

Production & Marketing of Hogs in Arizona

*by Elmer L. Menzie**

Hog production has not been an important enterprise in Arizona agriculture, but interest has been growing in recent years and at least some people feel there is a bright future ahead. The inventory of 54,000 head on June 1, 1968, was the largest recorded number since 1944 when there were 68,000 head. While relatively small, the inventory has doubled since 1965 and indications are that expansion is continuing at a fairly fast rate. Pigs saved in the spring crop for 1968 were nearly 30 percent greater than for the same period in 1967.

Commercial slaughter of hogs in Arizona in 1967 was estimated at 154,700 head, or about 36 million pounds liveweight. Based on the number of pigs saved, it appears that only about one-third of the commercial slaughter is produced locally. The bulk of the remainder is imported from the Midwest. Assuming consumption of pork in Arizona to be about the same as the national average (63.9 pounds per capita in 1967), it therefore appears that local hog production supplies less than 10 percent of the needs.

** Professor of Agricultural Economics.*

Location and General Characteristics of Arizona Hog Production

Production of hogs in Arizona is dominated by a few large producers, as is the case with other agricultural enterprises. It is also fairly well localized in about five counties, with three supplying the largest numbers. In 1967, Pima County was estimated to produce nearly 30 percent of the State's total. Most of these came from three or four lots. Nearly one-half of the pigs produced in the State are from the Safford area. Maricopa, Pinal, and Cochise Counties produce most of the remainder.

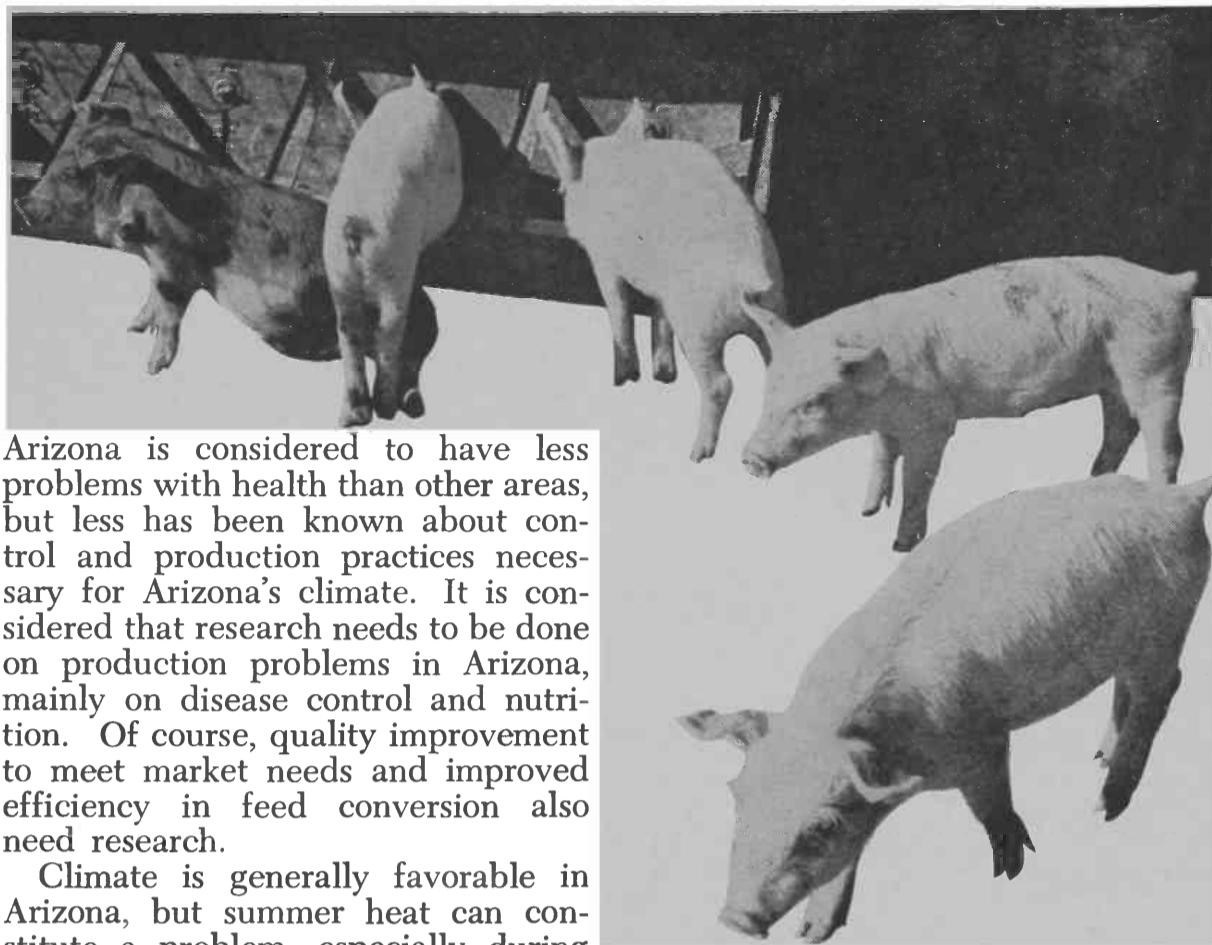
The largest proportion of the hogs produced are from 200- to 300-sow establishments, with 3,000 to 5,000 pigs per year. Some are specialty operations and some are established in conjunction with other farm production. Most feed a grain concentrate ration, although a few smaller operators use garbage.

