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University of Arizona

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE

PRODUCTION FOR DEFENSE
MORE FOOD FROM ARIZONA FARMS



PORK A SOURCE OF HOME MEAT SUPPLY

By J. T. RIGDEN

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PORK—A SOURCE OF HOME MEAT SUPPLY

By J. T. RIGDEN

While the conditions on most of the farms of Arizona are much more favorable to the fattening of beef cattle, some Arizona farmers can, however, increase their own meat supplies and, to some extent, increase their farm income by raising hogs. Since Arizona is already an importer of pork products, any increase in home pork production in Arizona will release that much for other defense needs as well as convert into a profit feeds on the farm that might otherwise be wasted.

The farmer has two alternatives in establishing a home pork supply. The first is to maintain one or more brood sows, and the other is to purchase weaner pigs. The supply of home-grown feeds should determine the extent of any hog-raising venture. If only a few animals are to be fed, it would be more economical to purchase weaner pigs than maintain brood sows throughout the year. Two pigs weighing 200 pounds apiece should produce around 320 pounds of edible pork products. Based on average per-capita consumption, this would furnish ample pork for a family of four.

It is not advocated that Arizona farmers go into large-scale pork production at the expense of other farm enterprises, but it is suggested that a sufficient number of hogs be kept on farms to profitably utilize home-grown feeds and only purchase a minimum of supplementary feeds.

The breed of hog is not important as long as one gets or raises medium heavy, thrifty animals. It is best to use a type between the old fat back and the long, upstanding type popular a few years ago. The most profitable hogs finish at 200 to 225 pounds and have from 1½ to 1¾ inches of fat back and a good firm carcass.

Pigs should be weaned at approximately 60 days of age and should weigh from 30 to 40 pounds at that time. If purchased on the market, the price per pound will be slightly higher than the price of the finished market hog. With proper care and feeding, pigs of this age and weight can be made to weigh 200 pounds when 6 to 7 months old. Barrows or gilts can be fed out together. There is no difference in rate or economy of gain.

Fancy equipment for feeder pigs is not necessary. They should have clean, dry quarters with protection from sun in summer and storms in winter. Troughs should be made solid and so they can be easily cleaned. Clean, fresh water is essential, but "hog wallows" are unnecessary and increase danger of infestation of worms and other parasites. A rubbing post wrapped with sacks and soaked with oil will aid in keeping down lice. Pens should be large enough for exercise. A pen 15 feet square is the minimum size for two pigs. Details on hog lot equipment can be furnished by the local county agent or by writing direct to the Agricultural Extension Service, University of Arizona.

Feeding is the most important item in raising hogs for a profit, even for home consumption. Hogs do best on concentrates and are not so constituted as to economically use large amounts of rough and fibrous feeds. They should be fed a nonbulky ration containing carbohydrates for fat production, proteins for growth, and minerals for skeleton development. Carbohydrates are furnished by grains such as corn, barley, wheat, hegari; protein from tankage, fish meal, and dairy products; minerals and vitamins from mineral mixtures, alfalfa hay, and green forage.

With the exception of corn, grains should be ground or rolled. There is no advantage in soaking or cooking grains for hog feed.

The following ration has proved satisfactory:

	Per cent
Grain	85
Tankage or fish meal	9
Alfalfa meal	5
Ground limestone	0.5
Salt	0.5

After the pig reaches a weight of 150 pounds, the tankage can be decreased and the grain increased to 90 to 92 per cent. Best results will be obtained by feeding through a self-feeder. If hand fed, 4 to 5 pounds of grain should be fed for each 100 pounds of live weight.

The above is strictly for pen feeding. Whenever possible, a farmer should plan his operations to fit in with his pasture. The most economical gains can be made with alfalfa pasture, but wheat, rye, barley or Sudan grass are quite satisfactory. Pasture will take the place of hay in the ration, but will not act as a substitute for all of the protein supplement. If tankage cannot be supplied, $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon of skim milk per day will take its place in the ration as outlined. Pasture makes a saving on grain. Pigs will make good gains on 2 to 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds of grain per 100 pounds of live weight plus protein supplement in the form of milk or tankage while on pasture.

If skim milk or buttermilk is available, it can be fed in quantities of 4 to 5 pounds for 1 pound of grain, but it should not replace all of the grain allowance. An acre of good pasture will run fifteen to twenty pigs and save approximately 20 per cent on concentrates. On a nonpasture ration it takes 450 pounds of grain per 100 pounds of gain. Rations can be further substituted with garbage, dried fruit, cull fruit in orchards, and vegetables. These feeds are low in protein, so additional protein should be fed in the form of milk or tankage. Dried fruits can be substituted for 30 per cent of the grain part of the ration. Garbage is a cheap feed and is used successfully if its quality is considered and other concentrates or protein supplements added when necessary.

When breeding sows are kept, they should be maintained in a thrifty condition with special care during pregnancy if healthy litters are to be raised. Sows should always have green alfalfa

hay when not on pasture. Protein supplements are most important during the last 6 weeks of pregnancy.

For information on farrowing and care of young pigs to weaning time, see the local county agent or write the Agricultural Extension Service, University of Arizona.

Important points to remember in feeding pigs:

1. Maintain sanitary conditions.
2. Maintain a good supply of clean, fresh water.
3. Feed a balanced ration.
4. An addition of proper protein supplement saves on grains through more rapid gains.
5. Give animals all they need to keep them growing.
6. Feed twice a day or use a self-feeder.
7. Use pasture and green feed to the fullest extent.
8. Skim milk is an excellent source of protein, but should not take the place of all of the grain.
9. Buy healthy pigs free from disease and parasites.
10. Avoid sudden changes in feeding practices.
11. Sanitation is the best prevention for diseases.

Additional information may be obtained in *Pork on the Farm: Killing, Curing and Canning* (U.S. Dept. Agr. Farmers Bull. No. 1186) and *Swine Production* (Farmers Bull. No. 1437).