

Preparing Hogs for the Show Ring.

First, it is necessary to have a good herd to select from. If this be the case, and good judgment is exercised in the choice made, the chances of winning a fair share of premiums only depends upon getting the animals into blooming condition. In making the choice, remember that the pig must stand well and be active when ready for the ring, therefore the legs should be straight, the feet strong, and the back slightly arched. The ribs should be of good length and fairly well sprung. Heavy fleshing will tend toward drooping the back, springing the pasterns, and spreading and deforming the feet. The broad-backed, chubby pig is not the sort to depend upon as a future winner. The plainer-looking, rangy animal, if he has the aforementioned requirements, will make more of a beauty when fitted than one would be inclined to suppose. If a hog has a good frame and sufficient scale do not discard him because he is a bit plain.

Just how much to sacrifice in fitting a herd is an important consideration. Most exhibitors do not consider it wise to raise and use animals exclusively for showing, but take breeding stock and push them along quickly before the shows, allowing them to fall back to breeding condition as soon as the show circuit is completed.

In fitting a herd it is well to keep to as near natural conditions as possible. The show stock should be removed from the rest of the herd and placed in small grass plots, those having plenty of shade-trees preferred. Small lots are better than large ones, in order to prevent undue exercise. Pigs of different ages should be kept by themselves, so that each animal will be more likely to get its own share of the feed. Breeding boars will fit better and be less inclined to fret at the shows if fitted among a bunch of sows of their own age.

The ration to commence with should be of a sort to produce growth and strength rather than fat.

D. P. McCracken, in the *Prairie Farmer*, voices our ideas when he recommended equal parts of finely-ground oats and wheat middlings for slop, with the addition of one-tenth part of old-process oil-meal. Feed three meals per day, thin at first, and only thickening it very gradually. After the morning and evening slop is given, feed lightly with well-soaked corn, or, better, peas. (Some prefer finely-ground meal.) Never think of keeping grain feed before them all the time, but see that every bit is eagerly eaten at the present meal. They should be hungry before every feeding time. Any animal once surfeited recedes rather than advances for a few days at least. The evening feed of grain should be heaviest, to provide for the fast of the night. As the fitting advances, the slop should be thickened, and the corn or other grain ration increased until within a month or six weeks of the first show, when the latter should be lessened and the slop thickened until when ready to ship to the first show the entire ration should consist of the oats and middlings slop. Pigs so fitted will flesh more smoothly and hold their bloom better, and remain more active and healthy than if fed on more starchy or fattening food, such as all corn. There is also much less risk of injuring the breeding qualities by this sort of feeding. Now, for making a great finish, irrespective of cost, there is nothing more safe and satisfactory to feed than new milk—a quart at least to each pig, and as much more as possible fed as a drink twice a day. Skimmed milk can be had on most farms and should be used to mix with the chop. Mix the slop fresh every day, or at every feed is just as well, according to Mr. McCracken, quoted above. Keep fresh water, salt, and wood ashes, within reach at all times. A few shovelfuls of charcoal fed twice a week tends to keep the digestive apparatus in good healthy order. Special care should be taken of the troughs, to see that they are kept perfectly clean and sweet.

How often we see a show pig's feet in bad shape, resulting simply from neglect. When pigs are on sod and not doing much walking the hoofs grow very rapidly. They can be trimmed just as easily as a cow's feet, if gone at in a business-like way. The trimming can be done with a chisel on a floor, or with a pair of nippers and knife while the animal is lying. Keep the pores open by daily rubbing the inside of the fore-legs with a brush or a corn-cob. Give the herd your first attention, and success will follow.

We have to record the death of another Old Country Shorthorn breeder, Mr. Robert Thompson, Inglewood, Penrith, Westmoreland.

The Pig Controversy.

BY "CLAUGHBANE," MANITOBA.

For some years past it has been a rare thing to pick up any of our agricultural periodicals without finding an article or two in them upholding a breed or breeds of pigs in opposition to other breeds. So far as Canadian writers on the subject have gone, the controversy may be summed up as a disagreement between consumer and producer. The pork-packer (who is indirectly the consumer, for he must cater to the tastes of his customers) says:—"I want pigs that will give me long, deep and lean sides of meat—such as the Yorkshire and Tamworth and their grades."

The producer says:—"I can give you that in other breeds, and can produce the meat more cheaply than by using the breeds you recommend." In answer to this, the packer says:—"We will pay more per lb. for pigs of the type we want, so that it will pay you to grow them, even if they are not so cheaply fed."

