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Market hog feeding and management

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Quaife: Market hog feeding and management

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Market Hog
Feeding and Management

By E. L. Quaife

The successful market hog producer plans a production program which best fits his farm conditions. He maintains efficient breeding stock. Through good swine management he endeavors to keep his losses from parasites and disease at a minimum. He produces pork at low cost by following efficient and economical feeding methods. He plans for pasture as part of his farm program to lower his cost of production. Above all, he is a man who likes hogs.

TWO BROAD PLANS OF SWINE PRODUCTION ARE PRACTICED IN IOWA

Approximately one-third of Iowa's swine producers practice the two-litter plan, raising both spring and fall pigs. The other two-thirds follow the one-litter plan of farrowing pigs only during the later spring months.

The two-litter plan calls for comfortable housing. Provisions necessary include artificial heat and other equipment such as feeding floors suitable for caring for early farrowed pigs and for feeding the fall pigs during the winter. A uniform feed supply must be provided throughout the year. This requires carrying some old corn over, in order to get early spring pigs ready for the early fall market. A medium-type hog is preferred, one which with full feeding can be marketed quite well finished at 225 to 250 pounds. This plan is very popular in the more diversified farming areas such as northeastern, east central and southeastern Iowa.

Advantages of this plan include the more uniform use of equipment, labor and feed; the good breeding stock may be kept for a number of farrowings; the producer has two chances at the market. Spreading the farrowings involves far less risk than the one-crop plan.
Fig. 1. Iowa is well adapted to swine production.

Greatest drawback of the two-crop system is the possible high loss of early farrowed pigs as a result of a spell of severe weather. Some producers have overcome this disadvantage by saving their breeding stock from fall farrowings. The gilts are bred to farrow the next fall and then rebred to farrow the following spring. This permits farrowing later in the spring because the pigs will be farrowed by a different lot of sows than are to farrow the next fall’s pig crop.

Producers who raise only one crop of pigs annually are largely renters, or producers who do not have satisfactory housing facilities for early farrowed pigs. This one-crop plan is also favored by many because the pigs can be farrowed when the weather is more moderate on pasture where there is less danger of parasite and disease infection common to old lots. This plan is followed more in the cash grain area or northwestern and north central Iowa. These hogs as a rule make rather extensive use of pasture. They are fed to heavier weights than are swine under the two-crop plan, and the bulk of them do not reach the market until winter months.

Probably the greatest objection to this one-crop plan is the concentration of the year’s production on the farm at one time;
therefore more risk is involved. Another objection is the fact that these pigs hit the heaviest runs on the market and for the most part are marketed during the lowest price period.

Either plan has its advantages and disadvantages. The producer must weigh them and follow that plan which best fits his situation. Either plan may be followed successfully. The plan followed, however, determines largely when the hogs are to be marketed, and that in turn determines to a great extent the method of feeding and management.

**FEEDING THE PREGNANT AND SUCKLING SOW**

The vigorousness of pigs with which the producer has to work after they are farrowed is determined to a considerable extent by the feed the dam receives while she is carrying the litter. For fast, economical gains pigs should be born strong and lusty and weigh 2½ to 3 pounds each at birth.

The dam must be well fed during the suckling period. The pigs should be encouraged to eat supplementary feeds at an early age. Good management practices must be followed to assure a high degree of thriftiness and freedom from diseases and parasites.

**FEEDING THE SUCKLING SPRING PIGS**

When 10 days to 2 weeks old, pigs will begin to eat feed in addition to the milk of the sow. Where the sows are self-fed the pigs may be permitted to eat the same as the mother’s ration if it is a desirable one for little pigs. Pigs at this time should not be obliged to eat much of very fibrous feeds such as whole oats. They may be encouraged to eat sooner if a creep is provided where they can go and eat special feeds apart from the sow.

