

Suggestions About Self-Feeders For Hogs.

"Experiments at Ottawa, Brandon and Lacombe all point to the feasibility of the self-feeding method for finishing hogs, and to the fact that it gives results equal to hand feeding with a reduction of from 60 to 80 per cent. of the labor of feeding." So says G. B. Rothwell, Assistant Dominion Animal Husbandman, Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa. Experience for a number of years at Ottawa has shown that the type of self-feeder as used in the United States, for the most part, is not suitable for use in Canada, where we use ground feeds largely. Meals will not feed through a self-feeder nearly as well as whole grains, and some device is necessary that will serve as an agitator to prevent a bridge-like mass of meal forming over the opening and preventing the hogs from getting at it. This has been largely overcome at Ottawa by modifying the control board, which regulates the amount of feed let down, so as to provide a hinged flap as indicated in the accompanying diagram. Where the hinged flap is not provided there is no way of preventing the feeder from clogging, unless the meal is poked down with a stick from above, but with a hinge near the bottom of the control board the pigs will dislodge the meal themselves by rooting at the control board and pushing it inward, thus loosening the meal. This point is most important in the construction of a self-feeder, according to Mr. Rothwell, since the efficiency of this method depends entirely upon the pigs having a supply of meal or grain always available.

Any kind of feeder will be satisfactory where it is to be used near the buildings so that it can be examined at least once each day. Where it is to be used in the pasture field, however, and visited only when it needs refilling, it must be of such a type as to feed readily and constantly. The standard type of self-feeder as used at the Central Experimental Farm is about 6 feet long, two feet eight inches wide and three feet high. These dimensions apply only to the feed bin, the peak of the roof being more than 3 feet from the bottom of the feeder and the troughs project out from the sides for varying distances. Troughs 9 inches wide are very satisfactory for mature pigs, but smaller animals

need narrower troughs to prevent them getting inside and lying down, thus soiling the feed. An illustration of a completed feeder is also shown herewith, and it will be seen that a feeder 6 feet long thus provides 12 feet of trough space. Half feeders can also be used for pen feeding. These can be used for weaning litters and need have no agitator, since some one is always around every few hours. The standard type as shown can be built at home for about \$12. Matched lumber should be used for the inside at least. The third illustration shows a larger type of feeder 12 feet long and having four compartments, so that different kinds of feed may always be before the pigs. It is well to note also, in the diagram and the 6-foot feeder, where the roof opens only on one side, that leaking at the joint is prevented by overlapping slightly, the lid being hinged to blocks fastened to the stationary half of the roof.

Mr. Rothwell stated that excellent results were secured from weaning pigs on the self-feeder last year. Conditions were, however, particularly favorable to a slow, gradual weaning, accomplished largely by the pigs themselves after they were at least 5 weeks old. A number of sows were housed in pens from which the litters could escape to another compartment where self-feeders were placed. If given skim-milk in addition to the meal there should be no check in growth, and the litters can be carried right along on the self-feeder.

Ordinarily, however, when pigs are weaned in the usual way, the self-feeder should not be used before the pigs are three months old. Trouble in this connection usually arises from the fact that when young pigs are given access to all the meal they will eat after and then go for the skim-milk. Afterwards they swell up like balloons and become stunted in growth. Skim-milk is always preferred for young pigs, but tankage is a substitute if fed in quantities no greater than the pigs want it. In other words, it should be fed from a small compartment in the self-feeder.

In any case small pigs should be gradually accustomed to feeding from a self-feeder. At first use a feeder that allows only a small quantity of meal to run down, feeding, at the same time, twice a day from a trough as usual, but in diminishing quantities, for about a week. Pigs up to three months require a ration fairly free from fibre, and on this account pasture or roughage are no more desirable than a self-feeder up to this age, unless under a prolonged weaning period as mentioned above. For very young pigs under these conditions, a mixture of oats, shorts and middlings is best with skim-milk in addition. All these feeds tend to build up bone, sinew and muscle. At three months of age a little corn can be introduced into the ration and at