Relative to most other types of agricultural production, it is fairly easy to move in and out of the swine business. Estimates of costs vary with the type of structures used, but indications are that buildings for a well-established 100-sow unit would cost \$35,000 to \$40,000. This is considered about a one-man operation. Of course, with less sophisticated structures these costs may be reduced.

It is general practice to have two litters per sow per year. Pigs saved per litter have been increasing and averaged 8.1 in 1967. With the favorable climatic conditions in Arizona, it is possible to control production and to market a relatively even number of hogs per month. This permits better use of labor and plant capacity.

Production Problems

Disease is considered to be the most serious problem for hog producers. In order to keep disease under control, good management practices are necessary. This, apparently, has been a significant factor in limiting the expansion of the industry in the past.



Arizona is considered to have less problems with health than other areas, but less has been known about control and production practices necessary for Arizona's climate. It is considered that research needs to be done on production problems in Arizona, mainly on disease control and nutrition. Of course, quality improvement to meet market needs and improved efficiency in feed conversion also need research.

Climate is generally favorable in Arizona, but summer heat can constitute a problem, especially during farrowing. There is need for more information on methods and costs of cooling, such as by sprinklers or evaporative coolers. In addition, research is needed on types of structures best suited to the area.

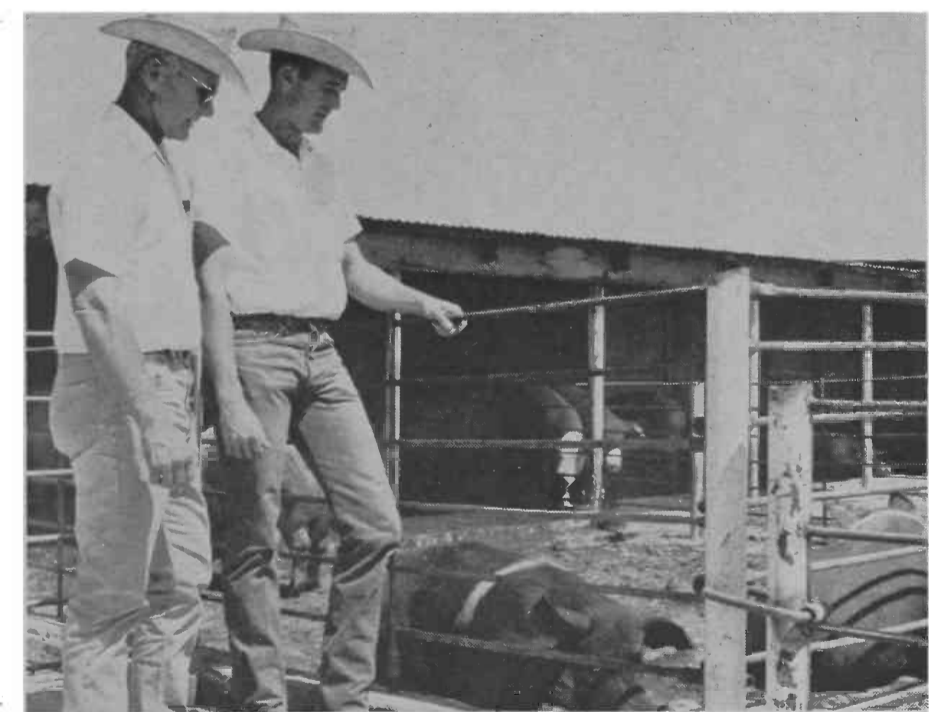
Marketing

Since Arizona production is only a small fraction of consumption, considerable expansion could occur to meet local needs if costs remain competitive with other areas. In addition,

there is a large market available in California.

Most of Arizona's production is marketed to one packing plant in Phoenix. Some smaller plants slaughter as well, but numbers are not large. Because of their location advantage in terms of the Arizona market, producers receive a price differential over Midwest market prices.

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At the Arizona Milling Company Buckeye Swine farm Herold V. Loughhead, Extension Area Livestock Specialist for feedlots and swine, left, and Gary Gruel, farm manager discuss possible ways of improving production. Gruel's management has the swine operation farrowing about 80 litters per month giving an average of 10.51 live births per litter. This farm is 10 miles west of Goodbar on the Yuma road.



Elmer Menzie, author of this article, left, and James F. Armstrong, Agricultural Agent for Pima county, work together in obtaining information needed for the survey. They are looking over the swine production operation of Silverbell Farms in the northern end of Avra Valley which is under the management of Evans Thornton. This operation started with 70 and has climbed to 230 sows. Thornton will level off production at 300 sows within the year.

Chronic Pain

(From page 3)

