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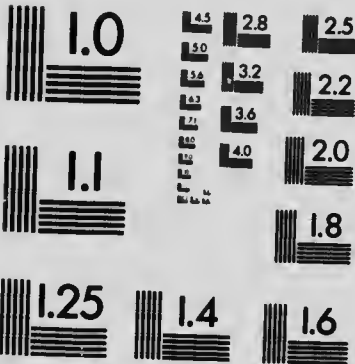
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Circular No. 16

May 1913

PORK MAKING ON THE FARM



Manitoba Agricultural College
Winnipeg, Canada

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY DEPARTMENT

PORK MAKING ON THE FARM

With the development of the modern abattoir and pork packing plant, there has been a decided decline in the old custom of pork making on the farm. The farmer as well as the city resident has found it convenient to buy pork products either fresh or in a well preserved condition, from the butcher shop or grocery store, and thus avoid what is considered by some the unpleasant task of butchering at home. It will not require much investigation, however, to prove that while the farmer may find it convenient to sell all his live hogs and buy pork, he does not find that practice profitable. It is rather a decidedly extravagant practice, for in buying his pork, the farmer pays a profit to the local shipper, twice to the railway company, a profit to the packer and a profit to the local butcher from whom he buys his pork. No wonder then that his prepared pork product costs him three or four times as much as he received per pound for his live hogs.

It is the purpose of this circular to encourage every farmer to slaughter a sufficient number of hogs at home to at least provide pork for his own table the year round, for by so doing, he may not only lower his meat bill by at least one half, but should have much better meat than if he buys it. The butchering of a few hogs at home and curing the pork is a simple and not altogether unpleasant task if one goes at it in an intelligent and careful manner. Many farmers are now doing this, and those who have had considerable experience at pork making themselves, will gain little by reading this circular. There are, however, many farmers who are not preparing their own pork at home, and it is for them that this circular is especially prepared, in the hope that it may contain some suggestions that will be helpful to the inexperienced who may be desirous of killing and curing their own pork, but are a little afraid to undertake the task

TYPE OF HOG TO KILL.

It must be remembered that a first class finished product cannot be made from poor raw material. This rule applies to pork making as well as to any other industry. The large packers appreciate this fact and show their appreciation of it by paying a considerably higher price for the right kind of hog than they do for an undesirable type. The kind of hog from which the best pork is made is one in a moderately fat condition, and weighing from 180 to 225 pounds. Very large or over fat hogs do not produce pork of as good flavor or quality as a hog of the right weight and type. The character of the feed that has been used affects the quality, firmness and flavor of the pork to a considerable extent. The pig that has had considerable exercise and has been fattened on green feed, and grains of good quality such as barley, oats and peas invariably produces firmer pork of better flavor than the pig that has been fattened in close pastures and fed soft feeds of poor quality.

SLAUGHTERING.

In preparing to slaughter one or more hogs, care should be taken to see that everything is in readiness before the first hog is killed. The utensils necessary to the successful slaughtering of a hog are not many, but the necessary ones should be on hand or the work will be found difficult and unpleasant. The necessary equipment will consist of a trough or barrel in which to scald the hog, some means of heating the water, a bench upon which to lay the hog while scraping and cleaning it, several butcher knives, a couple of hog scrapers, a place upon which to hang the hog while cooling, and some receptacle for the heart liver and entrails.

All hogs should be shrunk for a period of 24 hours before slaughtering. That is, feed should be withheld from them for at least two feeding periods before slaughtering. Hogs that are killed when their stomachs and intestines are comparatively empty, will bleed better, will be lighter to handle, and will produce better flavored meat than hogs slaughtered with their stomachs and intestines full of feed. The proper time to butcher is in the forenoon. Before killing the first hog the water should be almost warm enough for scalding. Perhaps the most convenient method of heating the water is to secure a large iron kettle that will hold about twenty gallons of water, and set it up near where the butchering is to be done in such a way that a fire can be built under and around it. By heating the water in this way, it will be handy, and the proper temperature for scalding can be more readily secured and maintained than if the water is heated in the house and carried out. Then also by keeping up the fire hot water will be available at all times as the butchering proceeds, and that is quite necessary.

