

# Making Pork on Grain, Roots and Pasture.

It is generally considered that hogs should be bred and reared on farms where there is considerable dairy offal to be disposed of, and that under such conditions the production of pork is most profitable. Some authorities advocate hog raising only when the number reared consume, as a part of their feed allowance, by-products of the home or dairy. Often farmers raise two litters each year from one dam, and with this small number the offal from the dairy goes a long way in giving the pigs a start and in nourishing them throughout the growing period. Skim-milk and buttermilk are almost always mentioned when rations for pigs are being discussed, yet there are thousands of hogs produced in Western Ontario that know not the taste of cow's milk or any product of it. In that district hogs are grown and handled as a distinct line, not as a sideline, on many home-steads. Still there are farms where hogs roam in herds, but are not given the attention and study the numbers warrant. In such cases the earnings compared with those from a well-regulated farm where particular oversight is given to swine, would be interesting and profitable to many. There is as much intelligence and care required to profitably handle a herd of brood sows and their offspring as a herd of cows and their calves. There is not so much capital tied up in the hog business as in the case with cattle, and, as a result, the pigs are frequently neglected or mismanaged. The sight of a splendid herd of swine on the farm of Henry Buchanan & Sons, in Kent County, Ontario, prompted a representative of this paper to secure from those farmers their methods of breeding and caring for a comparatively large number of pigs. This kind of farming is distinctive in character, for the hogs are dependent only on the feed produced on the farm. They are a branch of live stock unto themselves, not depending upon the dairy or by-products of any kind.

## Care of the Breeding Stock.

Eight is the number of brood sows usually maintained to produce the feeders, and it is evident that the care accorded the breeding stock is responsible in part for good, averaged-sized litters of healthy pigs. In winter the sows have the run of the barnyard, and the privilege of choosing any side of a large straw stack. The cattle are fed considerable corn, and the breeding swine subsist mainly on what they can glean from the droppings. Sometimes this is not sufficient. Roots and meal are then supplied in sufficient quantities to keep them in a good, healthy, thrifty condition, but not fat. However, circumstances have arisen when the brood sows were getting more from following the cattle than was required and young stock was turned in. The amount of feed is judged not by pounds or quarts but by the appearance and condition of the stock.

The treatment of the sows in summer is also conducive to strength and thrift. A large pasture field is available, and on to this the swine, young and old, are turned. The pigs and feeders have access to pens where they are fed, but the sows subsist almost altogether on grass throughout the summer. At least one week before farrowing the dam is brought to her pen at the buildings, and allowed to become accustomed to the surroundings. Roots then take the place of grass in the daily allowance, for it is realized that some succulent feed is necessary to supply those properties conveyed to the animal system through green vegetation. Charcoal, ashes, sulphur, etc., are also placed within reach of all confined stock, but Messrs. Buchanan state that the effect of the substances gathered from the soil itself can hardly be duplicated by feeding such materials as have been mentioned. Exercise and "roughing it" are considered essential, but at no time is the breeding stock allowed to get too thin on account of lack of feed.

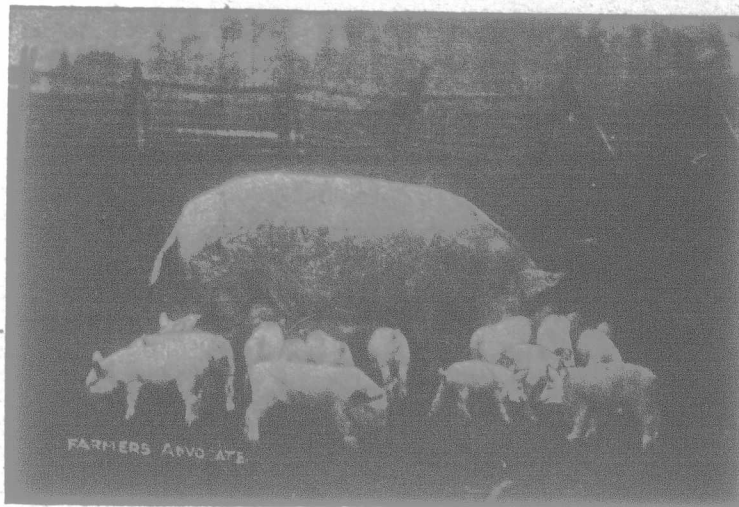
The sows are selected both for conformation and producing ability. This process of selection goes on year after year, and at present the average per sow per litter is about eight pigs. This is obtained generally twice a year, and from 125 to 130 hogs are disposed of every twelve months.

## Care of Young Pigs.

The young pigs are allowed to remain on the dam for about two months, and during this time they are permitted to run into an adjoining pen from which the sow is excluded. Here they are given, not milk and specially prepared mixtures, but simply dry chop and roots. It is while still running with the mother that they become accustomed to their meal. This consists of  $\frac{1}{2}$  oats with the remainder made up of about equal parts of barley and corn. If the sow farrows on a cement floor they are put, as soon as convenient, into a pen with an earth or wooden floor, for considerable difficulty has been experienced in raising young pigs on cement. After two months the trouble ceases and the litter is returned to the piggery, or let out to pasture.

During the growing period, the stock is fed meal and roots only twice a day. This method of feeding was suggested some years ago when a bunch of pigs were allowed to hog down some corn. Early in the morning and again in the afternoon they betook themselves to the corn field, but after each visit they spent their time rooting in the ground, or resting in a comfortable place. It appeared that sufficient was acquired on these two occasions, and the system has been adhered to in the pens. Water of course is supplied at noon, but the meal only morning and evening.

