

The Iowa Hog

Iowa, famous for its corn, bacon, and ham, raises twice as many hogs as the next ranking state. She produces one-fifth of all the nation's swine and one-fourth of the federally inspected slaughter. In 1943 she had 20,900,000 head; in 1951 she reached a record high of 21,304,000. Of every dollar coming to the farm, hogs return between 40 and 45 cents. More than 50 per cent of Iowa's golden corn is marketed through her millions of hogs.

Iowa swine producers are always striving for more efficient production. Not so many years ago it took eight months to get hogs to a market weight. Now it is attained in six months or less. In 1924, the first year any official record of the number of pigs weaned per litter was made available, Iowa swine producers weaned an average of 5.10 per litter. In 1950 the average saved was 6.64 or an increase of over 30 per cent.

Ten years ago the Master Swine Producers Project was started, which each year gives awards to 25 outstanding swine producers, based upon their efficiency in the number of pigs marketed per sow and the weight attained. In 1951 the high 25 marketed an average of 9.27 pigs per litter far-

rowed, with an average weight of 221 pounds at 187 days of age.

The plan of hog production in Iowa varies with the location, tenancy, and type of farming. The heaviest population is in Benton, Cedar, Clinton, Iowa, Jackson, Johnson, Jones, Muscatine, Washington, and Scott counties. Washington County led all Iowa counties on January 1, 1952. In northwest Iowa, Plymouth and Sioux are two of the heaviest producing counties, while Appanoose and the counties in the central southern tier are the low producing counties.

Spring farrowings (December 1 to June 1) comprise about 70 per cent of all litters farrowed. The eastern part of the state has about 60 per cent spring farrowings and 40 per cent fall, whereas in northwest Iowa the farrowings are about 80 per cent spring and 20 per cent fall. During the past few years there has been a slight tendency to an increase in fall farrowings, since swine producers realize that if they are to avoid the gluts which come in November, December, and January, they must spread the farrowings more evenly throughout the year. The relationship between spring and fall farrowings may shift quite markedly one year with another, depending upon the corn supplies, although the greatest cuts in production usually come in the spring farrowings.

Iowa not only feeds her own hogs but she also ships in many feeder pigs from surrounding states.

Many feeders of hogs buy feeding pigs, particularly in the grain producing areas where hog production is light. Cattle feeders usually buy feeding pigs to follow their cattle. This demand for feeder pigs has given rise to the establishment of so-called "pig hatcheries" or "piggeries." These are in their infancy and it remains for the future to determine whether they can succeed. If they can be successful, the future may see considerable of Iowa's pig crop produced in this manner. They now raise a large number of pigs and sell them to prospective buyers at eight to ten weeks of age. The going price for such pigs ranges from \$14 to \$16 per head. Another basis for determining the price is to charge one-third of the amount a 250-pound hog brings in the market.

The future expansion and the trend of Iowa's hog production will depend upon the grain supply. If Iowa's grain supply can be increased, as it probably will, Iowa may have a capacity of 25 to 30 million head of hogs raised annually. It is difficult to think of Iowa other than as a great corn and hog state. That's where the tall corn grows.

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