In killing a hog, it may be shot with a rifle, stunned by striking between the eyes with an axe, or simply stuck and bled with a knife without stunning in any way first. The latter is the method used by all large packing plants. It is much more convenient on the farm to stun the hog first. The sticking should be done immediately after stunning, as the hog will always lie still a few seconds after being stunned and will then begin to struggle. In bleeding a hog most men prefer to strike the heart with the knife if possible. This can easily be done by inserting the knife just forward a little from the centre of the forelegs and directing it backward as it is inserted. The knife should be inserted with a quick thrust and should be given a sharp turn so that if the heart is not reached the large artery running forward from it will be cut, and this will bleed the hog just as well. The hog should then lay long enough to bleed thoroughly and until life has become entirely extinct before it is scalded.

SCALDING.

A common method of scalding hogs on the farm is to set a barrel at an angle and fill it about one third full of water, inserting first the hind-quarters of the hog and then the forequarters into the barrel until the hair

cons. A better method, however, is to construct a trough about six feet
eighteen inches deep, and eighteen inches wide. This can be placed
of the bench upon which the hog is to be scraped, and by placing
a rope or a chain about the centre of the hog it can easily be rolled back
and forth until the hair loosens, by a man at either end of the rope. Then
when the scalding is completed, the hog can be lifted to the scraping
bench by this same rope. To get the best results in scalding, the water
should be at a temperature of about 180 to 190 degrees Fahrenheit, though
water at 150 degrees will scald a hog satisfactorily if given time enough.
The use of water that is too hot will cause the hair to set and make it
very difficult of removal, and course the use of water not hot enough, will
not affect the hair, and again removing the hair will be very difficult. After
scalding a few hogs one acquires the ability to test the temperature of the
water by inserting the finger into it. When the finger can just be inserted
into the water and removed without burning it, the water is at about the
right temperature. A small amount of clear wood ashes or lye added to
the water will aid materially in loosening the hair.

CLEANING THE HOG.

For removing the hair no instrument is as good as the small disc
shaped hog scraper. This can be procured from almost any hardware
store for 15c each. At least two men should be on hand at butchering
time, and while one is working on the head and feet, the other can be
scraping the sides and back of the hog. It is important to work quickly
in scalding and scraping hogs if the work is to be well done. When the
hair has all been removed, the hog is ready to be hung up. A small block
and tackle is the best device for lifting a hog, but if this is not available,
any one of many other methods may be used, and we will leave it to the
"butcher" to raise them up by the method he prefers. The hogs need only
to be hung just high enough so that the head will not touch the ground.
Immediately a hog is hung up it should be washed first with warm water,
then scraped down with a knife and washed again with cold water. This
will leave the surface white and clear. The next stage is the removal of
the entrails which is an easy matter. A cut is made down the centre of
the belly beginning at the twist, care being taken not to rupture the
stomach or intestines, as any offal from them coming in contact with the
meat is apt to taint it.

CLEANING BY "SINGEING."

A method of cleaning known as "singeing" is sometimes used. Singeing
may be done on the farm by piling straw loosely over the carcass,
and setting fire to it, thus burning the hair off. Care must be taken in
singeing a hog not to burn the flesh. After the singeing is complete, the
carcass may be cleaned by placing it in hot water a short time, then re-
moving and scraping with a knife. It is claimed by some that "singeing"
leaves the flesh in a firmer condition than scalding. However, from the
practical standpoint we would recommend cleaning by scalding.

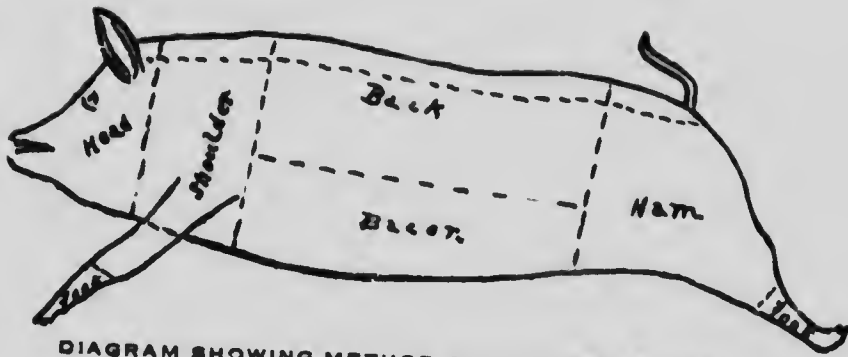


DIAGRAM SHOWING METHOD OF CUTTING UP CARCASS

COOLING AND CUTTING UP THE CARCASS.

