

Municipal Hog Raising

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In the present period of shortage of food stuffs and consequent high prices, it would seem that the attention of Canadian municipalities might well be directed to the utilization of their garbage by feeding it to hogs.

This method of disposal is not by any means a new one, but has been practised for many years. A certain amount of garbage is privately collected and fed to hogs in Canada, but as far as the writer is aware, there is no Canadian municipality which disposes of all, or even the larger part, of its garbage in this manner.

Judging from the experience of some cities and towns in the United States, where garbage has been fed to hogs for many years, success seems to depend principally upon:—

1. Prevention of disease among the hogs.
2. Cleanliness in handling the garbage.
3. Sanitary methods of disposing of manure, soiled bedding, etc.

The prevention of disease among hogs is primarily a matter of preventing epidemics of hog cholera. In the United States the practice is to inoculate the little pigs with anti-cholera serum when they are about five to six weeks old. This treatment protects them for about seven weeks, and they are then vaccinated with anti-cholera virus and serum, which confers permanent immunity. As nearly all garbage in the United States is fed to hogs uncooked, protecting them against cholera is a very important matter there.

In Canada, the regulations of the Department of Agriculture forbid the use of the double-inoculation method just described. These regulations also forbid the feeding of uncooked garbage, consequently the danger of infection is not so great here as in the United States.

Whether or not garbage should be cooked is a question which it does not seem possible to answer definitely at the present time. Most of the feeders in the United States prefer uncooked garbage, claiming that it contains certain elements which are necessary to the hog's health. Some sorts of kitchen wastes are not relished by hogs, and cooking necessarily infuses juices from these material throughout the mass, whereas if garbage is fed raw, the hogs will eat only that portion of it which will not injure them.

These opinions as to the desirability of feeding uncooked garbage are not shared in by all feeders. The writer sent a questionnaire to a number of farmers in Canada, who were feeding from 100 to 700 hogs each. The replies to this questionnaire show that Canadian feeders prefer to cook the garbage. The principal reason for this attitude appears to be that they feel it is a very distinct protection against cholera. It also seems to be a practice here to feed garbage mixed with grain of some sort, whereas in the United States much garbage is fed by itself.

If a hog farm is not to become a nuisance the garbage must be handled in a cleanly manner. This means that no more should be fed at one time than the hogs will eat, and that all left over should be

promptly disposed of either by burial or by burning.

One of the most successful hog farms is that conducted by the city of Worcester, Mass. Here garbage is fed on wooden platforms which have a plank spiked to the edge to prevent the hogs pushing the food off. These platforms are portable, and are moved about from place to place every few days, so that the ground on which they rest may not be come fouled by particles of garbage which may fall off. After each feeding the platforms are scraped clean with a shovel and the scrapings are buried.

If cooked garbage is fed, some form of trough is needed. Perhaps the self feeder with which the United States Department of Agriculture has been experimenting for some time might be used to advantage, although so far as the writer knows it has not been so employed.

As to the disposal of manure, etc.; during warm weather, this can be removed daily and ploughed in, but during cold weather it must be stored, and it is often convenient to store it during warm weather. If merely heaped up by itself, it may become offensive and will surely be a breeding place for flies. On the other hand, composted with an equal volume of dry soil, the disagreeable odors are greatly minimized and the fertilizing value is conserved. The fly nuisance may be controlled by spraying the compost heaps with an emulsion of kerosene-turpentine or creosote.

There are many details of a practical nature which must be attended to if feeding garbage to hogs is to be successful, but the three points enumerated must certainly be observed.

It is not many years since the medical profession was almost unanimously opposed to the use of garbage-fed pork. It may be said, however, that there is little foundation for this attitude. The hogs which Worcester has sold from its municipal farm have usually brought a slightly higher price than grain-fed hogs from the West and, if anything, a smaller percentage of them have been rejected as unfit for consumption, by the Government inspectors at the abattoir. At the present time, the general opinion is that there is no appreciable difference between pork from garbage-fed hogs and pork from hogs fed on other food.

As to financial returns which may be expected from feeding garbage to hogs, the only reliable figures available are those from the Worcester farm referred to. Here the garbage from about 75,000 people is fed to from 2,000 to 3,000 hogs. The following table gives the cost of collection and disposal of the garbage and also the amount realized from the sale of pork:—

Year.	Total Expenditures.	Total Receipts.	Net Cost.	Net Profit.
1898	\$14,804.34	\$7,674.02	\$7,130.32	
1899	17,109.00	10,641.52	6,467.48	
1900	17,714.21	11,947.91	5,767.30	
1901	18,935.86	13,933.03	5,022.83	
1902	18,765.03	18,766.99		\$1.96

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