

CARE OF PIGS DURING SUMMER

soda solution and applying the disinfectant through a spray pump if possible. As it is important that the house should be perfectly dry when the sow goes into it, cleaning should be done well ahead of the time that the house is likely to be wanted.

Every effort should be made to keep the pasture in farrowing paddocks short and leafy, though this is not easy at a time when growth is at its maximum. The easiest way of controlling pasture is to graze a few sheep on it, but ewes and lambs should not be used, owing to the danger of infection either to pigs or lambs with arthritis. Wethers, hoggets, and rams are quite satisfactory. If sheep are not available it may be necessary to run the mower over the pig paddocks.

However, in dealing with summer litters, it is possible to provide pigs with good, young leafy pasture, and every effort should be made to do it.

Farrowing houses should be cool in summer; all ventilation openings should be kept open whenever possible. Unsarked, corrugated-iron roofs will prove particularly unsatisfactory in hot weather and it is best to take them off and put sarking of some sort under them—old sacks nailed to the purlins will do if better material is not available. As an emergency measure a thick layer of old hay can be placed on a roof which is not sarked. This is quite effective, especially if at the same time an opening is made at the back of the house immediately under the roof so that a current of air can flow under the roof and over the pigs.

The question sometimes arises as to the advisability of allowing sows to farrow outside in summer. If really good shelter is available in the form of scrub or pampas grass, satisfactory results can be expected, but in view of the lack of control over the sow in the event of the weather deteriorating,



["New Zealand Farmer" photo.]

The provision of clean drinking water is most important.

it is advisable, if possible, to avoid having a sow farrow in the open.

Adequate Drinking Water

The provision of an ample supply of drinking water for the sow in the farrowing unit is most important, as lack of water to drink is probably a frequent cause of sows having a poor showing of milk; cows will not milk without a good supply of water, and neither will sows. Built-in water troughs of such a size that the sows cannot get into them are by far the most satisfactory receptacles.

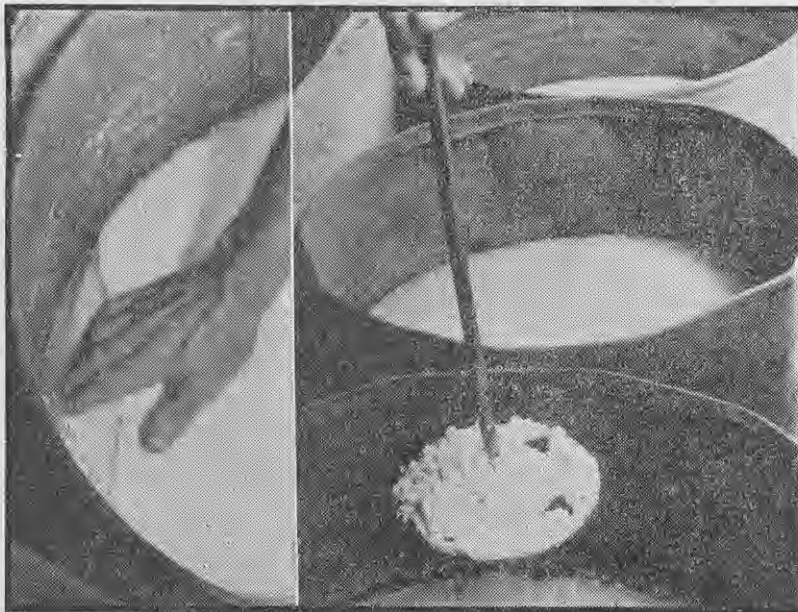
Care is necessary with very young pigs to prevent them getting sunburnt. It is a mistake to think that only white pigs suffer from sunburn; coloured pigs when very young are just as susceptible as white pigs, and it is most necessary in really hot weather to protect young pigs under 3 weeks old from the sun. Where housing conditions are good and adequate shelter is lacking it is advisable to keep sows with very young litters inside during the day and let them have the run of the paddock at night. After piglets are 3 weeks old they can be oiled with waste crank-case oil, but before this age oil is apt to scald them.

Feeding Weaners and Slips

As the supply of skimmed milk and whey is plentiful in summer weaners and slips are frequently given too much liquid food. This results in "ballooning" and not only causes slow growth but frequently permanent damage to the digestive organs. It is absolutely essential that concentrates in the form of meat meal and, if possible, a grain meal, should be fed to pigs of this size at a rate of up to 1lb. per day, and they should have access to good pasture and a water supply.

In summer especially it is necessary to prevent pigs from wallowing in mudholes into which drainage from the piggery or cowshed can run. Mud wallows are one of the most certain avenues for the spreading of disease and any mudholes should be fenced off or, better still, eliminated. A wallow in a clean creek is excellent, but one in the manure sump definitely is not.

Summer is an extremely busy period on the farm, but by careful organisation it should be possible to attend to special seasonal operations such as haymaking and silage making and yet give pigs adequate attention.



["New Zealand Farmer" photo.]

Preserving skimmed-milk curd. Left—Curd at the right consistency for breaking. Right—Preserved curd.