



CARE OF PIGS DURING SUMMER

SUMMER, with harvesting and all its attendant worries, is an extremely busy time for the farmer. It is a time, too, at which pigs require a certain amount of attention and though it may be difficult to give it, neglect is apt to be costly. In this article I. H. Owtram, Extension Officer in Pig Husbandry, discusses various aspects of pig keeping that apply more directly to summer.

BY this time of year the majority of the early-spring litters are rapidly approaching bacon weight and probably are occupying the fattening pens. Care should be taken to see that in feeding them food is not wasted, as pigs of this size will consume an enormous quantity of food if they are fed unlimited amounts. This, however, does not tend to produce a good carcass, and some restriction in feeding should be practised. When feeding skimmed milk—pigs approaching bacon weight can be finished off satisfactorily on this feed alone—the quantity should be kept down to not more than 6 gallons a day; in feeding whey as much as 10 gallons can be given, plus, of course, the 1 lb. of meal per day, which is essential for good results with whey feeding.

It is possible that under these conditions of feeding there may be a surplus of skimmed milk; in fact this is usually what causes wasteful feeding of big pigs in the fattening pens, because it may seem to be the alternative to throwing the surplus away. However, there is no need to do that, as skimmed milk can be preserved simply in the form of curd, either in drums or in tanks. Briefly, this can be done as follows:—

Surplus skimmed milk is placed in a drum or other container and left for the curd to set. When the curd is set

sufficiently for it to come away from the side of the container cleanly when the hand is pressed on the edge of it, it is ready to be broken, which is done simply by stirring. The curd will then sink to the bottom of the container and when this happens all the whey, which is now at the top, is drawn off, with the exception of 3 or 4 in. covering the curd. More skimmed milk can then be added daily and the curd will be found to sink of its own accord without stirring. Surplus whey is removed, a few inches being left to cover and seal the curd.

It is essential that containers used for storing curd should be clean and in addition to being washed thoroughly before use they should be washed out with a 1 per cent. formalin solution (about 1 teaspoon per gallon of water), after which they must be rinsed thoroughly with clean, cold water.

Access to Good Grazing

Pigs that are being finished off in the fattening pens should, if possible, be allowed access to a run on good pasture at least twice a week, even if it is only for half a day. This will assist materially in keeping them in good order. If it is not possible to provide grazing, pigs should be given a little green feed—lucerne is ideal and fresh lawn mowings are also use-

ful—in the pen. It must be remembered that a pig will not consume a very large quantity of green feed at a time and too much must not be given at once or the pen will be fouled. The quantity fed should be such that the pigs clean it up before the next feed. In very hot weather, providing that the housing is really good, it is better to let the pigs out at night than during the day.

Pigs running outside in summer must have shade, but shade without draught. In hot weather there is always a cold draught under big trees, especially when they are planted in a row, and such situations should be avoided. Where pigs cannot be prevented from lying under big trees a windbreak should be arranged under the trees. If there is no natural shade, artificial shade should be provided. There are numerous ways of doing this, but whatever method of supporting the shade is adopted, the actual top should be made from branches of trees, rushes, manuka brush, or some similar material. Old corrugated iron sheets are of little value, as below them it is generally hotter than outside.

Summer Farrowing

Sows farrow their summer litters from the end of November and preparations for this should be made well ahead. A thorough cleaning out of farrowing houses, which should include the use of a good disinfectant, is advisable. This entails scrubbing out the whole house with caustic

HEADING PHOTOGRAPH: Sows feeding on their daily ration of apples.