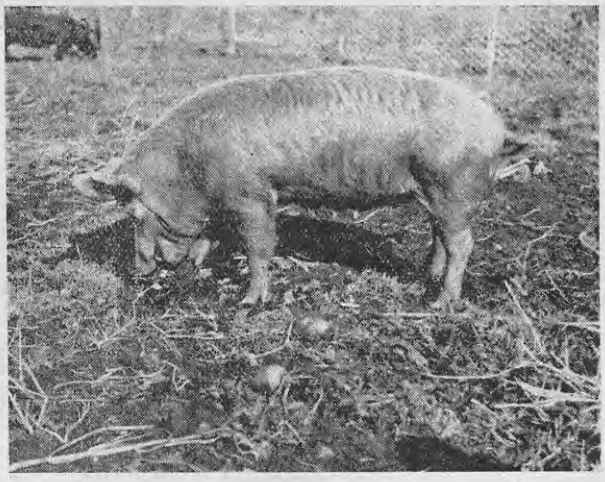
"What Crops Can I Grow for the Pigs?"



Following Great Britain's increased order for bacon, which was announced last month, many farmers will be asking, "What crops can I grow for the pigs?" Root crops will in most cases be the logical answer, and an outline of the merits of various crops is given in this article.

— By —
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THE final choice of what root crop to grow must depend largely on soil fertility, availability of labour for cultural operations, and climatic conditions. While the crops under discussion in this article are intended principally as a guide to what might be grown, more detailed information will be available in any locality from the local Instructor in Agriculture.

Briefly, points favouring good root crops may be summarised as follows:—

(1) Heavy crop and dry-matter yields per acre—root crops can suitably supply the bulk of the pig's rations.

(2) Less need for large purchases of concentrates or other feedstuffs.

(3) Ability to make full use of skim-milk, rejected fruit, or other food wastes.

On the debit side of the food account labour costs must be reckoned, as also the need for balancing up the root ration with other protein-rich supplements.

Importance of Dry Matter Yield

As an illustration of the importance of high dry-matter yield per acre, mangolds may be compared in their dry-matter production with that of a commonly fed cereal, barley. An average 40-ton crop of mangolds (dry-matter 13 per cent.) will produce 104 cwt. of dry-matter per acre compared with 14 cwt. from a 40 bushel crop of barley (dry-matter 86 per cent.). Although the mangold crop is capable of producing very much more dry material from the same area than a cereal crop, there are vast differences in feeding qualities.

Just as the performance of your car depends on the correct petrol-air mixture, so also will growing pigs make most headway with a suitably-balanced diet of carbohydrate and protein. In general, root crops are over carbohydrate-rich, whereas some grain, and particularly lucerne, pea-meal, or linseed meals, are over protein-rich. Hence the necessity for feeding such concentrates along with root crops, which provide the bulk of the ration.

As an indication of the area which should be set aside for cropping, it has been stated that one acre of good crops should be provided for every 30 cows milked, or an allowance of 2½ tons per cow plus 10 tons for every ton of grain bought. In non-dairying districts otherwise waste foodstuff, or reject apples in fruit-growing centres, may be profitably converted to pig-flesh with the assistance of home-grown root crops.