

North Island Porker and Baconer Competitions, 1950

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IN the 1950 porker and baconer competitions conducted at Westfield, Patea, and Tomoana freezing works by W. and R. Fletcher (N.Z.) Ltd. 5640 pigs were entered. The number, while large for a competition, is only about 4 per cent. of the total pigs passing through the three works and probably represents the efforts of the keener pig producers to whom the competitions offer a measure of their progress in the improvement of carcass quality. The general quality of the entries therefore may be regarded as being slightly above the average for the Dominion, and a study of the carcass-quality characters in these pigs gives an indication of the directions in which effort is required to produce better-quality carcasses.

THE judging standards adopted for the competitions are designed to encourage the production of the type of carcass most suited to market requirements. For that reason and because information gained from the competitions may determine their effectiveness, judging standards require frequent revision. Since the 1946 competition, with which the latest results will be compared, an appraisal of belly thickness has been included in the judging system and the loin fat standards for baconers have been relaxed by 1/16in.

In this analysis comparison is made wherever possible with the results of the 1946 competition, when new pig-carcass judging standards were introduced. An analysis of the results of that competition by D. M. Smith, Research Officer, Department of Agriculture Animal Research Station, Ruakura, appeared in the February, 1947, issue of the "Journal".

Compared with the 1946 competition, when 3480 pigs were entered, there has been a tendency for carcass-quality characters to suffer. Both porkers and baconers are shorter at the same weights and carry too much fat at all weights above 90lb. Balance of side has also suffered. To secure the improvement required attention must be given to selection of breeding stock for carcass quality and to feeding to avoid the excessive deposition of fat.

Length and Depth of Carcass

The points allotted for length and depth of carcass were: Body length, 20 points; balance of side, 5 points.

Porkers

A comparison of the average length and depth of porker carcasses in 1946 and 1950 can be made from Tables 1 and 2.

The carcasses are on the average 1½ to 2in. short on present standards,



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Mr. J. B. Swain congratulates the winner of the special award he announced at the Westfield works field day on behalf of the Worshipful Company of Butchers of the City of London. It was a medal for the grand champion team of porkers; a similar award was made to the grand champion baconer team winner.

scoring only a little over half the possible points. In each range they are shorter than the 1946 pigs. The overall average figure indicates a significant decrease in length in each weight range compared with 1946 results and suggests that much more attention should be given to this character.

In depth of side lightweight porkers are below the optimum measurement, and though this still gives a well-balanced pig, it is not as important in porkers as in the higher weight ranges where, as will be seen, this factor becomes progressively worse. The 1950 results revealed that, compared with those of 1946, balance of side has deteriorated in heavier porkers.

Baconers

There has been a decrease in length in baconers which persists throughout all weight ranges. The tendency to decrease in length in 1950 is apparent from Tables 3 and 4, although the ranges taken are not the same in the two years. Baconer carcasses are, on the average, 2 to 2½in. short of the length necessary to score maximum points.

No figures are available from 1946 to compare with 1950 results on the depth of side of baconers. With optimum depth 40 per cent. of the actual body length in each weight range, the balance of side becomes progressively worse with increase in weight of carcass. Actual depth is not seriously excessive if only body length were up to the optimum standard.

Backfat

The points allotted for backfat were: Shoulder: 10 points; loin: baconers, 20 points; porkers, 15 points.

TABLE 1—AVERAGE FIGURES FOR PORKERS WITHIN CERTAIN WEIGHT RANGES, 1946

Weight range (lb.)	61-65	86-90	116-120
Average length (in.)	24.9	26.83	29.05
Optimum length (in.)	26.37	28.25	30.5
Average depth (in.)	10.3	11.1	12.4
Optimum depth (in.)	10.1	10.8	11.6
Average ratio of depth to length	41.4%	41.4%	42.7%
Optimum ratio of depth to length	40%	40%	40%

TABLE 2—AVERAGE FIGURES FOR PORKERS WITHIN CERTAIN WEIGHT RANGES, 1950

Weight range (lb.)	61-65	86-90	116-120
Number of pigs	65	369	74
Average length (in.)	24.28	26.78	28.48
Optimum length (in.)	26.37	28.25	30.50
Average depth (in.)	9.93	11.14	12.41
Optimum depth (in.)	10.1	10.8	11.6
Average ratio of depth to length	40.9%	41.6%	43.6%
Optimum ratio of depth to length	40%	40%	40%

TABLE 3—BODY LENGTH, BACONERS, 1946

Weight range (lb.)	121-125	146-150	166-170
Average length (in.)	28.9	30.09	31.13
Optimum length (in.)	31.25	32.5	33.5

TABLE 4—AVERAGE RESULTS, BACONERS, 1950

Weight range (lb.)	121-130	131-140	141-150	151-160	161-170
Number of pigs	398	565	765	612	377
Average length (in.)	28.8	29.45	29.99	30.62	30.94
Optimum length (in.)	30.70	31.20	31.7	32.20	32.70
Average depth (in.)	12.42	12.7	12.97	13.35	13.70
Optimum depth (in.)	12.30	12.50	12.70	12.90	13.10
Average ratio of depth to length	43.1%	43.1%	43.2%	43.6%	44.3%
Optimum ratio of depth to length	40%	40%	40%	40%	40%