Pigs will take to "rolled" or hulled oats sooner than almost any other feed. A shallow trough with cleats 4 inches apart across the top to prevent the pigs from getting into it and soiling the oats will serve well. It is not necessary to grind the hulled oats. Cracked wheat also is a good starting feed. After pigs are a month old, shelled corn or cracked corn may be mixed with the hulled oats. By the time the pigs weigh 40 to 50 pounds, the hulled oats should be eliminated from the ration because of cost.

1See Bulletin P59, Brood Sow and Litter (Feeding and Management).
An excellent complete mixture or “pig meal” consists of 50 pounds coarsely ground corn; 25 pounds hulled oats or ground whole oats, middlings or ground wheat; 10 pounds meat and bone scraps; 7 pounds soybean oilmeal; 5 pounds alfalfa meal and 3 pounds minerals. All feeds are to be mixed together and self-fed as a pig meal.

**FEEDING FROM WEANING TO MARKET WEIGHT**

Pigs should be eating well enough at 8 to 10 weeks of age so that there is no setback when weaned. Early pigs probably will be on pasture by the time they are weaned. The ration should then consist of shelled corn and whole or ground oats self-fed in separate feeders, supplemented with a protein mixture\(^2\) also self-fed. Cracked wheat might replace any part or all of the corn. It probably will be more economical to remove all oats after pigs reach 100 pounds, when on pasture.

A quart of skim milk or buttermilk for each pig daily could replace all dry protein supplement.

To avoid shelling corn, ear corn may be fed by scattering it on fresh ground each day.

\(^2\)See page 195.

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**Fig. 2.** Market hogs after reaching 175 pounds in weight are often confined near water, feed and shade.
Mixtures of ground grain and supplement are sometimes fed to hogs to limit the protein supplement consumed and encourage a greater consumption of corn. This practice involves extra cost for grinding, but is desirable where the pigs are being fed in distant fields where hand feeding of the supplement is not practical.

A complete mixture for hogs up to 100 pounds on pasture may consist of 1,500 pounds ground shelled corn, 200 pounds ground oats and 300 pounds of supplement. After 100 pounds, the oats might be eliminated, the supplement reduced to 200 pounds and the corn increased to 1,800 pounds.

In hot weather when the pasture becomes dry and the pigs have reached weights of 150 to 175 pounds, it may be found profitable to confine them to a feeding floor or to a shady lot near the feed and water supply. Such hogs should be full fed corn and protein supplement, and forced for the early fall market.

**FEEDING THE LATE FARROWED SPRING PIGS**

Such pigs are usually farrowed by gilts on pasture during the months of April, May and June. Most of these hogs do not reach the market until November or later.

The corn-hog ratio probably affects the method of feeding more than it does hogs farrowed at any other time. When the supply of corn is ample and the price is low in relation to the price of hogs, full feeding is to be recommended and is more likely to be followed. On the other hand, when corn is scarce and high priced the grain and supplement may be limited or perhaps no supplement fed at all. The pigs forage more on pasture. New oats and new corn may then make up a large part of the total grain consumed. The gain is slower, but it is usually put on at a somewhat lower cost than if the pigs were full fed.

If oats are used heavily they should be ground to a medium degree of fineness and soaked 12 hours, then fed as a thick slop twice a day; or a mixture of \( \frac{2}{3} \) ground oats, \( \frac{1}{3} \) ground corn or wheat or rye might be fed in self feeders. When oats are fed in the dry form an ample water supply should be close at hand.
Fig. 3. Fall pigs weighing 60 to 75 pounds by December 1 make excellent gains when given comfortable quarters and a good ration.

These late farrowed pigs usually weigh around 100 pounds by October. They are a good size to hog down corn or follow cattle, or to be fed out on corn and a protein supplement such as recommended for drylot feeding.

FEEDING AND MANAGEMENT OF FALL PIGS

Fall pigs to be most profitable should be farrowed not later than September. Early farrowed fall pigs coming during August and September have the benefit of 3 to 4 months of pasture and sunshine. Such pigs usually weigh 60 to 75 pounds by the beginning of cold weather and will, with good management, make as satisfactory gains as spring pigs.

