed to cattle in the stables will give much better results if given in combination with chaff, cut straw or cut-corn fodder or ensilage, by reason of its being eaten slowly, masticated thoroughly, well mixed with saliva, and thus better fitted for digestion. One of the advantages of saving the chaff is that it comes handy for early feeding before winter work has set in and while the means for cutting straw may not be convenient or the time of all the hands may be taken up with outdoor work on the farm. Even where ensilage is provided, on which to feed any meal that is given, there is economy and profit in feeding it in combination with chaff or cut straw or hay, making more nearly a balanced ration and at the same time utilizing a large amount of rough fodder, often having much more nutriment in it than it is commonly credited with, and which may be rendered palatable by mixing it with the ensilage a few hours before feeding time, the straw being softened by the juices