

Swine.

THE BREEDING AND MANAGEMENT OF SWINE.

(From Farming)

By W. J. Haycraft, Agincourt.

Our methods of breeding and managing swine have undergone a great change in the last fifty years. In former times it was the custom to breed from a sow of any kind, color, or type; and the requirements of the market were never taken into consideration at all. Anything would do, so long as it would make pork. The housing, too, was usually of as slovenly a nature as could possibly be. As a general rule, a few boards thrown across some fence corner near the house constituted the pig-pen, and in wet weather the hogs would be wallowing in mud and muck up to their bellies. The feeding trough was never in a fit condition to put wholesome food into with any expectation of receiving a profitable return. And the marketing, in keeping with the breeding, the housing, and the feeding, was done in the most slovenly manner. But prices were good, and buyers seldom found fault.

But now see, at our annual exhibitions, what fine pens of swine there are; well bred, well kept, well fed. What a contrast they present to the swine of half a century ago. But this change has been brought about by years of careful breeding and selection, and by a steady improvement in the methods of housing, managing, and feeding. Great credit is due to those who have toiled unceasingly to bring our swine-breeding to the high standard which it now occupies as one of the leading industries of our noble province.

A CLEAR AIM NECESSARY.

In any pursuit of life there must be a clear perception of what is desired in order that the best results may be accomplished. A builder would have very poor success in erecting a building if he did not have a definite plan decided upon before he began. The same thought holds with respect to every other tradesman. So it is with the swine-breeder. If you intend to breed pure-bred swine you must first decide definitely which breed will be your choice, and what one will be best suited to your locality; or, if you wish to breed only for pork, you must first decide which breed or cross will best suit the market that is most convenient to you. When you have selected your breed and type, breed to that type only, and success will surely crown your efforts.

THE SOW AND THE SIRE.

The first thing necessary to success in swine-breeding is a good brood sow. She should possess good length and depth of side, a good shoulder, and a fine, deep ham. These characteristics she should have inherited from her dam, so that if we use with her a sire of the proper type we may expect her to transmit these same characteristics to her offspring. She should have at least twelve teats, and as many more as possible, for the reason that if it ever happen, as occasionally it will, that you get a large litter, some of your little ones will die if there are not enough teats for all of them.

By strict attention to your breeding stock you will soon be able to tell which of them have the best digestive powers and respond most quickly to liberal feeding, from these select your young breeders.

Always use a purebred sire, so that your stock may be improving instead of degenerating. No matter whether your dam be purebred or not, if you use a mongrel sire your stock will continually degenerate.

THE BREED.

Now, as to the best breed, it is enough to say that there is no "best" breed for all purposes, and for all people. Breeders of purebred swine all claim they have the best, and each strives to win the coveted prize when they compete for "the best hog of any breed." One thing is certain, namely, that some breeds of hogs conform more closely to the pork packers' views than do others; but whether such breeds will return as much pork for the food consumed by them as will others that are not so much desired by the packer, is a matter for our experiment stations to decide. But hogs that will grow to weigh 200 pounds live weight at six or seven months old, and that possess length and depth of side, together with a good, deep ham and shoulder, are the ones that suit the packers' idea at the present time.

HOUSING.

Having selected your breeding stock, you must now provide a comfortable house for them, for if your swine are not properly cared for your labor as a breeder will be lost. I prefer a frame pen, made frost-proof. My objection to stone pens is that on account of their being damp they are not so healthy as wooden ones are. Every swine-breeder knows about how many hogs he intends to keep, so he must build his pen to suit his requirements. At one end should be a boiling house, which should be large enough for killing also; and there should be a passage along in front of the pens for convenience in feeding. There should also be a yard to each pen, and it should face the south, if possible. Good ventilation is necessary, and it can be had for very little extra expense.

If convenient, build your pen so that it will adjoin the orchard, as then your pigs will have a shady run in the hot days of summer, and be able also to pick up all wormy apples, thereby destroying numbers of insects that would give you trouble in the next year. It is also claimed by some that sowing peas in the orchard and letting the hogs harvest them is very beneficial to the orchard.

FEEDING.

The feeding of swine is, to my mind, the most difficult part of their management. The feeding should begin with the sow as soon as she has been served, or shortly after. In winter her food should consist of roots and a little grain, and in summer she will do very well if she has the run of the pasture field and the refuse from the house. A few days before farrowing time she should be put in a pen with a scuffling nailed about eight inches from the floor and ten inches from the sides, so as to keep her from crushing the little ones against the wall. If possible, do not disturb her while

farrowing, and do not give her anything to eat till she looks for it, and then only a little slop for the first two or three days. After that give her all she will eat clean of barley and oats chopped, and occasionally a little oil-cake added.