Early farrowed fall pigs to be ready for the early spring market must be full fed. The only change from that of feeding early spring pigs would be the addition of alfalfa meal to the protein supplement. A supplemental mixture made up of 25 pounds ground alfalfa, 30 pounds tankage, 40 pounds soybean oilmeal and 5 pounds minerals is an excellent one for winter feeding.

Second or third cutting alfalfa hay of good quality may satis-
factorily replace the alfalfa meal as the pigs get larger. If the leaves and finer portions of alfalfa, clover, or soybean hay are gathered up as they accumulate on the floor where the hay is thrown down, they will be a good substitute for the meal. The leaves may be fed straight, or ground and mixed with ground grain or with the protein supplement.

When alfalfa is cheap in relation to grain, more alfalfa may be fed to pigs weighing up to 100 pounds in drylot. A satisfactory complete mixture is 1,200 pounds ground corn, 200 pounds ground alfalfa, 200 pounds ground oats and 400 pounds supplement. For heavier pigs the supplement should be reduced to 300 pounds, the alfalfa kept at 200 pounds and the corn increased to 1,500 pounds, eliminating the oats. Twenty pounds of a mineral mixture\(^3\) should be added to each ton of the mixture. Conditions for drinking should be very favorable; otherwise, fall pigs may not drink enough water.

Fall pigs need comfortable dry quarters with well-bedded, ample sleeping space. A cattle shed or a straw shed about 20 feet deep, enclosed with the exception of a door opening to the south, makes excellent quarters for fall pigs. Cold, drafty quarters cause restlessness of the pigs and piling up. On the other hand, quarters which become exceedingly warm at times may subject the pigs to colds and pneumonia because of temperature changes. A temperature in the hog house around 55° is about right for fattening hogs.

Late October or November farrowed pigs are likely to be a runty lot and do poorly until grass comes the next spring unless they are given extra good care and have comfortable, dry quarters in which to sleep. Because of confinement and lack of sunshine such pigs are likely to be affected with rickets unless precaution is taken to provide them with good leafy alfalfa meal high in vitamin D.

The same mixtures as recommended for the earlier farrowed fall pigs are satisfactory, although a warm, thick skim milk slop of ground oats and middlings helps bring such pigs through the winter. They usually pick up in their gain and thriftiness the following spring when grass comes. They should then be full fed corn, along with oats, barley or wheat. These pigs usually go on a July or August market.

\(^3\)See page 187 for mineral mixture.
PIGS FOLLOWING CATTLE

Pigs weighing from 75 to 100 pounds are the most satisfactory for following cattle. The proper number of hogs to follow cattle varies with the age of the cattle, and whether the corn is ground or fed shelled or in the ear form. As a rule one shoat is allowed to two steers when ground corn is fed. With shelled corn one shoat is allowed to each steer. In general such pigs should be hand fed corn twice a day to the extent of about 2 percent of their live weight. One-fourth to one-third pound of some protein supplement should be fed each day in addition to the corn.

SELF FEEDING OF HOGS

Self feeding of hogs saves labor and feed, speeds gains, and has brought about cleanliness in hog feeding.

One foot of feeder space will care for three growing pigs. About one-fifth of the total feeder space should be used for supplement. Minerals may be fed from a smaller feeder. Large self feeders that hold 200 bushels of grain will feed 100 pigs a month or more and save a great deal of labor.

Self feeders should be set upon a platform located close to the water supply. The grain and supplement are usually fed

Fig. 4. A large self feeder saves time and labor in feeding hogs.
separately, giving the hog a chance to balance his own ration. He will do this satisfactorily provided the feeds are equally palatable. Shelled corn or ground wheat and most protein supplements go well together. When oats or barley are fed alongside a protein supplement, pigs will eat heavily of the supplement because it is much more palatable than the oats and barley. Hogs will eat very heavily of such a supplement as soybean oilmeal at the expense of corn, unless the soybean oilmeal is mineralized or bulked by adding alfalfa meal.

