

At first sight the results under the English grading system are very pleasing, indicating as they do that even a larger proportion of the New Zealand carcasses reach the top two grades than many English pigs as indicated by published figures. The results are rather misleading, however, since the English standards do not involve length of middle in which New Zealand pigs notably fail. Again the fact that only 30 per cent. of the New Zealand pigs were able to be graded under the English scheme owing to the minimum weight-limit of 140 lb. reduces the value of the comparison.

The New Zealand grading results, which include "length standards," are probably more in keeping with the carcass value of the pigs. If "first grade" by this system be considered equivalent to grades A and B under the former system, it is clear that the length factor has been responsible for fewer pigs grading first in New Zealand. It is of interest also to record that the weight-length relationship previously noted is reflected in the commercial grading results when length is a factor, 65 per cent. of pigs below 140 lb. in weight grading first, as compared with only 25 per cent. on pigs over 140 lb. Increased proportion of fat in the heavier carcasses also played a part in this respect.

SUMMARY.

Considerable improvement is necessary in the present type of bacon pig exported from New Zealand if a high quality-status on the United Kingdom market is the objective of producers.

Shortness in length of loin is revealed as the most serious weakness. This is more apparent at high bacon-weights than at low, and points to the desirability from the quality viewpoint of marketing the present type of relatively short pig at weights below 140 lb.

Associated with this deficiency in length is a tendency toward overfatness. This is also correlated with carcass-weight and is penalizing to heavier carcasses, though the disadvantage of slaughter at weights above 140 lb. is not so acute as in the case of length.

Hams, shoulders, eye of loin (indicating proportion of lean meat), length of legs, and streak, attain a reasonably high standard on the average, though some types of pigs are defective in one or more of these characters.

There is little difference between the popular breeds and crosses in carcass-quality as a whole, though they may vary significantly in efficiency in respect to individual quality-points.

The Tamworth-Berkshire-cross pigs are too short in length of loin, while the Large White crosses are superior to others in this quality as well as in proportion of fat, though defective in other qualities. Differences within each breed and cross are very marked and point to the existence of suitable and unsuitable bacon strains. Selection within these on a carcass-quality basis is the logical line of attack in an improvement policy.

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