

IN THE MARITIME PROVINCES

The Bacon Hog.

ED. HOARD'S DAIRYMAN:—The bacon hog is now in evidence more than ever, and is another incentive to farmers going more strongly into dairying, from the fact that choice export bacon can only be produced from dairy bye-products, as whey, skim milk and butter milk, mixed with grain food, of course.

Just now bacon hog has reached the unprecedented price of \$7 per cwt. This is a great price, and what is regrettable few farmers are in a position to take advantage of this price, from the fact that winter fattening of bacon hogs, like winter dairying, has not made the progress it should. In fact, for profit in the bacon industry, a radical change must be made in the time of breeding. The progress of winter dairying had been slow at first, but, as the farmers are seeing the advantages and the necessity of it, it is now fast becoming general in all dairy districts. If the bacon industry shall become a success, more attention must be paid to winter hog-raising.

As a general thing farmers are in the habit of raising but one litter a year from the sow, and that in spring. Now the spring is the very worst time in the year for the litters to come, for the reason that the spring litters will be put on the market in the late fall months, when bacon is always at the very lowest notch. Fully three-fourths of the hog crop are placed on the market in the months of October, November, December and January, the very months in all the year when hog products are the lowest. The history of the past show (and there is a good reason for it) that the bacon hog market begins to rise in the month of February, and there is a steady rise in price of bacon hogs through March, April, May, June, July and August, and the price reaches, as a rule, to the highest point in the early part of August. After this period there is a gradual descent in the market. By the end of August prices have begun to fall; the fall in the market is gradual through September and October, when rock bottom is generally reached sometime in the month of November. For some reason the greatest consumption of bacon takes place in Britain from April to August, while the supply in this period is lowest. These facts should be a lesson to farmers who have hogs, particularly bacon hogs.

When should the bacon sow farrow? The answer to this question can be easily given from a study of the foregoing facts of the market. Now, a bacon hog is right to market at seven or eight months of age, therefore autumn months are the right time for the litters to come. If but one litter a year is raised that litter should be raised in the months of September, October, November

or December. But there is no reason why a brood sow should not raise two litters a year. There is no valid reason why a brood sow should be allowed to rest—farrow—for six months of the year. Most writers on the hog say that fall litters should come not later than September. This is a grave error. A sow that has farrowed and suckled a spring litter is often tardy about breeding a fall litter so early as September following, and when the owner finds that he is unable to have his sow served, to farrow in the month of September, decides not to breed her at all, but confine himself to having his sow breed but once in a year. Well it may be different with the pork-hog, but with regard to the bacon hog the later in the fall the litter is farrowed the greater will be the advantages. As a rule the December litter will fetch a higher price than the September litter.

Let it be understood, then, that the months of March, April, May and June are the four worst months of the year for the bacon hog to be farrowed, just the same as these months are the very worst months for the dairy cow to calve, but the cow breeds but once a year whereas the sow may, and should, breed twice a year. It is all right for one of the litters to be farrowed in those spring months, but the principal litter of the year and the litter, if the sow is bred but once, should come in the late fall and early winter months.

True, the spring litter can be raised somewhat cheaper than the fall and winter litter, and this will compensate in some degree for the lower price that will be obtained for the spring litters. Most authorities hitherto advise in favor of March and September as the most suitable months for the sow to farrow. For the bacon hog this is not so.

June and December would be the most suitable months of all the year when two litters a year are sought. Let the breeders be in not too great a hurry in breeding the sow that farrow in March or April. Let the pig suckle at least eight weeks, and if the sow is bred three months after farrowing it will be time enough. All this presupposes warm, well-ventilated and roomy winter quarters for the pigs. It also means the growing of abundance of roots for feeding, both cooked and raw, during the winter. It means, too, abundance of skim milk for the winter fattening of the fall pigs. In conclusion, then, the *sine qua non* of successful bacon raising is fall litters, warm and roomy quarters, abundance of skim milk and lots of roots, as turnips, beets and potatoes. With all these handy, the choice of grain foods is not important.

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