Mixtures of ground grain and supplement are sometimes fed in order to balance the consumption of grain and supplement. A medium degree of fineness is correct for ground feeds.

**MINERAL FOR PIGS**

A mineral mixture should be available for pigs at all times. A combination of 20 pounds of common salt, 40 pounds of limestone and 40 pounds of special steamed bonemeal is good. For winter or drylot feeding 2 pounds of iron oxide, $\frac{1}{3}$ ounce potassium iodide and $\frac{1}{10}$ pound manganese sulfate should be added. Another satisfactory mixture when animal byproducts are used in the supplement is 68 pounds ground limestone, 30 pounds salt, 2 pounds iron oxide plus $\frac{1}{3}$ ounce potassium iodide and $\frac{1}{10}$ pound manganese sulfate.

If the protein supplement is largely soybean oilmeal, at least 10 pounds of bonemeal or some high grade phosphate low in fluorine content should be included in the mineral mixture. Many hog producers feed equal weights of hardwood ashes and salt.

Swine feeders often mix minerals with the feed and obtain satisfactory results. When this is done, not more than 3 to 5 pounds of minerals should be added to 100 pounds of protein supplement or about 1 pound to each 100 pounds of grain. Additional minerals should be fed separately in a self-feeder.

**GOOD WATER SUPPLY ESSENTIAL**

The water supply is important in maintaining good hog gains in either summer or winter. Hogs suffer from extreme heat so they need to be able to get at plenty of water easily. Special attention needs to be given to providing water for hogs out on
pasture under the clean ground plan of raising hogs. Hauling water seems a monotonous task, so the supply of water in distant fields often is inadequate. This condition must be corrected for most profitable results.

Pigs often do not drink enough in winter if they are obliged to expose themselves to a cold wind and drink their water from an ice-bound trough. A protected water supply should be provided close to the feeders.

Some swine producers prefer to slop their hogs in order to get more water into them. This practice has no great merit if conditions are satisfactory for the hogs to drink all the water they desire.

**HOGGING DOWN CORN**

Hogging down corn is a fairly satisfactory method of harvesting a part of the crop. Hogs from 75 to 200 pounds in weight are best for this purpose. Smaller pigs need help in breaking the corn down, and heavier hogs do better if more closely confined and not obliged to rustle for their feed.

A hundred shoats weighing 75 to 100 pounds each will clean
up an acre of 60 bushels of corn in 6 to 7 days. After hogs reach the heavier weights, lighter hogs or brood sows should be used to clean up the fields.

Where the field is more than 80 rods from water and shelter, a water supply, temporary shelter and the protein supplement should be provided at the field if good gains are to be realized. When the field to be hogged down is close by so that the hogs use the permanent shelter, protein supplement should be hand fed or the supplement feeder set out near the corn; otherwise the pigs may eat too heavily of the supplement before going to the field.

An electric fence is an excellent device for dividing fields.

**CORN AND ITS PREPARATION**

With the advent of hybrid corn, the influence of hardness on the palatability and feeding value of the corn became a vital question. Tests show the harder varieties of corn to be about as efficient as the softer in producing rapid and economical gains. When pigs have a choice between hard and soft corn they invariably eat more of the softer corn, but when limited to the hard corn, they eat about as much as when they were limited to soft corn.

Grinding corn has not proved advisable on account of grinding costs although the pigs eat more corn and gain slightly faster. It is considered good practice, however, to grind corn rather coarsely for little pigs until they are 50 to 60 pounds in weight. For pigs of 60 pounds or heavier shelled corn or ear corn is probably more satisfactory. Some feeders, however, soak hard-shelled corn about 12 hours for their hogs. This is usually done during the summer when the weather is hot and the hogs weigh 150 pounds or more. The soaked corn is usually fed in addition to dry corn.

**SOYBEANS**

Whole soybeans can be used to make up a portion of the protein supplement, although generally it is more advisable to sell the beans and buy back soybean oilmeal.

