

Baconless Breakfasts in England

It Rests with the New Zealand Farmer Whether the Homeland Has Bacon or "Macon"

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THE conservative nature of the Briton is nowhere better evidenced than at the breakfast table. Scotland, with an influence out of proportion to her size, has dictated that the first course shall be good oatmeal porridge, although of recent years there has been a liberal class of devotees of patent American cereal foods. There is, as well, a small group of leftists—absolute extremists—whose tortured bodies demand the purgative salve of stewed prunes or other fruit.

So much for the foundations. They are eminently sound, and display a certain degree of latitude according to individual taste, but the main structure, the second course, is rock-like in its steadfastness. John Bull, for at least five days of the week, insists on bacon and egg. One day may be assigned to sausages, perhaps another to kippers, but he eats such things merely to deepen his appreciation of the hen and the pig.

The Substitute

And now bacon is being rationed. The prop and support of the starting day has been withdrawn, and John Bull marches on a stomach, either military or civil, which has been denied its first essential. The Rock of Gibraltar is cracking, and they are trying to patch up the crevices with a substitute material, called "macon," obtained by curing mutton. It is like putting lime in a super bag and calling it phosphate.

Why is Britain being subject to a ration card for bacon? The reasons, briefly told, are that in a normal year she consumes more than half a million tons of bacon and ham, some of which is home or Empire produced, but the great bulk of which is from Continental Europe. Denmark, Sweden, Poland, and the Netherlands were the prime

What are the people in Great Britain to eat for breakfast? Bacon, the staple breakfast food of the Englishman, is being rationed at Home, and a duty rests on every dairy farmer in New Zealand to contribute towards making good the deficiencies in supply.

sources of that appetising smell from the family frying pan.

Poland is now completely out of the picture, while the remaining three countries, which are contiguous to Germany by land or by sea, are subject to increasing demands from enemy trade. Added to this, there are the hazards of transport by sea. Scarcely a day passes without some Swedish, Dutch, or Danish ship being mined or torpedoed in the North Sea. These are the ships which are bringing butter and bacon to England.

It appears that there will be a repetition of the experience during the last war, when Continental supplies of bacon, and butter as well, fell to a very small figure. The United States of America and Canada filled the breach very nobly; in fact, the total imports of bacon were maintained at higher than pre-war levels. But what about this war? Canada will certainly do her part, because her pig industry is on an expanding basis, but it is highly improbable that the United States will be allowed to expand her exports, because dollar exchange will be much too precious for buying aeroplanes and the fuel to run them. The effort must come from the Empire, and there is no question but that New Zealand is in a position to contribute very effectively to making good the deficiencies in supply.

New Zealand's Part

It is not a vain statement to say that New Zealand could double the amount of her pig production on the food supplies that are available, particularly now that Australian barley and pollard are obtainable at the most favourable prices since 1910.

The limiting factor to increased pig production is not one of food; it is the will to farm pigs properly. The average New Zealand dairy farmer has no great love for pigs, and he expresses his attitude by careless and slovenly management. It is a curious anomaly that this should be so in a body of farmers who in most other respects lead the world in initiative and efficiency of enterprise.

How can the farmer increase his pig production? In the first place, he wants reasonably efficient housing and accommodation, and there are men qualified to advise him of this—the Supervisors of the Pig Councils. Apart from any direct material advantage to production of adequate housing, there is the psychological influence on the farmer himself who is given the opportunity to take in his pigs a pride which was denied him when they farrowed three or four miserable runts under the shelter of a blackberry bush. Good housing brings in its train lower mortality, more efficient utilisation of food, and, above all, better management, for the farmer has courage to look his pigs in the eye and see what they are doing for him.

Feeding

When it comes to feeding, it is advisable not to regard pigs as convenient drainpipes for troublesome dairy by-products. It is a good thing, too, to remember that a pig's digestive system is more like a human being's than any