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So You Want to

Raise HOGS



Extension Circular 654

December 1958

**FEDERAL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
OREGON STATE COLLEGE ✓ CORVALLIS**

Cooperative Extension work in Agriculture and Home Economics, F. E. Price, director. Oregon State College, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the State Department of Education cooperating. Printed and distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914.

So You Want to

Why raise hogs in Oregon?

Ready markets are close at hand. People in Oregon, Washington, and California eat much more pork than is produced in these states. Roughly, 10% of the nation's people live in Pacific Coast States, but only 1% of the hogs are raised here.

Competition is far away. Most of the pork shipped here comes from hogs raised in the Dakotas, Nebraska, Iowa, and other Midwest states. Some come from Canada and as far as Denmark.

Our hog prices usually are among the highest in the nation.

We have a large supply of barley and other locally-grown grains not being fully used in other ways.

Our feed grain prices are fairly competitive with prices in areas now shipping hogs to coast markets.

Studies and experience show that Oregon farmers raise hogs about as efficiently and as cheaply as farmers elsewhere when the feed costs the same.



Raise HOGS

What are the risks?

Of course, profits from hogs aren't a sure thing. There will be times when bad luck, poor management, or low prices may bring disappointment. Hog prices fluctuate widely and rapidly. For instance, in February, 1954, butcher hogs at Portland hit a top of \$30 a hundred pounds. Only 22 months later, in December, 1955, they brought as little as \$12. By July, 1957, they had climbed back up to a top of \$26.75. These changes are due largely to changes in national supplies of pork and other meats.

Meanwhile, prices of feed grain had fluctuated much less. A hundred pounds of hog on Oregon farms would pay for 1,100 pounds of barley in the early part of 1954 but only 600 pounds at the end of 1955.

So, profits from hogs are subject to many changes in the short run. These changes are important in deciding when to get started in the hog business.

Also, we cannot be certain that we always shall have



an abundant supply of feed grain. Largely because of federal farm programs, much of our present large supply is being raised on land that usually grows wheat. Stricter controls on use of cropland could reduce feed grain plantings. Even so, odds are that production would remain relatively large due to higher yields than in the past.

Despite these risks, chances for fair to excellent returns are good.

How do hogs fit into the farm business?

Hogs are adapted to many Oregon farm situations, either as a supplementary enterprise or as the main enterprise.

Two or three sows may increase the net income for some farmers since available resources can be more fully utilized. Other farmers may need 50 or more sows to fit into their operational patterns economically.

The hog enterprise can be handled on a pasture system or is well adapted to a specialized, highly mechanized, continuous-output drylot system.

The hog enterprise is flexible. Timing of peak labor periods may coincide with slack labor for other enterprises. Also, pigs can be sold as weaners or feeders to take advantage of the market situation or to balance feed supplies.

How much feed, time, and money do they take?

Hogs require large amounts of feed in relation to labor and capital investments.

To produce a 200-pound market hog, it takes from 800 to 900 pounds of barley or equivalent plus protein supplement, mineral, and pasture. This includes the feed for the entire breeding herd. Hogs will eat the equivalent of about 4% of their body weight in feed per day. Efficient operators will produce a 200-pound hog in 5½ to 6 months.

In estimating feed, each sow and two litters per year would require 5 to 6 tons of barley or equivalent.

In estimating annual labor requirements (including care of breeding herd), less than 3 sows would require 120 hours per sow; 5-7 sows, 76 hours per sow; 10-15 sows, 70 hours per sow; 25-35 sows, 60 hours per sow.

Self feeders and automatic waterers would reduce these requirements about 25%.

With limited additional help and a fully mechanized setup, one man could care for 90 to 100 sows on a continuous drylot feeding basis. Superior management and "know-how" is necessary for success in this specialized system.

Capital investment may run from \$300 to \$400 per



Heat lamps will reduce death losses from crushing. A pig feeder may be provided under the heat lamp.

sow for breeding stock, buildings, equipment, and operating capital. Operating capital is turned over twice a year.

What should hogs be fed?

The hog requires a more complete ration than a cow or sheep since the hog has a single stomach, and a comparatively small sized digestive tract. Hogs need most of their feed in the form of concentrates, rather than roughage.

Since feed costs represent some 75 to 80% of the total cost of raising hogs, efficient feeding practices are essential to a profitable operation.

Cereal grains are the usual basic feeds for hogs, although other materials, such as garbage, may be used when available. Grains are deficient in some respects. This deficiency is made up by addition of certain supplements.

In this mix, additional protein is supplied by soybean oil meal and tankage. Animal protein, such as tankage, is recommended for all hog feeds. Grains are low in vitamin A and in calcium; these are supplied by the dehydrated alfalfa and ground limestone. Salt also may be fed, free choice.