Whole soybeans are worth about two-thirds the value of tankage and about 90 percent of the value of soybean oilmeal when
fed to 100-pound pigs in drylot. Soybeans are deficient in minerals and in vitamin content. The feeding of some good legume hay and of minerals in addition to the beans is essential to make up for these deficiencies. The beans should be fed whole. Grinding does not pay. Cooking the beans makes them more palatable but does not eliminate the danger of producing soft pork.

The varieties of soybeans usually grown in Iowa contain 16 to 18 percent of oil, or about four times that of corn. Because of this high oil content there is danger of producing soft pork when the natural beans are fed to pigs in appreciable amounts. When soybeans are fed from weaning time on, it is not advisable to have them comprise more than 40 percent of the protein supplement, or more than about 8 percent of the total ration consumed. After pigs reach 100 pounds in weight and are on good pasture, beans may then make up the entire protein supplement without much danger of adverse results. In drylot, however, soft pork is more likely to result because of the larger consumption of beans necessary to furnish the protein to balance the corn. Beans should be limited to about 50 percent of the supplement in drylot for these heavier hogs.

Pregnant sows may be fed \( \frac{1}{2} \) pound whole soybeans daily as their protein supplement. Suckling sows should not receive over half their supplement in the form of beans.

**PASTURE VERY VALUABLE**

A good pasture will lower the grain some, and cut the protein consumption of swine by nearly 50 percent. Pasture furnishes easily digested protein and such minerals as calcium and phosphorus, especially valuable to the young growing pig. Young grass is also an excellent source of carotene (pro vitamin A), an important material contributing to the health and growth of young animals.

The number of hogs an acre of pasture will carry varies with the method of feeding, size of the pigs and the kind and quality of the pasture. An acre of good alfalfa, red clover or rape may carry 18 to 25 growing hogs if the hogs are full fed grain and supplement, whereas with a limited feed of grain an acre may carry 10 to 15 pigs. An acre of rye pasture will carry as many as six sows and litters for a period of 4 to 6 weeks during April and May.
Fig. 6. Rye pasture is excellent for late fall and early spring.

Bluegrass is the most common grass used for hog pasture but is of little value during July and August. Some provision should be made to supplement a bluegrass pasture during the dry period with rape or a legume pasture. Adding alfalfa meal to the protein supplement will help if other pasture is not available.

Alfalfa ranks first as a hog pasture. It continues to produce fresh tender growth from early spring until late fall. If the alfalfa field is to be used for only one season 20 to 25 hogs full fed can be pastured to the acre, but if the pasture is to be maintained for more than one season 12 to 15 hogs to the acre are enough. Many swine producers pasture lightly enough so they can clip hay once or twice during the season.

Red clover ranks close to alfalfa but becomes drier and more fibrous during the late summer, and for this reason does not have quite the carrying capacity.

Rape ranks along with alfalfa and clover. Rape needs a good soil and a cool, moist season for best results. Sow it at oat seeding time at the rate of 5 to 6 pounds of seed to the acre. It should not be pastured until 5 or 6 inches high, then will fur-
nish green feed until killed by frost. White hogs or hogs with white spots are likely to blister when pasturing rape.

Sweet clover gives fairly good results if kept eaten down, but because of its lack of palatability and its high water content due to rapid growth, pigs do not do as well as on alfalfa or red clover.

Sudan grass is considered an emergency pasture, to be sown when some other crop fails. Brood sows make better use of sudan pasture than young pigs.

Rye sown during the fall will furnish an abundance of pasture late in the fall and early the next spring.

Soybeans do not furnish pasture for long enough periods to justify their use as a hog pasture.

CONCRETE FEEDING FLOORS

A concrete feeding floor is an asset to any farm where hogs are being raised. An outside floor 20 x 60 feet in addition to the sleeping quarters will care for 100 to 120 fattening hogs.

During the early spring, sows and their litters may be kept on the concrete until the pigs are 6 to 8 weeks of age. The pigs
are moved to a pasture for the next 3 months and then brought back to be finished on the floor. This keeps the pigs out of the old lots, avoiding much of the possible necro and parasite infection. Fall pigs farrowed in the fields can be brought in with the coming of winter and make very effective use of a feeding floor. Much feed will be saved by feeding it upon a floor, as compared to shoveling corn out upon muddy ground.