The number of hogs turned off at six months of age is not large. Usually they are fed to weigh between 220 and 240 pounds, and this means an eight or nine-months-old animal. Often the best two or three in each bunch will be ready before the others, but the majority of the lot are eight or nine months



A Healthy Family.

sows subsist chiefly on grass. After haying and harvest the stock have the run of some fields. Without pasture Messrs. Buchanan fear they would not have very good success with pigs.

In the fall a field of corn is usually hogged down, and this is a time-and-labor saver.

Not much difficulty is experienced with regard to fencing. When the young fellows are well yarded at the start, and do not become accustomed to looking for holes through which they may escape they go to pasture and give little trouble. However, if a litter of pigs gets the habit of finding holes and learning that escape is possible, they will find any weak place in the fence, and probably give trouble in adjacent crops. It depends largely on how they are reared from the first, for their early training governs their actions during their period in the pasture.

## Finishing Hogs.

Chop and roots are the main feeds. Two proportions for combining the different grains are considered good. One ration consisting of  $\frac{1}{2}$  oats and  $\frac{1}{2}$  corn gives good results, while another mixture of  $\frac{1}{2}$  corn and  $\frac{1}{2}$  oats and barley is equally good or better. From beginning to end an effort is made to keep the pigs thriving and in good condition. They are not forced at any time, but runts or stunted pigs are guarded against so far as possible. Often one or two in a bunch of pigs will not do so well as the others, but when the larger pigs are sold off the smaller ones make satisfactory gains and profitable pork.

## Making Pork Largely in Summer.

From seven hundred to a thousand dollars worth of hogs are turned off annually by Bodkin Bros., also of Kent County. Finishing is done mainly in the summer, for under their conditions with grass and the warm weather it is believed that one-half more growth can be obtained in summer than in winter on the same amount of feed. The young pigs are fed well on the sow for about seven weeks and then weaned. Bodkin Bros. purchase shorts for the young swine, and have considerable skim-milk and buttermilk from the number of cows they milk to supply the home. In the spring the litters arrive during the latter part of March and the first two weeks in April, and those are finished off during the autumn. The fall litters are not forced, but kept growing throughout the winter. About the first of May all the pigs are rung and turned to grass. The practice is made of sowing small fields of clover and rape for the hogs, and alternating between the different fields so they are not grazed too closely. Red clover is found best, and alfalfa it is believed would be good if it would stay in the land. The rape is sometimes sown broadcast. During the last cultivation of the corn field rape is sown. The success of this seeding depends much upon the season. Sometimes it does not produce much pasture, while in other cases it grows well and produces a stand ten or twelve inches high. This has been found to be a good fall run for the cattle, sheep and hogs. The winter-farrowed pigs are ready to go in June, July and August, and the spring litter later in the season.

The winter feeding of the young pigs consists of a good supply of roots. Furthermore, they receive shorts, chop, milk and buttermilk. The feeding of meal continues on grass, but they are shut up about three weeks to a month with extra feed before being turned off at 220 to 240 pounds in weight. The finishing ration is made up of oats and barley and wheat or corn. Corn is considered a little better for finishing than wheat. Bodkin Bros. prefer to feed their wheat, rather than sell it for less than \$1.00 per bushel. Chop made up of one-third corn or wheat and two-thirds oats and barley, which are grown together, gives excellent results.

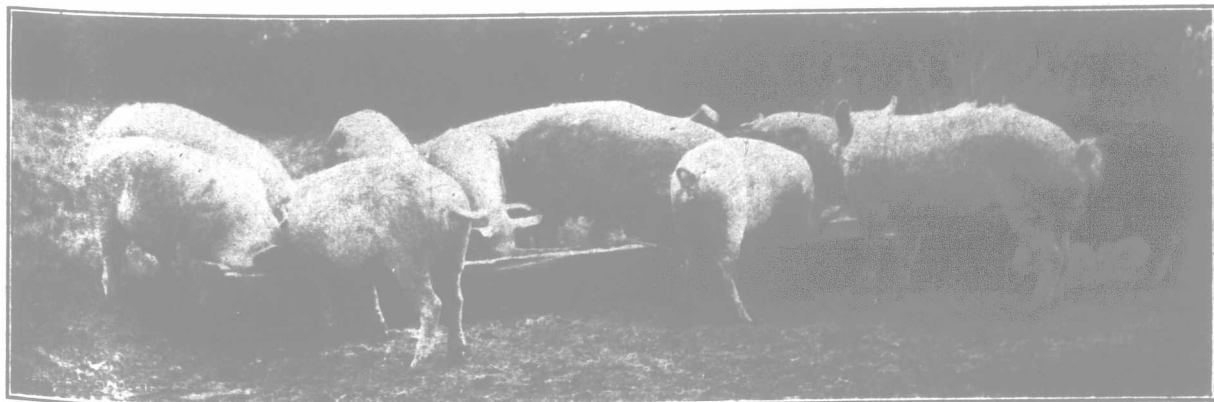


An Even Bunch of Sows on Grass.

old before they are ready to go. The objection these hog raisers have to selling at around 200 pounds in weight is that to make the same number of tons of pork, more pigs must be reared. This would necessitate the keeping of more brood sows, and as the number of breeding stock increases, the average number of each litter would decrease. The cheaper gains made by young pigs, it is thought, would be more than counterbalanced by the expense of the extra sows it would be necessary to maintain. Furthermore, there is the matter of pens and room which the larger number of small pigs would require. The price is also a factor, for often in waiting for a more satisfactory bid, the finished hogs increase in weight until they sometimes become quite heavy. These were the reasons advanced for carrying the hogs until finished between 220 and 240 pounds or even more.

## Pasturing the Swine.

Some of the cows, sheep and all the swine have the run of a pasture field on the home place. As previously stated the growing pigs are fed meal, but the



Fresh Air Whets the Appetite.