

Shall We Cure Pork on the Farm?

By A. W. ORR

If Properly Done it Will Excel the Packing House Product

SHOULD we stop to consider the subject and try to count how many of our neighbors kill hogs enough to have any meat to sell, or even for home use. We would, no doubt, be a little surprised to learn that this class is very small. From my observation, I think that not more than five per cent. of the farmers have any cured meat for sale. Again, should we visit our railway stations at almost any time of the year we would find that the merchants are shipping in enormous quantities of meat from the packing plants. Then stop for a moment and consider where this meat is coming from. These hogs are grown on our farms, shipped to the city, slaughtered, the meat cured and shipped back to the home of the hog, and in many instances, perhaps, is consumed by the very farmer who raised the hog from which the meat was made.

He, therefore, paid a profit to the local shipper, twice to the railroad, and to the packer and the retail grocer. After all this he fails to get meat that could be compared to that which he could as easily produce on his own farm. Our city brother who never gets any "good old country ham" has, according to my opinion, never yet known the taste of good meat. We once entertained a representative of a well-known packing firm in our home and served him some "home-made" country ham. Upon tasting it, his first remark was, "I wish Mr. So-and-So could taste this ham. He thinks nobody can cure ham that will equal the product of his plant." It is our purpose in this article to discuss the curing of hogs on the farm and to offer some plans and suggestions for the work.

Salting the Pork

After the butchering and cutting up of the hog, which we will not discuss, we reach the most important point in the whole work, namely, the salting. As the process of common dry salting is so well understood, we do not consider it worth while to dwell on it. Many farmers have never used any other method. Much very excellent meat is made in this manner; and, in our opinion, were the majority of it not left in the salt so long it would be much better.

We are going to lay more stress on the process commonly called "sugar curing." We think that any farmer who ever successfully uses the sugar method would never return to the dry salt method. For, we may say, 1,000 pounds of dressed meat, mix one-half bushel of salt, 8 to 10 pounds of dark brown sugar, 1½ pounds of ground black pepper, then stir the mixture together thoroughly. Take about one-half pound of saltpetre and dissolve in as little water as will dissolve it. Pour the solution over the salt mixture and mix well. Spread a thin layer of dry salt over the bottom of the "meat box," then lay a board across the top of the box to place meat on so that any waste material will fall into the box. Now place a piece of meat on this board and thoroughly rub the mixture over it and into it, taking great care to cover all cut surface and especially the shank end. Build the pieces into the box as closely and as compactly as possible, using dry salt

to fill all vacant space and holes. We prefer to put the joints in the bottom and the middlings on top. Use plenty of salt. If the weather is not too cold so that the meat is frozen, it should lie in salt about two weeks. This same salt preparation may be dissolved in water, making a brine. Place meat in a barrel, then pour the brine over it.

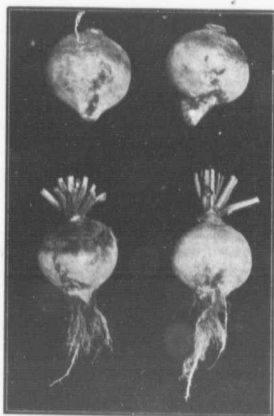
Hanging the Meat

After the meat has taken salt for a sufficient time it should be taken up and the salt brushed off. Place a kettle near the smoke-house and have it full of hot water. Have some wire stretched near by, and see that meat hooks are ready. These meat hooks may be made of No. 7 or 9 galvanized wire, and if taken care of, will serve more than one season, but if very rusty, throw them away, as wire is cheap. Place several pieces of meat in a wash tub and pour the hot water over it. Rinse off the salt and hang on the wire to drip. Proceed with this operation until all the meat has been washed, and by that time the first pieces washed will be ready for the next process.

Get a baking powder can and punch the lid full of holes, making a big "pepper box" out of it. Punch the holes from the inside of the lid, leaving it smooth on inside and rough out. Fill the can with powdered borax and shake this over the meat. Then hang it in the smoke-house ready to be smoked. The borax should be put on before the meat is dry so that it will adhere to it. The top of your smoke-house should be strung with a lot of wires laid over the joists. The wire hooks before mentioned should then be hung over the wire. This hook method has a great advantage over the old string system in that it takes a much smaller hole in the meat to insert the wire than the string, and this damages less meat and makes but little place for vermin.

Making Good Bacon

Here is where we reach a very important point in the preparation of our bacon. Up to this time we have handled our bacon a whole side in a piece; we shall now divide it. There are two kinds of bacon, thick and thin. Fortunately there are also two kinds of bacon eaters. One class prefers it thick and fat; the other thin



Trimming the Right and Wrong Way

Roots trimmed as seen above will not produce good planted next season. Notice that all rootlets and the crown are left on correctly trimmed roots, as seen below.

and streaked, the more lean the better. Nature has so built the hog that it can cater to both classes. The way to accomplish this is simply to take your knife and split the side the long way of the hog, leaving the upper, or thick, side separate from the lower, or thin, part.

There are more reasons than one for doing this. The thick bacon can be used or sold in the early part of the season and the thin held until summer time, when it will be in demand and more palatable. Again, when the "guidwife" goes into the smoke-house where there are a lot of big sides of bacon she just cuts one corner out, leaving two raw edges, which will have to be cut off the next time. With strips of three to five pounds each she can take a whole strip to the kitchen and thus save some steps, as well as bacon.

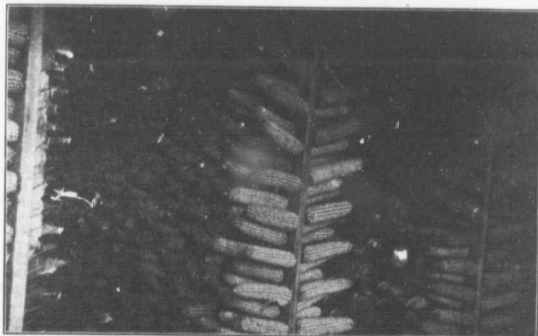
Smoking the Meat

After all is hung we are ready for smoke. Place an old stove or open kettle in the smoke-house and keep a fire of green hickory or sassafras, or both together, for several days. The exact time would depend upon how closely built the house was and thus how well the smoke was confined. The only sure way to test it is to try some of the meat. If the meat is to be kept until late summer it should be canvassed during dry weather and dipped in a preparation of ochre or whitewash and kept in a cool, dark place.

Influence of Good Plowing

Joshua Smithson, Peterboro Co., Ont. (A former Provincial Champion Plowman).

AS a farmer, I have an experience extending over 40 years in the employment of men for farm work. One thing I have always noticed—wherever a hired man proves to be a good plowman, he invariably is a good all-around man. The reason is simple. Before a man can be a good plowman, he must have a desire to excel. Such a man is not likely to be satisfied with



Seed Corn Properly Grown and Carefully Stored is Worth \$3.00 a Bushel

Such is the price fixed for good seed corn by a well known United States corn expert. Mr. John Fitter, of the Commission of Conservation, who supplied Farm and Dairy with this photograph, said: "It has been proved that a man who pays \$25 a bushel for corn properly cured is further ahead than the man who uses ordinary crib corn for seed at \$1 a bushel. This illustration gives an idea of the method adopted by Mr. Nelson Peterson, Essex Co., Ont., for drying and storing his Wisconsin No. 7 seed corn."

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