increases in activity and productive behavior; conversely, they tend to ignore complaints of pain and discomfort.

Apparently this method, although somewhat oversimplified in this description, when applied consistently and knowledgeable by the entire therapeutic team and followed by appropriate continuation in the patient's normal or home environment has produced very promising results. Further details and/or reprints of articles dealing with the learning-type model in chronic pain management can be obtained by directing inquiries to Dr. Wilbert E. Fordyce, Pain Clinic, University of Washington, Seattle.

The fact that significant differences in pain responses and reactions have been described among Jews, Italians, Indians, Old American, and other ethnic groups would seem to indicate considerable promise for further research in the learning approach to pain management.

Dr. H. K. Beecher's observations concerning the significance of situational determinants — the influence of particular situations upon reaction to pain — are also relevant to the learning theory approach. Beecher compared soldiers in a combat zone hospital who had been seriously wounded with 150 male civilians who had undergone major surgery. The tissue damage in the two groups was comparable, but their responses were sharply different. According to Beecher the soldier interpreted his wound as a blessing. It enabled him to leave the battlefield with honor. It was his ticket out. The civilian on the other hand, perceived his "wound" as a calamity. It was painful and disabling. Only one-fifth of the post-operative patients refused medication for the relief of pain, whereas two-thirds of the soldiers refused medication. The meaning that pain has to the individual quite obviously affects his response to it. Equally obvious is the fact that the meaning, or the individual's perception of the significance of the pain, can be modified through appropriate experimental techniques.

Hog Production

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An Arizona Pig Marketing Association assists producers in marketing hogs and in buying certain types of supplies. The Association tries to develop an orderly flow of product to the packing plant by keeping track of numbers available for market each week. Currently there are 36 producer members estimated to produce about 80 percent of the State's hogs. The main marketing problems are to improve quality and to sell consumers on the value of locally produced pork.

Industry Profitable

While further study needs to be made to determine costs in relation to different systems of production and

to varying feed prices, estimates are that hogs are being produced in Arizona at between \$16 and \$17 per hundredweight. From January 1965 through June 1968, monthly mean prices reported for hogs in Arizona fell below \$17 in only three months. Average prices reported rose to \$27.70 and the mean price for the entire period was \$20.87. This would indicate that while prices fluctuated rather sharply during the past 3½ years, margins above costs have been good. This, plus the fact that producers are searching for profitable alternative uses for resources in agriculture, is helping to stimulate interest in the industry.

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