

SHALL WE GO BACK TO THE FAT HOG?

J. A. Macdonald, Carleton Co., Ont.

THE continued prosperity of the swine industry cannot be maintained by the efforts of the farmers themselves. As the industry in the early days required and received the substantial support of the packers of that time it still requires, in their part, active cooperation. This in the last few years, the packers have failed to give and, as a result, our export bacon industry is falling off at an alarming rate.

In 1908 Canada exported 95,945,099 pounds of pork products, while in the same year we imported 10,224,413 pounds, or, in other words, we exported that year five and three-quarters times as much as we imported. In the nine months of 1911, after April 1, our exports were 48,446,575 pounds as against 13,165,786 pounds imported.

These figures show that we exported three and one-half times as much as we imported. At this rate Canada will soon not be raising enough pork for her own requirements.

THE BACON HOG CRITICISED
In our efforts to please and satisfy the packers we have developed throughout Canada the lean, fine grained "Singer" that is a hard feeder and an unprofitable hog compared to the old-fashioned thick fat. And what thanks or return are we getting from the packers for doing away with the old-fashioned easy-feeder for this slab-sided, lean, bacon hog? The systems of buying, on the part of the packers, do not tend to stimulate the production and breeding of this bacon hog. They pay no premium on this so-called bacon hog over the lard hog.

While packers, like other business men, cannot be expected to conduct their business at a loss, it would seem to be wise on their part not to take the advantage of liberal supplies which they do at present, to make an undue profit, a policy which cannot but result in discouraging hog-raisers who would like to continue in the industry, but find it unprofitable to do so. Such a policy creates a condition that is unprofitable to the producer as well as a hardship to the consumer, to say nothing of the partial idleness which at times it brings about in the packing industry.

PACKERS PAST AND PRESENT
The pioneer packers in Canada showed a generous spirit towards the industry. The packers of the present day have sought only their own immediate interests, and in looking out for these, have undoubtedly underestimated the intelligence of the Canadian farmer.

The pioneer packers did everything to encourage breeding the hog they wanted, and most of them made special importations of these hogs distributing them to farmers at low cost. For the progeny of these hogs they gave discriminatory prices. The hogs on sale were classified, and the bacon type, from their standpoint, fetched one-half cent to three-quarter cent above the old-fashioned thick fat. Not so today. There is no classification. The rough, thick fat hog, if he is but of the required weight, fetches as much as the "lean bacon type."

SHALL WE RETURN TO FAT HOG?
Why, then, should farmers continue to breed the bacon hog, as represented by our Improved Yorkshires and Tamworths? Every feeder knows that those hogs are harder to feed than those types and breeds of hogs of 20 years ago. Twenty years ago we had no "Improved Yorkshires" nor "Tamworths." We had a breed of "Yorkshires" but these were of an entirely different type and conformation to the Improved Yorkshires of today. They were not slab-sided,

tall, narrow-backed, light-banded creatures as are those of today. The sows and boars did not grow to the enormous size of the present day Yorkshire.

Then we had the easy-kept, easy-fed Berkshire. While we still have a number of these fine blacks, as these numbers are not in proportion to the others for the reason that the packers do not encourage their breeding. Breeders have endeavored to breed a type of Berkshire that would meet the requirements of the packer and, in doing, have ruined, in a measure, the inherent qualities of this fine breed. Chester Whites used to be a common bred year ago, also Essex. Few of these are bred today. These were easy feeders, did not grow to maturity to an enormous size and were profitable hogs.

EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCE OBTAINED
The experimental stations have worked in cooperation with the packers against the direct interest of the hog breeder in the conducting of the feeding tests. These records show that Tamworths and Improved Yorkshires were as cheaply raised, Berkshires, Chester Whites, Duroc-Jersey and Essex. Any farmer who has fed hogs of the various breeds knows different. No farmer is able to feed his hogs in the manner of the stations. Under ideal conditions, the Duroc-Jersey and Improved Yorkshire and Tamworth will make gains as cheap as the Berkshire, Chester White, Duroc-Jersey, and other fat type, but how many farmers can have the ideal conditions which are required to obtain at the Experimental Stations? Very few.

The farmers of Canada threw away "cash into the fire," as it were their good old profitable breeds of hogs, and adopted instead the improved Yorkshires and Tamworths, expecting to reap a big reward. It resulted in a boomerang for the farmer. A farmer should not expect upon to maintain a big sow weight, 500 to 600 pounds the year round, produce pigs to weigh 200 pounds each, when a smaller animal can do the work as well and at a much less cost of maintenance.

GO BACK TWENTY YEARS
The moral for farmers, then, is to discard those bacon breeds, as the improved Yorkshires and Tamworths and return to the breeds of 20 years ago. It cannot injure our industry, because our export trade is falling away by "leaps and bounds" anyway.

If the packers, however, wish farmers to raise these bacon breeds they must be prepared to pay a premium as they used to do in the pioneer days. It is up to the packer if the breeds of hard-feeders which are mostly pork, are to remain.

Why Drill Seeders are Best
J. H. Gridale, B. Agr., Ottawa, Ont.

Seeding is now rarely done by hand. It is, however, in too many districts still done broadcast, that is, what is known as broadcast seeding. Such seeders are not nearly so satisfactory as drill seeders. Much of the seed is inefficiently covered, while other part is buried too deeply. Consequently it comes up unevenly, unevenly, ripens unevenly, and the loss is thus considerable loss at harvesting, to say nothing of the seed being injured by being buried too deeply or by being insufficiently covered.

The hoe drill and the single disc are the best seeders, and of these, I believe the single disc to be the best.

Issued Each Week

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HOW THE FARMER

Can Their Methods be Improved

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