

# EFFICIENT FARMING

**SOFT PORK A MENACE—WANT BACON, NOT LARD.**

Somewhat of a new difficulty in bacon manufacture—or rather, a very old difficulty in accentuated form—is pressing upon Canadian packers. This is the growing proportion of hogs which, when slaughtered, yield what is known as "soft pork." This consists of softness in the fat and a general flabbiness which makes it impossible to prepare a "best" Wiltshire side from these hogs. Such sides can only be classed as seconds or thirds in the trade, while in the worst cases they are almost valueless. As stated, an undue number of Canadian hogs this year are cutting out soft.

This is all the more remarkable in Canada because it is the one aspect of scientific bacon production which is generally considered to have been most thoroughly studied. "Aside from soft pork investigations very little experimental work has been carried on with the definite aim of ascertaining the effect of feeds and feeding on the quality of the ultimate product," Mr. G. B. Rothwell, Dominion Husbandman, wrote in a recent report. The Ontario Agricultural College, Guelph, and the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa, many years ago did extensive experimental work on this subject but apparently its practical application has been lost.

"One of the greatest defects in quality with which Canadian packers have to contend is a tendency of some of the sides to turn soft during the process of curing," to quote Professor. Geo. E. Day, who wrote about 1906. "Softness has nothing to do with fatness; in fact, a thin side is more apt to develop softness than a fat one. In a soft side the fat is soft and spongy and sometimes even the lean is affected. . . . The percentage of soft sides is sometimes very high, even as high as 15 per cent. It will be readily understood that such a condition represents an enormous shrinkage in value; and this loss is bound to be reflected in the prices paid the farmer for his hogs. This is not a matter, therefore, which affects merely the packer. It affects the bacon industry as a whole and the farmer, sooner or later, must shoulder the loss."

Professor Day enumerates as chief causes of softness in bacon: Exclusive meal feeding, corn, beans, lack of exercise, untidiness, lack of finish, holding back and lack of maturity.

For the comfort of our producers and packers alike it may be added that this is a problem in other countries also. In the current issue of "The Journal of the Minister of Agriculture" in Great Britain there are the results of a special investigation into soft bacon. The writer states: "The lack of uniformity in bacon pigs is one of the chief handicaps of the curer. Soft fat is detrimental to bacon and hams not only on account of wastage when cooking but also because such fat develops rancidity more rapidly than firm fat. Moreover the appearance of the bacon leaves much to be desired. Unfortunately there is no certain test by which the curer can forecast the nature of the bacon-fat from an inspection of the freshly killed carcass. Consequently it is not possible to pick out the defective sides and hams until curing has been completed. The curer's aim is to trace

the cause of soft bacon in order to abolish it."

Perhaps a misunderstanding of the bacon hog campaign is partly responsible for the present situation. Underfeeding resulting in lack of finish and holding back hogs tending to run to fat are both prolific causes of soft pork. The attempt of many farmers to turn thick hog conformation into the "select bacon" grade may have this effect. This emphasizes the fact that what must first be obtained is bacon conformation, by adopting the right breeds which then will carry the finish to produce "best" Wiltshires without excessive fat. Breeding and feeding go together and the principle of feeding should now receive special attention.

Pork and lard are two of the largest items in the food supply of the American people, according to a recent statement from Washington. The average annual per capita consumption for the last five years was 67.3 pounds of pork and 12.5 pounds of lard, as compared with 60.9 pounds of beef. In several recent years the consumption of pork alone has exceeded that of all other meats combined. Those who fail to understand why Canadian farmers should raise hogs when United States farmers have had such good success with the lard type will find a partial answer to their problem in the above quotation from the Washington report, says the "Family Herald," Montreal.

The American farmer has a home market at his door for his lard and pork. The Canadian farmer has not and his hogs, if produced in any large number, must be exported, as the home market will only consume a limited quantity.

