



Outstanding Results on Waikato Farm

Farmers should take advantage of the £5 per acre subsidy on crops for pig feeding. Here is the experience of a Waikato farmer, which shows how annual cropping may be used to increase pig production.

THOUGH many farmers are aware that the judicious use of crops for pig feed can considerably increase net profits, they are often reluctant to launch a cropping programme without the conviction that comes from seeing the results of the experience of others. The force of example brought out in this article is all the more striking, because it is fully supported by unassailable records placed without restriction at the disposal of the writer. While the value of cropping for pigs is established beyond doubt in the minds of a great number of pig producers, a further incentive to undertake cropping as a means of expanding pig production for Britain is offered by the State subsidy of £5 per acre on crops for pigs.

"I have nothing to hide. Anyone can come and see how the pigs are run here, and there is no real reason why it can't be done on many other farms." This was the feeling expressed by the sharemilker, Mr. W. E. Reid, and backed up by the farm owner, a well-known and long-established settler in the Pukerimu district, Cambridge. "There is this, though," continued Mr. Reid, "it is not a bit of use expecting results if a man isn't keen and neglects his pigs. They must have adequate shelter, ample good food, and constant attention. If they get that, and with ordinary luck, there is money in pigs, but you have to put in the work."

The Layout

An inspection of the pig section of the farm is a treat for any pig fancier.

Covering roughly 1½ acres are 26 subdivisions on which there are 11 double-unit 18 x 9 pig houses and three single-unit huts. The fencing is almost wholly pig netting, wire fencing being out of favour because of the difficulty of shifting and the scratches on

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the pigs caused by the barbed wire. The shelters are iron roofed, with wooden floors well off the ground, and draught proof. This is brought about partly by sacking hanging down over the entrance to within a foot of the floor and steeped with oil as a prevention against ticks. Inside is a restricted quantity of hay, which keeps the pigs cosy, but is insufficient to hamper the movements of the small pigs. The entire layout is divided by a 15ft. drive allowing ample room to drive the truck between the whey drums. Outstanding amongst the features of this layout is the use of a large quantity of fine shingle from a nearby pit opened specially for the job. Not only is the main drive shingled to a depth of a foot, but almost all the pens are covered for about 20ft. back to provide a warm, dry area for the troughs and to reduce mud to a minimum. A comparison with the few pens not yet shingled shows striking advantages in general cleanliness and preservation of the

pasture. It is needless to remark on the value of this or to say that the remaining pens are listed for shingling at the first opportunity.

However well ordered may be the layout, it is the results that count most. Here is the visual evidence on August 13. Ten of the 20 sows had farrowed, their litters being about six weeks old, and healthier, more thrifty piglets it would be hard to find, with not a runt amongst them. The litter sizes were: 1 of 4 pigs, 3 of 7 each, 2 of 8 each, 1 of 9, 3 of 10 each, total 80 pigs from 10 sows, an average of 8 pigs per litter. All these sows and those yet to farrow are in excellent condition, revealing careful husbandry and controlled feeding. What is even more appealing is that in the 1943-44 period net sales returns, less costs of purchased meal and incidental costs, show a profit of almost £400, and this is on whey feeding from 140 milking cows. Admittedly there are several special circumstances, but obviously this high level of returns invites a searching investigation for the benefit of other pig producers, and in setting out the following account unprepared documentary evidence has been drawn on to the full, principally figures on which income tax returns have been based.

"I have always been keen on pigs," said Mr. Reid, "and my experience of maize growing on the east coast and what I have read and seen of crops suitable for pigs made me feel there was a good thing in pigs if the crops and feeding were taken on in the right way." The co-operation of the farmer was secured and a layout constructed as an early part of the plant. In 1942-43 6 acres of old pasture were set aside for pig crops, comprising sugar beet, maize, kumikumi, swedes, and mangolds.

A few facts about the construction and costs of the layout should be of value. The plant has been built over