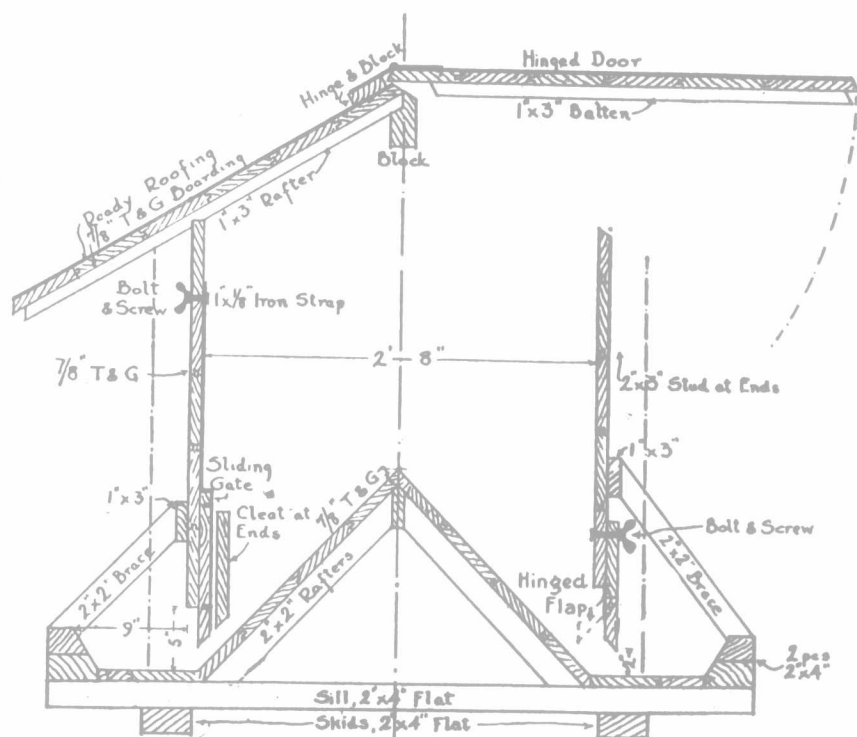


Diagram of Self-feeder Showing Two Arrangements of the Control of Feed Slide.

four months equal parts of corn, shorts and oats, or barley, shorts and oats can be used. Barley is practically equal to corn, although it is hardly as palatable. At about five to six months the corn can be increased, using a little tankage fed from a small compartment in the self-feeder unless skim-milk is used.

For market hogs from the age of 4½ months up to marketing age the self-feeder is difficult to beat. There is some doubt as to whether younger pigs on pasture will forage sufficiently if meal from a self-feeder is available in unlimited quantities, and experiments are to be conducted this summer to determine this point. As a general thing also, the self-feeder cannot be used with best results on little pigs, sows with litters and pregnant sows. In fact, when used with breeding stock of any kind, there is too great a tendency to put on fat with a self-feeder. Pigs will eat slightly more meal when hand fed than when on a self-feeder, but they will get to market weight faster on the latter. "The self-feeder was primarily designed for feeding on pasture," said Mr. Rothwell, "but our experiments for the last three years with winter feeding show that there is even more of an advantage in using a self-feeder indoors."

Buy a good pure-bred female and lay the foundation for a registered herd.

Docking Lambs.

Although the tail is useless either from a breeder's or butcher's standpoint in many flocks docking is not practiced or else it is done in a slipshod manner. All lambs should be docked when from ten days to a few weeks of age. It is neither a difficult nor dangerous operation. A good method is to leave the lamb standing and with a sharp knife cut the tail from below upwards allowing knife to slip between the segments of vertebra at about the second joint from the junction with the body. This method causes little or no shock to the lamb and the bone is not crushed as it is liable to be when the chisel and mallet are used. If bleeding continues a handful of flour or like material placed on the wound will very often clot the blood and stop the flow. If bleeding is profuse a string might be tied tightly above where the tail is to be severed. As a precaution the knife should be sterilized in some antiseptic solution after each operation. In Pamphlet No. 16 of the Live-Stock Branch Messrs. Stanfield and Morton give the following reasons why docking pays:

"The tail is useless and a detriment. Manure gathers on a long tail, but when docked this cannot occur. Maggots often appear on the rumps of lambs and sheep where manure is caked. These pests cause considerable loss and stop growth. In the case of small lambs, often the manure cakes so hard that it is impossible for the bowels to act and death follows. Docking is a sign of careful management. It makes the animal more attractive and, therefore, easier to sell. A buyer will not purchase the neglected flock until he has purchased all the good quality lambs. All ewe lambs should be docked because it makes breeding easier and does not waste the strength of the ram. A long tail obstructs and impedes during the breeding season."

When docking the lambs the males to be kept for breeding purposes should be castrated. Far too many sheep owners neglect this and as a result suffer financial loss. All grades and scrub pure-bred male lambs should be altered. It is not good business to raise buck lambs to feed off and a scrub pure-bred should not be permitted to perpetuate his kind. In castrating it is a common practice to clip the end of the scrotum and draw the testicles. By cutting the end of the scrotum it ensures a free opening at the bottom and avoids later trouble. It pays to castrate market lambs. Messrs. Stanfield and Morton give the following reasons for castrating in the above mentioned pamphlet.