Here is a sample feed mix for pigs :

<i>Ingredient</i>	<i>Pounds</i>
Barley, ground	78
Soybean meal	7
Tankage, 60% CP, digester	7
Alfalfa meal, dehydrated	6.5
Limestone, ground	0.5
Salt, iodized	1.0
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Total	100.0

This mix is satisfactory for growing shoats, sows in the last third of gestation, and nursing sows. Lower levels of supplements (the nongrain part) are suitable for dry sows, sows in early gestation, and herd boars. Higher levels of supplements are necessary in rations for young pigs.

Feeder pigs on such a ration should average gains of 1.35 pounds or more daily, and will require about 4 pounds of feed per pound of gain.

What kind of hog does best?

Five traits count most in hogs: (1) large litters, (2) livability, (3) rapid growth rate, (4) high feed efficiency, (5) desirable carcass quality. The term "meat-type" has come into wide popular use to describe hogs possessing a high proportion of lean to fat in the carcass. Such hogs usually appear well muscled.

Best results in commercial production are achieved through the systematic crossing of three or more breeds. The system of mating crossbred females to purebred—including inbred—boars, provides maximum prolificness and motherliness in the females and maximum livability and growth rate in the pigs. Use of purebred, or inbred, boars should provide a uniformity of performance that is highly desirable. Carcass quality tends to be intermediate between the parent stocks. Feed efficiency may be slightly improved over parent stocks. The same high degree of care, orderly operation, and good judgment should be practiced in selection and management that would be used with hogs of one breed. Animals used for crossing should be from highly productive herds.

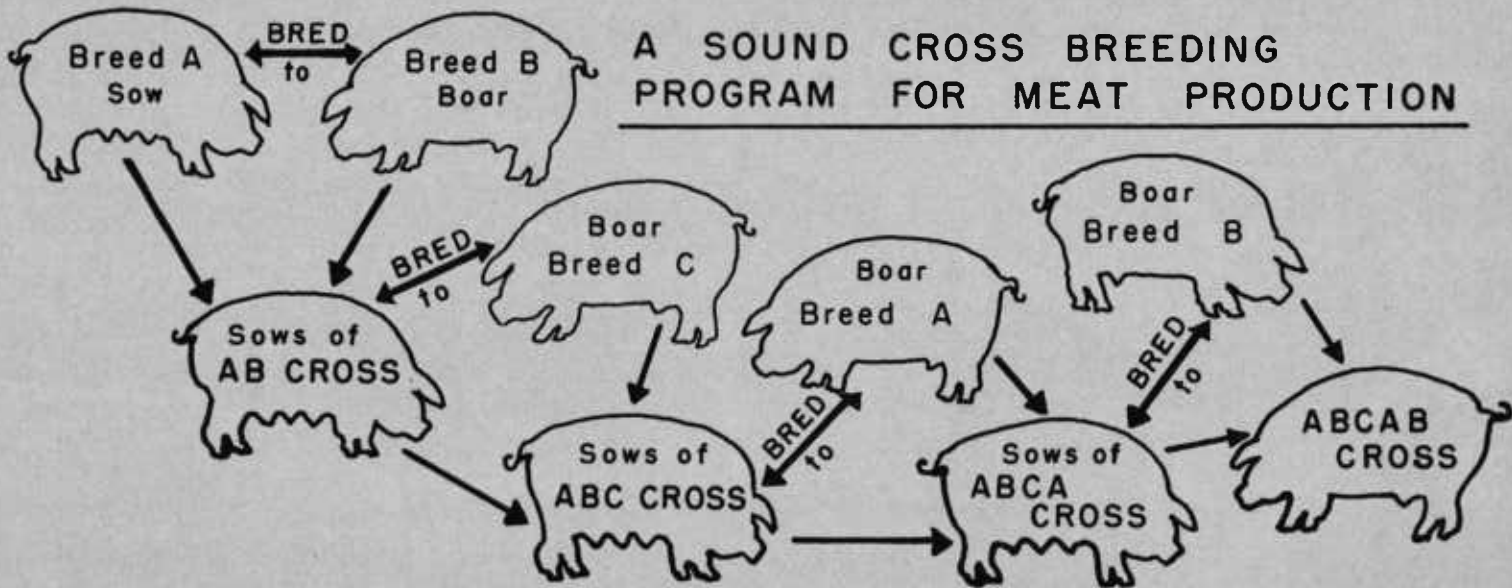
A sound crossbreeding program is outlined below:

Females of breed A (or crossbreds) x boar of breed B = market hogs and replacement females.

Crossbred females AB x boar of breed C = market hogs and replacement females.

Crossbred females ABC x boar of breed A = market hogs and replacement females.

A SOUND CROSS BREEDING PROGRAM FOR MEAT PRODUCTION



Crossbred females ABCA x boar of breed B = market hogs and replacement females.

Continue systematically. The gestation period is 114 days.

