BULLETIN 225] [DECEMBER 1914

Ontario Department of Agriculture

ONTARIO AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

Swine

By G. E. DAY, B.S.A.

PART I.

THE PLACE OF THE HOG UPON THE FARM

The swine industry occupies a rather peculiar position in many localities. Swine multiply rapidly and come into use for breeding at an earlier age than other farm animals; consequently, it takes only a short time for farmers to increase or decrease their stock, as the case may be.

Fluctuations in Hog Supply.—When, owing to scarcity in the supply of hogs, the price for hogs goes up, we find farmers increasing the number of breeding sows, and in a very short time the supply of hogs coming to market increases to such an extent that the price is likely to break. If the decrease in price is very severe, the farmer becomes disgusted, and the chances are that many farmers will sell their breeding sows and practically go out of the business. This unloading process adds to the burden of the market, and general demoralization is apt to follow. By and by, after the market has absorbed the excessive supplies thrown upon it, a scarcity occurs again, owing to so many having gone out of the business of hog raising, and prices once more reach a high level. This is a signal for farmers to rush again into hog raising, and overstock their farms in many cases, so that once more the market becomes top-heavy, and the history of the hog market repeats itself.

Now it is altogether probable that very few of those who were tempted to rush into the business on account of high prices obtained any profit from the venture. They paid high prices for breeding stock, but by the time they had hogs ready for the market the decline in prices began, and before they were through they were selling their hogs at a loss.

Profit from Hogs.—The man who makes money out of hogs is the man who has hogs to sell when prices are high, whose farm is never over-stocked, nor yet entirely depleted of its supply. He knows how many hogs his farm will carry to advantage under average circumstances, and he practises a wise conservatism. When prices are high, he has a good profit, when they are low, his profit is small, but the average is fairly satisfactory. He may slightly expand or contract his operations at various times, but he never "plunges."

The "plunger" is apt to find himself "in" when he ought to be "out," and "out" when he ought to be "in." The other man is "in" at all times, but never to such an extent as to be seriously damaged when the market goes wrong.