Pig Feeding Trials on Copra and Whey

By

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DURING the past year a number of feeding trials to demonstrate the value of copra or of whey have been carried out by farmers under the direction of the District Pig Council Supervisors in different districts, and have been summarised. Where known, the actual prices paid for meals or received for pig-meat have been used in estimating cost and returns; otherwise, meals have been charged at £12 10s. per short ton, and pig-meat valued at 6d. per pound.

A uniform procedure has been followed, giving the essential facts and making the four essential deductions —namely, the cost of meal per pig during the trial period, the return per gallon of milk after paying for supplements used, the feed used to produce 1lb. of carcass, and the cost of meal per pound of carcass gain. Whatever the amount of meal used per lb. of carcass gain is in excess of 6lb. there is something wrong with the quality of the feed, the quality of the pigs fed, or the quality of the attention given them. When the figure approaches 4.5lb. the owner has attained a state of excellence in all departments—feed quality, pig quality, and management.

There is a close relationship between the feed used per lb. of gain, the amount of meal used, and the earning value of milk per gallon. These trials establish a fund of information on feeding problems, and as this information is collected under actual farm conditions, it is worth careful study by those interested in getting better value out of their feed supplies. Farmers who have gone to the trouble of making these experiments have done an excellent service to the industry, and are to be complimented for their interest and effort. The identity of the trial is indicated by the name of the district in which it was made.

Copra Trials

Trial 1: Copra, milk, and green maize (Taranaki).

Seven Tamworth-Berkshire pigs were fed with 1lb. of copra, 4 gallons of skim-milk, and 8lb. of green maize daily per pig for 43 days. These pigs weighed 134lb. when the trial began, and 191lb. when it finished. The resulting carcass increase was 47lb. per pig worth at 6½d. per lb., 25s. 5½d. Meal used at £9 6s. 8d. per short ton cost 4s. 0½d. per pig, and maize at a nominal charge of 5s. per green ton cost 9d. per pig, leaving 20s. 8d. as the earning capacity of 172 gallons of milk. On this basis, milk shows a gross value of 1.44d. per gallon. Feed used per lb. of carcass gain was 5.30lb.; meal used per lb. of carcass gain cost 1.0d.

Trial 2: Barley and meat-meal, milk, and green maize (compare with copra above) (Taranaki).

Six Tamworth-Berkshire pigs were fed with ½lb. of meat-meal, ½lb. of crushed barley, 4 gallons of milk, and 8 lb. of green maize daily per pig for 43 days. These pigs weighed 143lb. when the trial began, and 204lb. when it finished. The resulting carcass increase was 50lb. per pig, worth at 6½d. per lb., 27s 1d. Meal used at an average of £11 per short ton cost 4s. 9d. per pig; maize, as before, 9d., leaving 21s. 7d. for 172 gallons of milk, or 1.50d. per gallon. Feed used per lb. of carcass gain was 4.98lb., and meal used per lb. of carcass gain cost 1.14d. In these trials, copra is not quite as good as a mixture of meat and barley meals. Compare Trials 7 and 8.

Trial 3: Copra and skim-milk (Pukekohe).

Six pigs were fed 2lb. of copra, plus an average of 4.66 gallons of milk daily per pig for 45 days. These pigs weighed 140lb. when the trial started, and 217lb. when it finished. The resulting carcass increase was 61lb. per pig, worth at 6d. per lb, 30s. 6d. Meal used at £9 5s. per short ton cost 8s. 3d. per pig, leaving 22s. 3d. as the earning capacity of 208 gallons of milk, or 1.28d.