

The boar is half the herd, and where a pure bred boar is used on common or grade sows he is really of still greater importance than all the sows combined so far as conformation is concerned. It is evident therefore that very great care should be observed in the selection of a boar to head even a commonplace herd. All pure bred animals are not necessarily good animals. Many pedigreed pigs now in service should have been castrated in their early days. The very fact that they are pure bred, although inferior specimens, makes them even more dangerous than a common grade scrub, because being pure bred they are much more likely to leave their mark on their get. Have nothing to do therefore with the pure bred scrub.

The boar to be a good one should in the first place come from good stock. Boars of good conformation are sometimes found among the get of inferior breeding stock. Such boars are not likely to prove satisfactory no matter how nearly they may themselves approach the ideal in conformation and characteristics.

The ideal boar for breeding for bacon production will of course vary somewhat in conformation according to the breed in which he is sought. Generally speaking, however, he should be strongly masculine in appearance but not coarse. Masculinity indicates prepotency or impressiveness. It shows itself in various parts of the animal, more particularly in the head, neck and legs. The head should be of a good size, strong featured and broad between the eyes and ears. It should be attached to the body by a rather short, strong, somewhat crested neck. The hair should be somewhat coarser and the legs somewhat stronger than would be desired in a sow of similar size and the same age. Coarseness in boars is not infrequently mistaken for masculinity, particularly in this the case when the coarseness shows itself strongly in the region of the shoulders. Broad heavy shouldered boars are not necessarily prepotent nor even extraordinarily vigorous sires. On the contrary not infrequently do they prove themselves lacking in vitality and impressiveness. The smooth shouldered, deep chested sire with large heart girth and well let down at the fore flank is much more likely to prove himself a valuable getter than the heavy shouldered fellow with the immense bristling crest so often regarded as the ideal sort.

He should be rather shorter bodied than the ideal bacon pig it is desired to breed and somewhat more compact in form. He should stand right up on the points of the toes of rather short, very strong, clean, straight, well placed legs. The hind quarters or hams and hind legs should be particularly well developed and free from signs of weakness. The croup should be broad, long and carried out fairly straight. Every muscle of the ham should stand well out right down to the hock, both inside and outside the gamine. The second thigh. The hocks should be strong and squarely set, and the pasterns particularly well set and set.

The back should be long, level and straight, save for a slight tendency to arch at the loin. The body should be deep and strong looking.

The visible organs of reproduction should be normal and well developed. No ruptured animals should ever be used for reproductive purposes.

In short the sire should be well balanced, or symmetrical, show lots of vitality and be masculine in his build and appearance.

THE SOW.

Every sow in the herd should be as good as can be procured. Having a good boar will not make up for inferior sows. Where it is not desired to sell stock for breeding purposes, however, the use of pure bred sows is not absolutely necessary to insure success.

It is generally supposed that the good brood sow should be somewhat more rangy, rather more loosely put together and a bit more open in conformation than the good boar of the same breed. Many compactly built sows, have, however, proven very excellent breeders, bearing and raising large, uniform and thrifty litters. It is very easy too to select sows so loose and ungainly as to be quite useless as mothers. The appearance the sow should be essentially feminine. She should have a strong but neat muzzle.