THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE.

# The Self-Feeder For Swine.

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The self-feeder for swine has given good results at experiment stations in Canada and the United States, but the practice recommended by these institutions has not been adopted as extensively as the advantages of the system warrant. At present the self-feeder offers a partial solution of the labor problem as it affects swine production, while, at the same time, it is no deterrent to the economical and successful rearing of hogs. In fact, swine as a general thing will thrive better under the system of self-feeding than when handled according to the old-time popular way. There has been considerable controversy as to whether hogs should be fed two, three or four times per day. This has been largely idle pastime, for it has been proven that they will do excellently when allowed to eat when and what they wish. We have been taught to look upon the porcine tribe as something that will eat anything, and always too much if they could get it, when the facts of the case are that the hog is somewhat of a connoissuer in regard to food and if given a preference he will take exactly what he needs and what he requires to produce meat quickly. Furthermore, he has shown that he can balance his own rations and set his own standards quite as correctly as several notable swine authorities, whom we have followed in the past, could do it for him. On a recent visit to Iowana Farms, in the State of Iowa, the writer had the opportunity of observing the self-feeder in use where a hundred sows or more are farrowed every year, and in the neighborhood of five hundred hogs are turned off annually, the majority of which go for breeding stock. In the hog-cabins and in the piggeries the selffeeder was a part of each pen's equipment, and the writer never saw a more thrifty herd of swine. Tankage and middlings are fed through the boxes separately, while the corn is thrown to the hogs in the yard. At the time of our visit, corn was being fed on the cob. Throughout the States of Iowa, Illinois and Indiana the selffeeding method is popular, while at the Iowa State College, at Ames, where it has been tested for several years, it is held in very high esteem. Observations, however, made in the States mentioned would lead us to impose one limitation on its use, and that is in regard to the feeding of in-pig sows, particularly as they near farrowing time. Brood sows thus fed showed a tendency to be somewhat too fleshy

The construction of the self-feeder in use throughout the Corn Belt was in no way elaborate. It resembled, in design, the hopper in common use by poultrymen for feeding dry mash to chickens, only it was larger and usually had two compartments; one for shorts and the other for tankage. It was nailed to the side of the pen, or on the inside of the hog cabin, thus allowing the hogs to feed only from one side

## The Self-Feeder in Canada.

For a number of years the Central Experimental Farms at Ottawa have recommended the self-feeder for use under Canadian conditions, and in the January 3 issue of "The Farmer's Advocate," (page 6) was pub-lished an article telling just how it has worked out on a Middlesex County farm. The self-feeder in use there was made according to the Experimental Farms design, which is described in the following paragraphs:

Provided the requirements enumerated are met with, changes in the details may be suggested by the ingenuity of the builder. The line drawing shown illustrates a feeder with one-half of the roof hinged and used as a filling door, the possibility of leakage being prevented by continuing the opposite side several inches past the peak, thus protecting the joint. The photograph shows a feeder with the filling door at one side, the aim being to do away with the joint in the roof. While both are satisfactory and similar in the more im-portant details, possibly the first type is to be especially

The structure rests on 3 pieces of 2 x 4 on edge, as shown. (By using a pair of runner or skids, the outfit may be rendered portable).

The walls consist of three 2 x 3 studs on each side, covered inside with  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch T & G boarding. On top of the study is a 2 x 3 plate. The boarding should start at 5 inches above the floor of the troughs, and a gate, or feed control board, 7% inch by 10 inches in width, the full length of the feeder, slides behind the boarding. This gate may be fastened at any desired height by thumbscrews, sliding in a vertical slot on the outside face of the boarding. Connection between control board and thumbscrews is made by two iron straps 1 inch by 1/4 inch, as shown.

The floor of the bin consists of 3% inch T & G boarding laid on 2 x 2 rafters at 45 degrees. The floor of the feed troughs is ½-inch T & G board-

ing laid across the 2 x 4 base pieces.

The front of the feed troughs consists of 1 piece 4 inches by 4 inches (2 two by fours) beveled from the centre down to the flooring. From this front are placed 2-inch by 2-inch braces running up to a 1-inch by 3-inch piece laid along the sides, as shown. The roof consists of 2-inch by 2-inch rafters resting

on the 2-inch by 3-inch plate, and covered with 1-inch

T & G boarding and ready roofing. The door which is made of %-inch T & G with 1-inch by 3-inch battens at back, should be equipped with hinges and handle for lifting, and in the case of the roof door, should have a prop to keep it open.

The structure is 5 feet 134 inches by 6 feet 534 inches, outside dimensions.