Purebred herds are "seedstock" sources. Records should be kept of the number born, number weaned, weaning weight at a standard age, age at 200 pounds or at a given market age, and feed required to produce a pound of gain. Attention should be given to traits or measurements indicating carcass quality. Carefully planned breeding and selection programs should be followed to insure highest performance when these animals are used for commercial production.

What are some of the other musts for successful production?

A constant supply of clean drinking water is a must.

The swine herd must be kept healthy. Prevent diseases and parasites by strict sanitation. Clean sows and disinfect pens with hot lye water before each farrowing.

At farrowing time, bed lightly with chopped or short straw or hay, shavings, or other suitable material.

Provide heat (lamps or other methods) in area accessible only to baby pigs.

Have sows farrow at planned intervals. This will distribute the work load throughout the year and make full use of equipment and facilities. It can also provide



Farrowing stalls will save an extra one or two pigs per litter.



Shown here is some of the necessary handling equipment for care and management of hogs.

a supply of hogs for market in months when prices usually are best.

During the first week of a pig's life clip needle teeth so they will not injure the sow's udder. Also notch the pig's ear for identification. Castrate boar pigs, and prevent anemia with a suitable iron treatment.

Begin creep feeding when pigs are one to two weeks of age.

Wean pigs at six weeks. This can be done without use of a milk supplement.

Breed sows producing two litters per year during the first heat period following weaning.

Keep records—they usually are important to successful swine management.

What housing is needed?

Here, briefly, are the essential building and equipment requirement for farrowing, weaning, and feeding out hogs. This equipment can be adapted to any size of operation.

Farrowing stalls: In both eastern and western Oregon adequate shelter should be provided, with floors, preferably of concrete, that can be cleaned easily. Farrowing stalls with heat lamps are very important. Circular of Information 556, "A Practical Farrowing Stall," gives construction details. Heat lamps should be installed so they are safe, according to the electric code.

Suckling pens: If you have only a few pigs, you can convert the farrowing stall to a suckling pen. For large operations, separate pens may be advisable for the suckling period.

When the farrowing stalls are used, the dividing boards can be taken out and partly rearranged to provide a creep area. To do this, place a dividing board across the end of the pen near the walkway; move the heat lamps over this area, and place water and feed there. In addition, an outside area or pen equal to the size of the farrowing stall, or slightly larger, is desirable. A feed hopper for the sow can be placed in this area.

Where separate pens for the sow and her litter are required, a pen 12 by 8 to 10 feet should be under cover, with an outside pen of about the same size for an exercise yard. Place a divider in the inside pen to provide a heated area with water and feed for the small pigs.

After weaning, the pigs may be moved to a separate feeding area or they may be fed out in the same pens.

Feedlots: Pigs fed in a dry lot need about 12 to 15 square feet of space per animal. This should be on a hard surface lot, either concrete or asphalt. In western Oregon at least two-thirds of the dry lot area should be covered with a roof; in eastern Oregon less roofed-over area is needed. Part of the roofed-over area serves as a bedded area. The hard surfaces should be sloped toward gutters, to be used as clean-outs. Self-feeders will save labor. An adequate water supply must be provided.

In some cases, existing buildings can be converted and used for any one or more of the three essential areas.

How can hogs be marketed to best advantage?

Marketing is the climax of the producer's efforts to make money in the hog business. Intelligent marketing may determine whether the producer will make a profit or lose money. Good marketing depends in part upon wise planning, breeding, production, feeding, and management.

Raise what the market wants. You can expect some premium on "meat-type" hogs and a dock on "fat-type" hogs. Preferred weights are 200 to 220 pounds.

Aim to have hogs ready for market several times a year. Hog prices in Oregon generally are highest in July, August, or September and lowest in November, December, or January.

Choose the market place that suits you best. Hogs can be sold to local butchers, through auctions, or on the terminal market at North Portland. In rare instances, Oregon's live hogs are shipped to out-of-state markets.

Buyers will obtain hogs either on live weight or on a carcass weight and grade basis. More and more pro-



**A suitable porch should be provided during wet seasons.
The porch will provide some exercise area.**

ducers of quality hogs are selling on carcass weight and grade. Some are "contracting" to produce hogs of specified types and weights for a given outlet.

Study market prices reported in newspapers, over the radio and TV, and in releases from the Federal Market News Service, and/or Oregon State College. This will help determine the best time and place to sell when a group of hogs is ready for market.

Get acquainted with buyers and let them know what you have to sell. Confidence and reputation are very important in buying and selling. Follow your hogs through the packing plant to actually see what you have produced.

Let the market know ahead that you are coming, particularly if you have many hogs to sell.

Avoid losses in shipping by :

Using canvas slappers.

Eliminating protruding nails and broken boards from loading chutes and conveyances.

Bedding conveyances properly.

Loading carefully.

Not overfeeding hogs before shipment; hogs can get carsick.



*See your County Extension Agent
for other information
on Oregon hog production,
housing, feeding, breeding,
management, and
marketing*