The Berkshire men, who have taken up their pens in defence of their favorites, have argued that they can, by selection, give the consumers the desired conformation and lean meat which they demand; and while the breeders have not said much about it, there is a feeling among farmers that pigs of the Berkshire type take considerably less feed to produce a pound of pork than those grades which the packer calls for. It is not to be wondered that the Berkshire breeders fight hard in defence of their breed, as for years it has been the popular pig, and by far the greater number of Canadian pigs have a strong infusion of its blood; and when a few packers say somewhat suddenly, "We want no more of them!" it is not surprising that the breeders have something to say in the matter.

shire pig with a ham big enough to suit him."

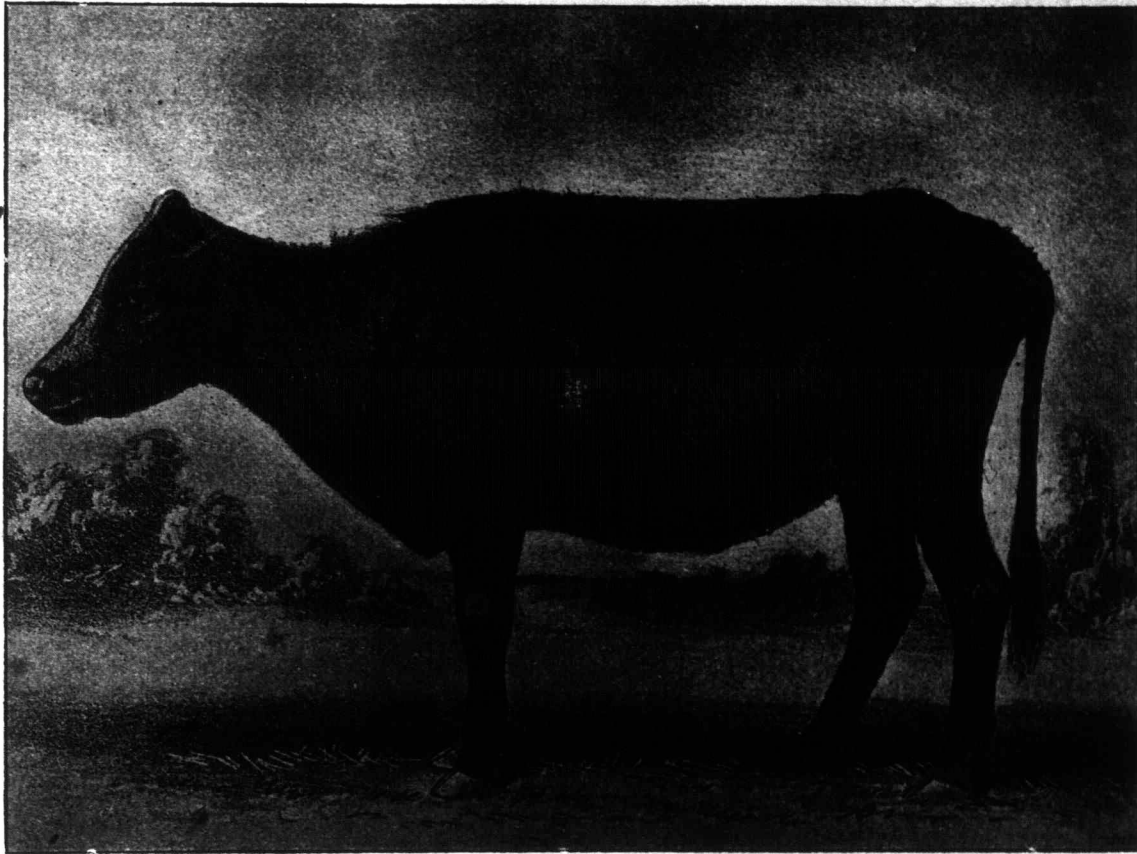
Now, I can quite understand his difficulty, but think the Berkshire is not so deficient in the size of the ham as it often seems to be; its very heavy shoulder giving it this appearance. This heavy development of shoulder is, I think, a defect in a pig, for the shoulder is the poorest quality of meat in the animal; it should, therefore, be rather light; and as the jowl also is anything but choice eating, according to present taste, it should be as light as possible, which is not the case with the Berkshire. There are, however, numbers of pigs of this breed that have shoulders which are not unduly developed; shoulders that, while not being light, are of a size in proportion to the other parts of the animal. Such pigs are long and smooth in appearance, with a good heavy ham. They are pigs that the packer, I should think, could not grumble at very much; and the farmer would find them profitable feeders, though in this respect they would probably not equal the shorter, thicker type; for I am of the opinion that the nearer the Berks approach the packers' ideal so will they take more feed to produce a pound of pork. While I believe it is all right for the breeders of the Berkshire to mold, by selection, their pigs to suit the demands of their customers (for they have pigs approaching that type), it seems ridiculous for breeders of Suffolks and other small breeds to do so, as I saw one breeder was endeavoring to do. These pigs have their place; but not as the bacon hog of to-day. No pig is easier fed or fit to kill so young as the Suffolk; and they will always be the most profitable animals to grow for fresh pork, near markets, for they can be killed at any time. They have their characteristics and uses. Why, then, change these and endeavor to make bacon