### Modifications.

The two-sided self-feeder is especially adapted for outdoor use or where a considerable number of hogs are together in a large pen or run. Under ordinary circumstances one-half of the feeder represented by the line drawing would be ample and could be made in such a way that it might readily be attached to the wall. Partitions could also be made in it so the different kinds of grain would feed down separately.

The points to keep in mind are: First, the construction must be such that the grain will feed down regularly without any stops or clogging, such as often occurs in chutes from bins. The troughs must also be made so the minumum amount of waste will be permitted through the hogs nosing the meal over and out of the trough.

## How and What to Feed.

Experiments at the Central Experimental Farms have prompted the Animal Husbandry Division to give the following advice in regard to the self-feeder and rations adapted for use in it:

Place the feeder on a platform or floor that will remain clean during wet weather, and prove accessible to the pigs at all times. Provide shade of some sort, either trees or a rough shed. While this system of feeding will prove relatively economical in dry lot feeding where green feed, skim-milk or water are supplied daily, the maximum efficiency will be reached where the feeders are placed in a good clover or alfalfa pasture. In any case, dry lot or pasture, with or without milk products, fresh water should be always supplied, preferably running, or from some self-watering device, regularly and frequently filled.

Young pigs from ten weeks of age onward may be safely and economically fed by this method. Until this age is reached it is generally wise to feed by hand, although experiments have proved that even sucking pigs have been benefited by the feeder. Shoats of all ages, and in fact all classes of pigs may be most profit-ably "self-fed." Young breeding stock similarly Young breeding stock, similarly, are benefited, provided the ration is one of a bone and

From a mechanical standpoint practically any mixture of whole or ground grains, or other millfeeds may be successfully fed. Corn, for example, is frequently fed alone with clover or alfalfa pasture, for short-finishing periods. For young pigs or shoats any of the following rations will be found suitable, provided all hulls are fairly finely ground:

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1. Shorts, fine-ground oats, fine-ground barleyequal parts. 2. Shorts 4 parts, either of above grains 4 parts,

ground peas 2 parts.

3. Shorts or wheat, 2 parts; barley, 2 parts; peas, 1 part.

With any of the above rations fed to young pigs skim-miilk may be profitably fed. Where such cannot be obtained the addition of tankage, meat or blood meal, is recommended, say at the rate of one pound of tankage to six pounds of any of the above mixtures. Where whole corn is used, one pound of tankage could be added to every five of corn.

## Self-Feeder Suggestions.

In the United States the Free-Choice system is followed quite extensively. This consists in placing dif-ferent kinds of grain in separate compartments of the self-feeder and allowing the hog to mix his ration as he desires. Shorts, tankage and corn are the three feeds commonly used throughout the Corn Belt, but in Canada, especially this year, the latter two are practically out of the question.

John M. Evvard, Assistant Chief in Animal Husbandry at the Iowa Experiment Station, and an acknowledged swine expert, makes the following suggestions in regard to the usefulness and limitations of the self-feeder

An efficient method for full feeding of hogs is to self-feed.

If you wish to "grow your pigs slowly" do not self-feed.

3. The hog does not like hash any better than you do.

4. The self-feeder will not save all of the work, only part of it.

5. Better have a little too much self-feeder trough space than too little.

6. The self-feeder works excellently with swine; but that is not saying that the same is true of horses, cattle, sheep, poultry and goats.

To self-feed pregnant sows, mix bulky feeds with the grain, such as alfalfa. Regulate the gains by increasing or decreasing the hay meal.

The hog is a physiologist not an economist; he eats to suit himself, and corn at 3 cents and corn at \$3.00 looks all the same to him. In other words, "the hog looks out for himself, not you.'

9. Human ingenuity must be exercised in learning what and which feed to place before swine in separate self-feeders to secure optimum results.

10. The hog cannot always economically balance his ration; much depends upon the opportunities that you afford him. Choose the right feeds

The self-feeder in the summer had best be in 11. the shade, and in the winter away from the cold winds, preferably under warm shelter-well floored.

Rats, chickens, birds and other animals enjoy the self-feeder as do the hogs; govern your operations accordingly. 13.

The careless, unreliable human feeder can be displaced with the self-feeder to great advantage ofttimes in the full feeding of swine.

14. Self-watering is a part of the Iowa Self-Feeding System, therefore keep plenty of drinking water before

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recommended.

with pregnant sows, particularly as farrowing time approaches.

the hogs always. Self-icing is not self-watering. 15. Self-fed pigs are liable to eat most any hour of the day or night, hence it is well to have the self-feeders easily accessible all of the time.



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