A pork carcass should be thoroughly cooled before it is cut up, but should not be allowed to freeze, as freezing injures the keeping quality and flavor of the meat. If the slaughtering is done in the morning, the carcass will be cool by late in the evening, and in the coldest weather in the winter it may have to be taken inside before evening, to prevent it from freezing. It should then be allowed to lay over-night in a cool place, and should be cut up next morning. In working up a carcass, it should be laid on the table with the head projecting over the edge. Then taking a sharp butcher knife, the head may be removed by cutting clear around it just back of the ears, cutting to the bone, and then by giving the head a severe twist it will separate from the body very easily. The carcass should next be turned on its back and should be held upright by an attendant while the "butcher" cuts the ribs down each side of the back bone with an axe or cleaver. Cutting out the back bone can then be completed with a knife. This method of cutting gives a strip of meat the length of the hog and containing the back bone. The fatty covering on the back of it should be trimmed off for lard and the back bone cut in sections. This will prove very wholesome and palatable pork to be fresh, preparing it by boiling. Next the leaf lard can be stripped out by the hands and the shoulder and the ham removed from each side. The feet and legs should be removed from the shoulders and hams just above the knee and hock joints. The part of the carcass remaining then consists of the side of bacon, the spare ribs and the back piece. The spare ribs can be trimmed out with a knife, or if the back piece is to be used for chops fresh or for roasting, they can be left in with it. The side should be split lengthwise at about the central line between the top and belly piece. The lower half being the side of bacon and the upper half trimmed of its covering of fat may be used as fresh pork chops or roast pork, or it may be cured and kept along with the hams, shoulders and bacon. The hams and shoulders will require considerable trimming, and the only way to acquire an accurate knowledge of how to trim them is to see a packing house man and shoulders or one that has been trimmed by someone who knows. The object should be in all trimming to leave the cuts in a well rounded condition, as they will keep better and look better as

CURING THE MEAT.

There are many different methods in use for curing and keeping pork for summer use. The hog carcass lends itself to curing and preserving better than any other type of meat. In fact the flavor and palatability of pork is greatly improved by curing and smoking. The various methods of preserving pork include preserving by cooking, by packing in snow or cold storage, and by curing with a salt or brine preparation, and in some cases smoking the meat after it has been treated with the salt preparation. The following three recipes comprise the most popular and simple methods in use in curing pork:--

Plain Salt Pork—Rub each piece of meat with fine common salt and pack closely in a clean barrel and let stand over-night. The next day weigh out ten pounds of salt and two ounces of saltpetre to each hundred pounds of meat, and dissolve in four gallons of boiling water. Pour this brine over the meat when cold and weight down so that all meat will be kept under the brine. The meat should be packed as closely as possible in the barrel. In curing meat this way it should be kept in the brine until used, and soaked with clear water for from twelve to twenty-four hours before using to remove the salt, or it may be removed from the brine and smoked at the end of four or six weeks.

Dry Sugar Cured Pork.—This is a recipe that has proven quite popular with those have used it. It is claimed that it gives the cured pork a flavor that is preferable to that of the plain salt pork. For each hundred pounds of meat weigh out five pounds of salt, two pounds of granulated sugar and two ounces of saltpetre and mix thoroughly. Rub the meat once every three days with a third of the mixture. While the meat is curing it is best to have it packed in a barrel or tight box. After the last rubbing the meat should lie in the barrel for a week or ten days when it will be cured and ready to smoke. Care should be taken to see that every bit of the raw meat is rubbed with the mixture, and special care should be given to the joint ends. A cool and rather moist place in which to keep the meat will be found most suitable.

