

SOFT PORK

AN INVESTIGATION INTO ITS CHARACTER AND CAUSES *

BY

FRANK T. SHUTT, M.A., F.C.S.,

Chemist, Dominion Experimental Farms.

INTRODUCTION.

That the export bacon trade is one of great importance to Canada is obvious from the fact that last year we received from England more than \$12,000,000 for this commodity alone. Moreover, the limit has not yet been reached; those engaged in the packing business assure us that the demand for first-class Canadian bacon will continue to increase for some years to come. It is, therefore, advisable that our farmers and dairymen should well understand the requirements of this large and remunerative market as regards size, shape, fatness and, above all, the character or quality of the bacon. These are matters which closely concern the raiser of pigs, for they are not under the control of the packer. Further, it is well to remember that the highest price will only be paid in England for that article which conforms with the demands of the consuming public, and that it is only first-class bacon that can be exported with profit.

Among the qualities necessary for first-class bacon in England, none is of greater importance than firmness. A tendency to softness or tenderness is quite sufficient to rate the bacon at second-class prices, and, if this softness is at all pronounced, to make it altogether unsaleable at a profit.

Since it was reported by our packers that a large, though varying, proportion of the pigs offered them produced soft bacon, and that this detrimental character specially characterized the produce of pigs from certain districts, it was held that an investigation to learn the nature and the cause or causes of 'soft' pork would, in all probability, furnish information of a most useful and valuable character.

*The feeding trials which this investigation necessitated were planned and conducted by Mr. J. H. Grisdale, Agriculturist, Central Experimental Farm. In addition to this most important part of the work, Mr. Grisdale, by his advice and assistance in the factory inspection and rating of the animals, has rendered most valuable aid, and I am much indebted to him for his hearty co-operation in bringing this research to a successful issue.