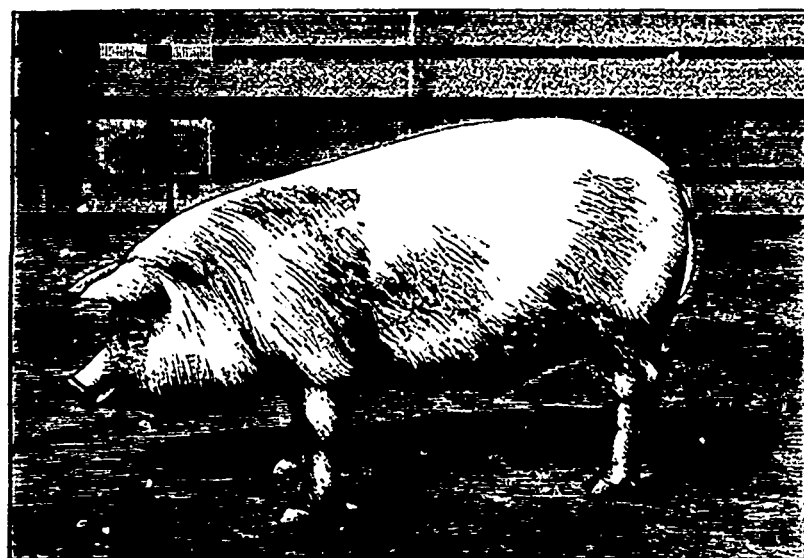
When the little pigs are about three weeks old, castrate them, and partition off a part of the pen for them to run in. Place where they can get at it a little sweet milk, and they will soon learn to eat. After they get accustomed to eat, you may add a little meal. I prefer shorts; if convenient, add a few boiled potatoes, which will be greatly relished by the youngsters.

I usually wean at six or seven weeks. At weaning, the pigs should be fed very carefully so as not to stunt them with overfeeding or underfeeding, as a stunted pig is dear at any price. Until fattening time comes the pigs should be fed with bone and muscle-forming food, so as to insure good growth. Oat and barley meal is good

strict attention is paid to bedding and cleaning; especially so if it had to be purchased with hard cash.

We do not advise the use of too highly concentrated foods. For instance, some feeders, knowing the highly nutritious nature of cotton-seed meal, are tempted to feed it to swine in hope that its abundant nitrogen (1) may add to the fleshy part of the animal, and thus produce the much sought for pork composed of alternate streaks of fat and lean. But we must remember that in feeding animals we cannot produce as certain effects as we can in mixing paints or metals. We must consider the health and vital functions of the animals we feed. This especially applies to swine, whose internal organs are similar to those of man, and every one knows with what care man's food has to be selected, consumed, and digested in order that serious trouble may be avoided.

Thus every feeder of farm animals must make a study of the science of



PRIZE BACON CURERS' PIG.

At the Montreal Exhibition last autumn a prize of \$20 was offered by the Laing Packing and Provision Company of Montreal, "for the best bunch of hogs of any kind, ten or more in number, suitable for the export bacon trade, weight to be 140 lbs. to 190 lbs., live weight. Hogs to be in good condition, and not too fat." There were three entries. The hog shown in the illustration was picked out by the judges as being the best and most typical animal of the lot for the bacon trade. Of the bunch of ten hogs winning the prize, two were Tamworth and Berkshire crossed, three were Yorkshire and Berkshire crossed; two were Poland-China and Berkshire crossed; and three were Berkshire. The animal represented in the engraving was from a Yorkshire boar and a Berkshire sow.

food for growing hogs. It should be mixed with pure water, or, what is better (if dairying is carried on in connection with hog-raising), with good, sweet skimmed milk.

Give your hogs plenty of exercise, for that is very essential to the formation of the coveted bacon that is composed of alternate streaks of fat and lean. A little trough with salt and ashes should be kept where the pigs may have free access to it at will both in growing time and also in fattening time.

FATTENING.

As fattening time comes on a more fattening food should be fed. This may consist of peas or corn, mixed with barley and oats. We should consider two things, the wholesomeness of the food, and its capacity to make a large return in flesh and fat. By strict attention to feed and a proper mode of feeding it, we ensure a greater freedom from disease. Some prefer boiled food, but the extra expense for fire and labor will not be balanced by the increased gain. We have fed shorts mixed with pure water, and have been well paid for our labor. Besides there is the manure, which is no small item where a number of pigs are kept, and

feeding, and then apply it to his own practice, experimenting with different foods and with different manners of preparing them, in order to find out for himself what will be the best methods for him to pursue in his own practice.

PIG RAISING PAYS.

The pig has been from time immemorial the despised and neglected inhabitant of the barn-yard, but he has often been the most profitable domestic animal kept about the farm. But neglect and bad treatment have often prevented him from rendering to his owner the return in profit of which he was capable.

Of course, in the economical fattening of swine, some attention must be paid to the market end of the business. But in this, as in other matters pertaining to the farm, the home end of the business is the most important one. The reduction of cost and the improvement of quality are two objects toward which the swine breeder must give his most strenuous attention. While the individual farmer

(1) Pease will answer for the nitrogen.—Ed.