Sugar Curing, Brine Method.—When the meat is cooled, rub each piece with salt and allow to drain over night. Then pack it in a barrel with hams and shoulders in the bottom, using strips of bacon to fill in between or to put on top. Weigh out for each hundred pounds of meat, eight pounds of salt, two pounds of brown sugar and two ounces of saltpetre. Dissolve all in four gallons of water and cover the meat with the brine. For summer use it will be safest to boil the brine before using. For winter curing it is not necessary to boil the brine. Bacon should remain in this brine four to six weeks; hams six to eight weeks. They may then be removed and smoked.

SMOKING MEAT.

Meats are smoked to aid in their preservation, and to give flavor and palatability to them. A small house about six by eight feet will suffice as a smoke house. It should be built with ample ventilation so that the smoke will pass up over the meat and out of the house. The circulation, however, should not be too rapid or it will be hard on fuel. The fire pot should be arranged outside of the house if possible and the smoke conducted to the meat chamber by means of a flue. If this cannot be done a fire may be built on the floor of the smoke house and the meat either protected by a piece of sheet metal or hung about six feet above the fire. Large dry goods boxes and even barrels may be used where only small amounts of meat are to be smoked. If the barrel or box is used the fire should be built outside and the smoke carried in by means of a flue. Plenty of circulation should be applied by leaving opening at the top of the barrel or box. The meat should be hung close to the top. Hard wood should be used as fuel. It is also more suitable if it is green. Hickory or maple are the best woods, but being unavailable here, any hard wood should be used. There is too much deposit from the soft woods which causes a strong flavor in the meat. The meat should be removed from the brine two or three days before putting in the smoke house. If it has been cured in a strong brine it will be well to soak the pieces in cold water over-night to remove some of the salt. Hang up to drain a day. Hang in the smoke house below the ventilators and hang so that the pieces do not touch each other. A slow fire that will heat the meat up gradually is best. Keep the fire about the same as an even temperature is necessary to get the meat smoked uniformly. Twenty-four to thirty six hours of a steady fire should be sufficient to finish one lot of meat. If the meat is only to be kept a short time, the pieces need only be hung out separately to keep all right. If they are to be kept a long time they should be covered with brown paper and then with canvas and hung in a cool place.

TRYING OUT LARD.

It is quite an easy matter for anyone to try out and prepare their own lard and have just as good lard as they would ordinarily get from the butcher shop. While leaf lard is the best, the fat trimmings from all parts of the carcass as well as the fat trimmed from the entrails, makes a very satisfactory lard. The fat from the entrails, however, makes a rather strong smelling lard and it should be rendered separately and not mixed with the other fat trimmings, for if it is, it will lower the quality of the entire amount. All lean meat should be removed from the fat as pieces of lean are likely to burn and give a bad flavor to the lard. The fat should be cut in pieces an inch square or smaller. In rendering the lard the receptacle should not be filled more than three-quarters full with the fat, and a little cold water or melted lard should be poured on it to keep it from burning until it becomes sufficiently heated to begin to melt the fat. The fat should be heated over a slow fire until the crackling becomes brown

and light enough to float. Frequent stirring will be required to prevent burning. When the crackle become well browned the lard should be poured off and strained through a cloth into the jars in which it is to be kept, and the crackle should be put through a small lard press made for the purpose, to squeeze the remaining lard from them. Stirring while cooling helps to whiten the lard and make it smoother, or adding a quarter of a pound of saleratus to each hundred pounds of fat has a similar effect without injury to the lard.

SAUSAGE MAKING.

There are so many recipes for making sausage that it would be difficult for any one person to collect and give them all. The making of sausage is the most economical way of disposing of the trimmings of lean meat resulting in the cutting up of the carcass. In view of the fact that each family prefers as a rule to make and season their own sausage to suit their own taste, we will not attempt to give any one best recipe for making sausage, but would suggest the following as a recipe that has been found very acceptable:—

Grind the meat well, using considerable fat. To one gallon of ground meat add two heaping tablespoonfuls of coarse salt, one teaspoonful of ground black pepper, and about one half to one teaspoonful of pulverized sage. Mix thoroughly by kneading in a large pan or tub, then pack down as solid as possible in stone jars for immediate use, or this kind of sausage may be kept for a considerable time by making the sausage into small cakes and frying it and then putting in an earthen jar and covering over with melted lard and alloying the jar with the contents to cool until the lard hardens. In this way the sausage can be kept until warm weather comes.