1. Castrated lambs are not as restless as ram lambs and attend to their business better which is getting fat and ready for the block.
2. Wethers are easier to fence and herd on the farm.
3. Wethers do not annoy the ewe and ewe lambs in the flock. The wether lambs can be left in the ewe flock without danger. Ram lambs must be separated or breeding will take place.
4. On the same feed and under the same conditions wethers will grow bigger and fatter than ram lambs.
5. If the market in the Fall drops and becomes dead, the wethers may be carried over but the ram lambs must be sold at any price.
6. Finally and most important, wethers sell at a premium above ram lambs on the market.

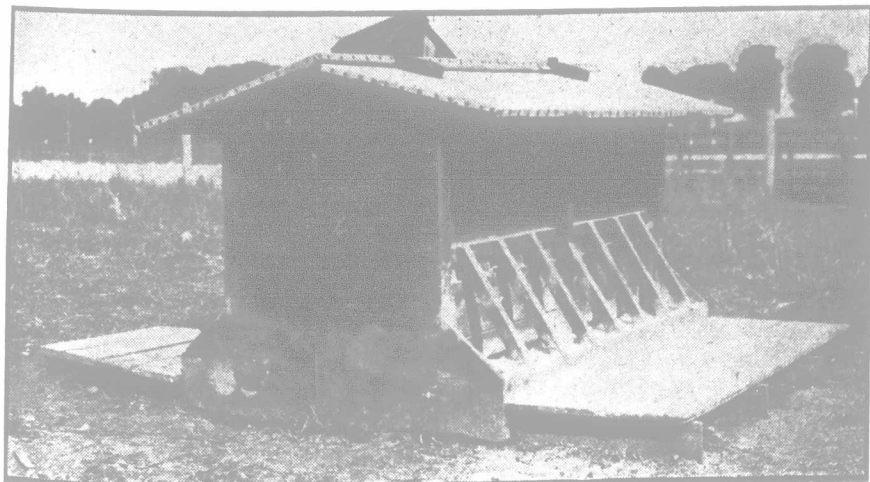
With everything in favor of castrating the lambs destined to be fattened why is it that so little castrating is done in Ontario flocks? Think it over; there is usually a difference of several dollars a head in favor of altered lambs over bucks of the same age on our markets and the reason is obvious.

Starting Right.

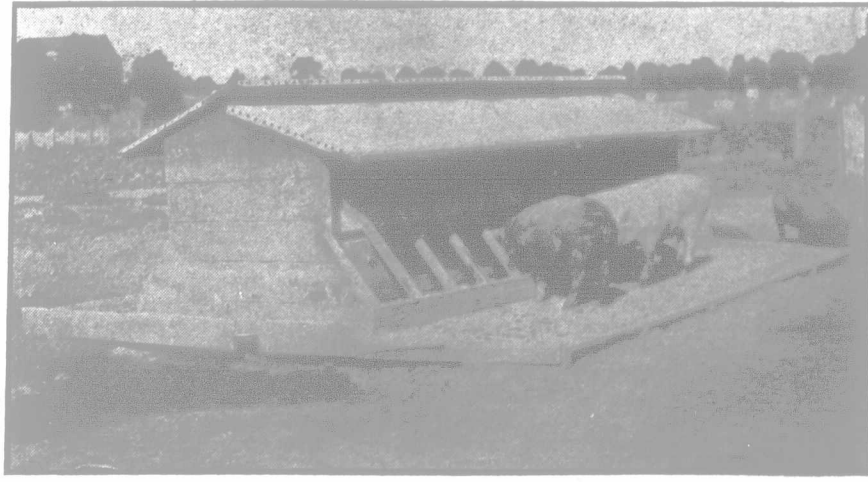
EDITOR "THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE":

I read your paper with a great deal of pleasure. I was asked by a neighbor the other day what job I liked best on the farm, and I told him I liked them all fairly well, but the one I liked best was sitting with my feet in the oven reading "The Farmer's Advocate."

After being off the farm for about ten years I came back to the soil last fall. I bought a pure-bred bull and heifer calf with which to build a herd of pure-bred stock. They cost me about three times as much as scrub calves, and a number of farmers thought it was wasting money. If health, weather, and a hundred and one other things which we have to contend with, do not "buck" me too much, I will show some of these careless, tumbledown



A Standard Six-foot One-compartment Self-feeder.



A Four-compartment Self-feeder, with Twelve Feet Feeding Space to a Side.