

. . . PORKER AND BACONER COMPETITIONS

the body conformation shows up fairly well in the live pig, it should be possible to make some further progress by selection on the hoof.

Marketing Points

Possible marketing points were: Porkers, 10; baconers, 5.

A good, clean, bright skin without pigmentation, retained hair, seedy cut, bruises, scratches, or any other blemish is required. With the increasing use of Large White boars some improvement is being shown, but there is still evidence, such as bruising, of careless handling.

As after singeing baconers have an improved and more uniform appearance, certain defects such as pigmentation are of less moment in baconers, and for that reason fewer marketing points are allotted for baconers than for porkers.

Summary of Competition Results

The competitions, and comparisons between 1950 and 1946 results, may be summarised as follows:—

Length: In proportion to weight both porker and baconer carcasses were shorter.

Balance of side: This character becomes progressively poorer with increase in weight. Bacon pigs require improvement in this respect.

Backfat: Both shoulder and loin fat have increased in all pigs. However, the loin fat of the lighter porkers is still below the optimum; baconers have become more excessively fat in all weight ranges. The increase in shoulder fat becomes important in

carcasses of over 90lb. The lack of any premium for quality undoubtedly has been responsible for the trend toward the production of fatter, shorter pigs at all weights than were entered in the 1946 competitions.

Points for belly thickness: Results show that a fair allocation of points for this character has not yet been achieved; no proper allowance is being made for weight and degree of fatness of carcasses. Added to this, the fact that thickness of belly is influenced much more by fasting and resting immediately before slaughter than by either breeding or feeding and that the points awarded in a competition are no guide to a breeder in selection throws considerable doubt on the value of retaining judging of belly thickness in competition work.

Decline in Quality

The increase in the number of carcasses in the competition from 3480 in 1946 to 5640 in 1950 would indicate that selection has not been as critical as in 1946 and this, in addition to the lack of incentive to produce high-quality carcasses, has possibly contributed to the decline in general quality.

Two major factors contribute to carcass quality: Breeding and feeding. Unsatisfactory length and balance of side can only be overcome by applying thoroughly more careful methods of selection and breeding. The average New Zealand pig is so far below the optimum in length that it should be possible to make considerable pro-

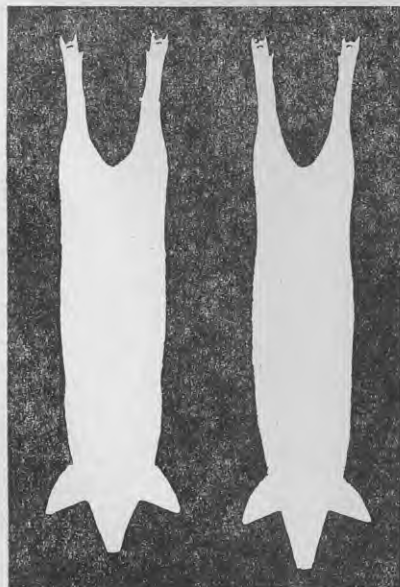
gress with the aid of carcass-quality information obtainable from the carcass-quality scheme. Ultimately, a testing-station system will be required to assist breeders in their selection but, meantime, the information obtainable from the carcass-quality scheme and competitions if used can assist the industry toward the production of better-type pigs.

Producers of the better-type pigs in competitions today are largely those who have benefited from information obtained on the performance of certain strains, and until the majority of pig raisers have appreciated this fact and followed the example of those producers it would be premature for breeders to undertake the costly methods of improvement inherent in a testing-station system.

Controlled Feeding

Backfat thickness can be controlled by careful feeding, the essential points being to feed pigs well so that they grow at their maximum rate up to 16 weeks of age and then to restrict the feed gradually so that in the fattening stage the deposition of fat is controlled to suit the particular type of pig and the ideal finish at the weight desired is obtained. The ideal weights for porkers are 70 to 90lb. dressed weight, and up to this stage it is difficult to over-fatten the pig, as the rate of growth of muscle is relatively greater up to this stage. Baconers should be finished at about 145 to 150lb. dressed weight, and some restriction in feeding is necessary to get ideal finish on these pigs unless they

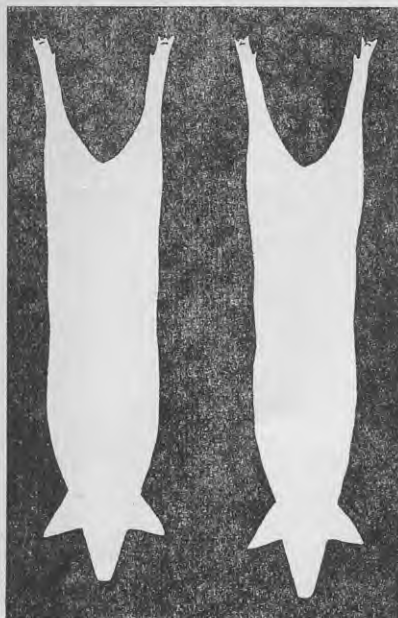
121-130lb.



As it is
28.8in.

As it should be
30.7in.

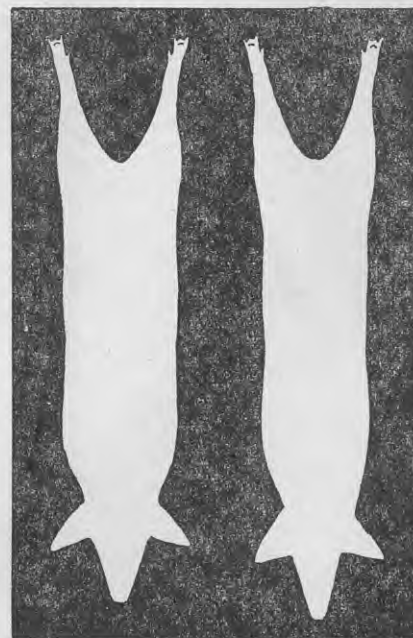
141-150lb.



As it is
30.0in.

As it should be
31.7in.

161-170lb.



As it is
30.9in.

As it should be
32.7in.

Diagram showing the extent to which New Zealand pigs fall short of the ideal length for weight.