RAISING HOGS IN TOTAL CONFINEMENT

Some interest has developed in the raising of pigs entirely in confinement or upon concrete floors. This plan has both advantages and disadvantages. Advocates of this plan claim hogs can be raised free from internal parasites and infectious diseases because the pigs do not come into contact with infected lots. The hog enterprise is localized as to feed, water, shelter and care; equipment is more permanent, gains may be faster because of extra care. On the other hand, there is little use of pasture when this plan is followed. All manure must be hauled;

Fig. 8. A concrete feeding floor saves feed and aids in controlling parasites and diseases.
more detailed labor is involved; hogs are more likely to suffer from diet deficiencies; cost of production may run high unless the ration is varied and contains those materials necessary for maintenance of good nutrition and health.

The total confinement plan appeals more to those who raise both spring and fall pigs and aim to have their hogs on the market in 5½ to 6 months' time. To succeed in raising hogs on concrete, the producer must observe details very closely. He must guard against anemia when the pigs are small. Clean sod dirt should be available all the time as well as a good mineral mixture.

A variety of feeds must be fed: corn, wheat, oats, plenty of good, green alfalfa hay and a protein supplement which has several kinds of materials in it such as tankage, oilmeals and fish meal, or milk in addition.

The floor must be cleaned frequently during the summer; otherwise, the advantage of sanitation is lost. A pressure water system is a help to keep the floor clean.

Raising hogs in confinement demands constant application of the best swine feeding and management practices.
SUGGESTED SUPPLEMENTAL MIXTURES

1. For Hogs on Pasture
   A. Tankage, 60 percent protein, or meat and bone scraps
      50-52 percent protein
   B. 50 pounds tankage, or meat and bone scraps
      50 pounds soybean oilmeal
   C. 40 pounds tankage
      40 pounds soybean oilmeal
      20 pounds linseed oilmeal
   D. 20 pounds tankage, or meat and bone scraps
      20 pounds fish meal
      40 pounds soybean oilmeal
      10 pounds linseed oilmeal
      10 pounds cottonseed meal

2. For Hogs in Drylot or on Poor Pasture
   A. 30 pounds tankage, or meat and bone scraps
      40 pounds soybean oilmeal
      25 pounds alfalfa meal
      5 minerals
   B. 30 pounds tankage, or meat and bone scraps
      30 pounds soybean oilmeal
      10 pounds linseed oilmeal
      25 pounds alfalfa meal
      5 minerals
   C. 20 pounds tankage, or meat and bone scraps
      10 pounds fish meal
      30 pounds soybean oilmeal
      10 pounds cottonseed oilmeal
      10 pounds linseed oilmeal
      20 pounds alfalfa meal
**APPROXIMATE AMOUNTS OF FEED NEEDED TO PRODUCE A MARKET HOG TO 225 POUNDS**

The amount of feed required to produce a market hog varies between farms because of varying abilities of producers, kind of hogs kept, health or thriftiness of the hogs and the rations fed. The amounts of feed listed, however, will be approximated under average conditions. The following data are based upon six pigs per sow being marketed with all feeds fed being charged to the pigs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Grain (bu.)</th>
<th>Protein supplement</th>
<th>Hay</th>
<th>Paste</th>
<th>Minerals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pregnancy period</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suckling period (8-10 weeks—pigs weaned at 30 to 40 lbs. in weight)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoothing-up period of sow (30 days)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fattening period (6 pigs 40 lbs. to 225 lbs.)</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>285A</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total feed for sow plus 6 pigs</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2/5A</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total feed each 225-lb. pig</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1/15A</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The grain may consist of corn, oats or wheat, although not more than ¼ oats is considered in these amounts. In drylot, ¼ to ½ more supplement would be required. Feed cost represents about 80 percent of the cost of raising hogs.