

CHEAP HOUSING AND LABOR SAVING IN THE WINTER FATTENING OF SWINE

ONE of the most common losses in connection with winter swine management is due to crippling or rheumatism. That this malady, easy to contract and difficult to cure, may be practically eliminated, or rather, prevented, in breeding stock, wintered out-of-doors with open shelters, has been demonstrated beyond doubt. No ill effect has cropped up to offset this advantage. With several individuals in a small, well-bedded cabin, there is no apparent discomfort to the inmates even during the most rigorous months of the Canadian winter.

The fattening hog, heavily fed, required to make maximum gains in minimum time, would seem to require warm quarters. The energy required to offset cold would thereby be utilized for growth and

fat production. Less feed would be required. While the latter promise proves true, the fact of the matter is that the swine feeder is confronted with the choice of two apparent evils—a comparatively cold house, that because of its nature, is practically like outdoors and therefore dry, or a more expensive, tightly-built, warmer structure, that, even if ventilated, usually proves more or less damp. Crippling in hogs will appear to a greater or lesser degree under bad or good management. Damp quarters undoubtedly predispose to it. Add to this, heavy feeding, with occasional over-feeding, and the result is frequently that of several more or less crippled pigs, the whole or partial losses from which will seriously affect the winter's profits. On the other hand it has now been pretty well proven at several points in the Experimental Farm system that such losses from outdoor-fattened hogs are practically negligible and that the evidence of thrift and quality resultant, very greatly overbalance the extra cost of outdoor feeding. Cold air should in itself have no virtue. Nevertheless the open-air hog is more vigorous and healthy than the one fed in warm, dry quarters. Constantly pure air and a certain amount of exercise would seem to be responsible.

The use of the self-feeder during winter has also proven a success. The feeder or feeders must be protected by a shed, as suggested. There is no trouble from frozen troughs and the general inconvenience and waste of slop feeding in winter. Much disagreeable labor in the cold is avoided; in fact, the man who uses the self-feeder for the winter work finds it even more of a convenience than it proves in summer. As to gains and cost to produce, tests have proven it usually superior to the hand-feeding method. Whole, cracked or ground corn, ground barley or barley and oats may be fed. Shorts, bran, re-cleaned screenings, etc., may be mixed with the above, or following the American plan, fed separately in compartments. Where corn enters heavily into the ration, tankage should be fed in a compartment by itself. Charcoal, woodashes, slaked lime, salt, etc., or a mixture of these should be available. If nothing better, supply plenty of ashes, both coal and wood. Where dairy by-products are not available, water, preferably slightly warmed, must be supplied. Some form of watering device including a tank heater, home-made or purchased, will prove useful where many hogs are kept. A rough rack along one side of the shed near the trough or feeder should be kept filled with well-cured clover or alfalfa hay.

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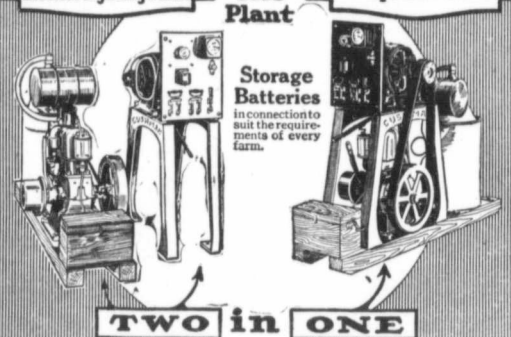
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