

Before commencing the actual killing it is well to consider a few things in connection with the selection of the animals for slaughter. They should in the first place be free from disease. Good condition is also essential, that is, the pig should be in a thriving state, and gaining in weight. If a pig be in poor condition he will not kill out satisfactorily. The carcass will lack in quality and will not present that characteristic admixture of lean and fat so desirable in a choice piece of meat. The fat that is put on is not so valuable in itself as is its effect upon the muscle, the lean tissues of the carcass.

Sometimes an old sow is killed and because the market price for meat of this kind is low, it is kept for family use. This is mistaken economy; better by far to sell her for what she will bring when well fattened and keep for family use the carcass of a smooth bodied pig of bacon type that will weigh when dressed from 160 to 170 pounds.

We cannot expect to turn out No. 1 hams and bacon by using sides and hams cut from the carcass of some heavy, coarse, rough hog. The smooth, long bodied, light jowled, heavily muscled type, with good deep sides, will be found admirably suited to the needs of the home or the demand of the local market. A carcass from a pig of this kind will carry practically no waste whatever and will be far more satisfactory than the short, thick and excessively fat kind.

There are two distinct types of hogs, namely, the Bacon Type, and the Butcher or Lard Type.

Bacon Type—A prime bacon hog has a smooth, medium but uniform shoulder, medium wide back, loin and hind quarter, all of which should indicate a wealth of muscling. His sides are flat and uniformly deep from front to rear. Both flanks are well filled. He has a smooth, trim jowl and neck and a smooth, tapering ham well fleshed to the hock. He should weigh 160 to 230 pounds. Good breeding and good feeding will produce him from the Yorkshire and Tamworth breeds at six to seven months of age.

Butcher or Lard Type—A prime butcher hog has a smooth, wide, full shoulder; broad back; wide, full hams, short, heavy neck; smooth, heavy jowls and short legs. He should be uniform in width and depth throughout his whole length. Quality should be evidenced by freedom from wrinkles, fineness of hair and bone, absence of any coarseness and waste. He should weigh 180 to 250 pounds. Good breeding and good feeding will produce the butcher hog from Berkshires, Hampshires, Poland Chinas, Duroc Jerseys and Chester Whites, at about seven to eight months of age.

PREPARATION

Hogs intended for slaughter should be fasted for at least twenty-four hours. Thirty-six hours without food is still better. A hog that is on full feed when killed will not bleed out so well, will be harder to dress, and the carcass will not present such a clean and pleasing appear-