

PIG-MEAT PRODUCTION MUST NOT DECLINE

Risk of Losing Good Will on Home Market

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REALISATION of how sadly our pig production has slipped in the last four or five years is brought home by study of the figures for all slaughterings in meat export slaughterhouses, abattoirs, rural slaughterhouses, and estimates of farm-killed pigs for years ending September 30. In 1940-41, the peak year, 1,007,000 pigs (52,600 tons of pig meat) were produced; in 1945-46 only 664,000 pigs (38,400 tons) were slaughtered. This is nearly back to the position in 1930-31 (525,000 pigs: 25,000 tons pig meat). Must we assume that nothing short of another depression will make us take an interest in what is, after all, the most efficient form of meat production.

WE have a large surplus of suitable foods for pigs, and the efficiency of the pig as a converter of such foods into human food is well known. Why, then, has the pig (and the dairy cow to a less extent) fallen back in the race with sheep and fat lamb production?

Part of the answer undoubtedly lies in the relative prices ruling for the animal products sold and the net profit remaining when all production costs have been deducted. That this is so is shown in the case of the moderate-sized farms in many dairying districts where the change from dairying to fat lamb production has taken place. But the fact that dairying and pig raising are more continuous work and have a higher labour demand is a very big part of the answer under our present conditions, when farmers are finding it hard to get value for money spent and feel that it is not worth while to expend the extra effort entailed in securing the extra return which would be obtained by giving more attention to the utilisation of by-products.

From the angle of maintaining a pig industry capable of contributing considerable tonnages annually to the United Kingdom market the problem is, therefore, largely an economic one which must receive the serious consideration of all associated with the industry. It is proposed, therefore, to review our pig industry, particularly with a view to taking stock of future prospects and possibilities and to point to the lines of effort which appear to give more promise for the future prosperity of the industry.

The United Kingdom Market

The United Kingdom market for pig meats—New Zealand's only export outlet—and our position with relation to the normal, and the present, extent

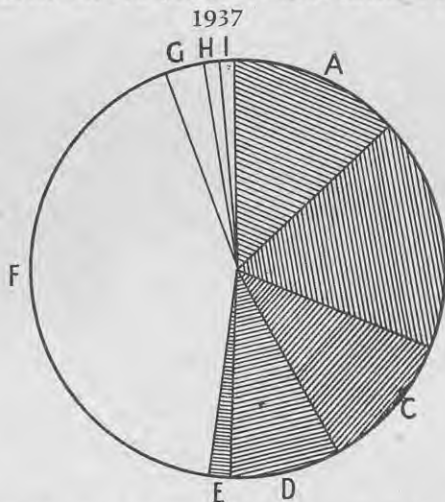
of the market should first be examined. As shown in the accompanying diagram, the total pig meats coming on to the United Kingdom market in 1937 (taken as a fairly normal year) was 963,000 tons, of which New Zealand

supplied 29,600 tons, or less than 3 per cent.

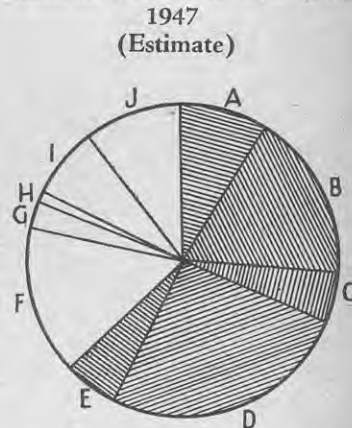
There is a potential market worth more than £100,000,000 to the farmers of the supplying countries. But the diagrams showing estimates for production during the coming year (compiled from data published by the United States of America Department of Agriculture Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations and the estimates of this Department) reveal that not only have the total supplies to the market fallen to little more than half the pre-war level, but that New Zealand's share of the market has remained static because of the reduction of our exports of pig meats to half the pre-war quantity. In a country where by-products ideally suited for pig food are going to waste this should surely give us cause to question our business common sense both nationally and individually.

PIG MEATS ON UNITED KINGDOM MARKET AND NEW ZEALAND PRODUCTION

Bacon: Shaded portion of each circle. Pork: Unshaded portion of each circle.



Total supply of bacon and pork for United Kingdom market in 1937, 963,000 tons. Sources of supply: Bacon—A United Kingdom, B Denmark, C other European countries, D Canada, E U.S.A. and Argentina. Pork—F United Kingdom, G New Zealand, H Australia, I Argentina, U.S.A., Canada and other Empire countries.



Total supply of bacon and pork for United Kingdom market in 1947, 527,000 tons (estimate). Sources of supply: Bacon—A United Kingdom, B Denmark, C other European countries, D Canada, E U.S.A. Pork—F United Kingdom, G New Zealand, H Australia, I Argentina, J U.S.A.

NEW ZEALAND PRODUCTION AND ITS DISPOSAL



Total production 47,000 tons.
L—Local consumption.
E—Export.



Total production 40,000 tons (estimate).
L—Local consumption.
E—Export.