hogs of them, when there are other breeds better adapted for the purpose than they can ever be, unless they are so altered in appearance as to be unrecognizable.

Of the two breeds which the pork-packer recommends—the Improved Large Yorkshire and the Tamworth,—it looks to many as if they were advising the farmers to go back to raising the old-time razor-backs. Especially is this true of the Tamworths, and there are few who see them for the first time that are favorably impressed with them. They are, however, a pig that grows on you; and when one becomes used to their somewhat peculiar appearance their good points begin to show up. Euclid says: "A line is length without breadth." This is very nearly true of a Tamworth's head; for while the nose is long, the rest of the head is small and fine—not larger than would seem to be actually necessary. There is next to no jowl, a very light shoulder, with a great deep side and comparatively heavy ham.

Now, the question is, What is the difference in the amount of feed required to produce a pound of pork in one of these big, narrow, slabby pigs, compared with that required to do the same in a good average Berk? While some experiments have been made in this direction, I think that the Experimental Farms would be doing a good work by making a sufficient number of tests so that the farmers of Canada could know the comparative cost of feeding the different types of pigs. These long lean breeds are raised and fed very largely by the Old Country farmers, for the Berkshire is not so generally popular in England as in Canada, and these Englishmen know a thing or two about hogs as well as about other stock. They also know a good piece of bacon when they come across it; and as England must be the market for our surplus bacon, we can profitably learn a lesson or two from them, if we would have them buy this surplus.

[NOTE.—Our correspondent makes a suggestion that the Experiment Stations carry on tests to ascertain the comparative cost of feeding the different types of pigs which seem to commend themselves respectively to the feeder and the packer. At the last Sheep and Swine Breeders' meeting in London, Ont., the question of inaugurating "breed contests" at the Ontario Agricultural College Station did not meet with favor, and was deferred till next annual meeting. However, not a few speakers suggested that the feeding of "grades" rather than of pure-bred would be advantageous. We would throw out the additional suggestion in favor of feeding experiments to determine the comparative cost of bringing the same type of hog to a marketable condition under different systems of feeding, in order that we may get at the most economical process of producing the class of pork that the market calls for.—EDITOR.]



A BALTIC PROVINCE HORNLESS COW—THE SORT NOT TO BREED.

Now, let us endeavor to look at the case with a totally unbiased view—without a leaning towards any particular breed, and without prejudice against any.

The pork-packer has claimed that the farmers' interests and their interests, as to the kind of pig to be raised, are identical; and so they are to a very large extent, provided the packer deals fairly by the farmer; for the packer, to increase his business, must turn out an article which the market demands, while the farmer who supplies him with his raw material has the demand for this raw material increased just in proportion as the packer supplies his customers with what they want.

In these days of close competition, where one country vies with another in the markets of the world, it is ridiculous to consider what class of product can be most easily raised; the first thing we must ask ourselves being: can we produce the article the market demands? If this can be produced at a profit, all right. If not, it must be abandoned. It is useless to produce any commodity for which there is no demand, or for which a demand cannot be created. William Cobbett, in his "Cottage Economy," tells how a pig should be fed, and says: "The last bushel fed is the one that pays the best, even if the pig has to sit down to eat it." Now, pigs that reach this stage of fat are not generally less than eighteen months old; and with the knowledge we have today of pig-feeding, we know that a bushel fed at this age is not as profitable as if fed to a pig a year younger; and, moreover, the time when such meat was wanted is gone by, even by that class in whose interests he was writing, and whom he would have live on bread, bacon, and beer.

A Manitoba Berkshire-breeder, speaking at the annual meeting of the Central Farmers' Institute, said "he had found it very difficult to get a Berk-