"We cannot export hogs to the United States market as it is already supplied with hogs grown in that country. Last year the United States exported many millions of pounds of pork and pork products. Our only alternative outlet is the British market, and that calls for bacon. Not just 'any old bacon' but bacon of fine quality, put up as 'Wiltshire sides,' bacon up to the standard the British consumer has been accustomed to from Denmark and Ireland. Unless our bacon is up to that standard it will not command the top price. Whether our American cousins will continue to prefer pork and lard to bacon cannot be foretold nor does it matter to the Canadian hog raiser, since the producer there can be trusted to shape his product to the demands of his home market. What we need to do, is to shape our product for the market to which we have to cater—in this instance the British bacon market."

Learn the amount of lubrication needed. Too little means friction and worn parts. Too much means a gumming and a clogging of parts, and the fouling of spark plugs. Enough is enough. Know how much that is.

Take out insurance coverage as a matter of business policy. The wise man does not run any risks from which he can protect himself. A talk with a reliable insurance agent will prove illuminating, and the relatively small amount spent for insurance protection, is worth while in satisfaction, peace of mind, and possibly in the settlement of some unexpected claim.

## Assisting Nature.

By F. H. Present, Department of Horticulture, Ontario Agricultural College

What has been responsible for the remarkable interest which has developed in the past few years in landscape gardening and its attendant features? Is it a deferred awakening amongst our Ontario people of a love for the beautiful in Nature? We can hardly attribute it wholly to this because such an appreciation of Nature has always been apparent even though not openly expressed. From some unknown source a stimulus has arisen or it may be just the natural development, on a wide scale, of the expression of such sentiments.

To-day, in all of our cities, practically all of our towns and many of the smaller communities, local organizations have been formed for the purpose of furthering the idea of the beautification of public and private grounds. These are usually branches of the Ontario Horticultural Society but in many cases the local branch of the Women's Institute has taken up this work. In the larger cities, or many of them, the Parks Commissions are doing much to beautify civic property. However, with all of this development of interest, the rural communities are most backward in taking it up. It is true that many community parks have been and are being established but these are comparatively few. The movement cannot be said to be effective in the country until it brings about such an interest that every farm owner is going to do something to his own home grounds and surroundings that will make him proud of them rather than ashamed of their ugliness. For it is a regrettable fact that our farm homes throughout too many communities are the most unattractive and uninteresting parts of the landscape.

For this condition of affairs there is no real excuse as the hundreds of attractive and splendid farm home grounds found scattered all over the

## The Sunday School Lesson

AUGUST 5.

Lesson VI: Luke 8: 1-3; Matthew 27: 55, 56; John 19: 25; 20: 1-18. Golden Text—Our soul waiteth for the Lord; He is our help and our shield—Psalm 33: 20.

LESSON SETTING—Our lesson to-day emphasizes the part that women played in the life and ministry of Jesus.

I. HELPING THE WORK OF JESUS, LUKE 8: 1-3.

V. 1. It came to pass afterward. The preceding event in the Gospel of Luke is the story of the penitent woman who came into the house of Simon the Pharisee. Jesus pardoned her and sent her away in peace, while he rebuked Simon. We are not to identify this woman with the Mary of our lesson. Went throughout every city and village; covering completely a certain region. *Shewing the glad tidings.* The word "gospel" means good news. Jesus spoke words of hope and love to those hearts where hope was absent and love was needed. *The twelve were with him;* sharing the burden of Christ's work and partaking in its joy.

V. 2. *Certain women.* There was a band of women helpers as well as the disciple band. The religious teachers of the day treated women with contempt in their teaching. "No woman was allowed to come closer to a man than four cubits' distance." Which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities. Jesus had blessed them in soul and body. *Mary . . . Magdalene;* from the town of Magdala. *Out of whom went seven devils.* Whether the state of Mary had been that of spiritual malady or moral degradation, it was extreme in its nature, as is indicated by the word "seven," which is the word of completeness, whether good or evil.

V. 3. *Joanna.* She was with Mary at the sepulchre. *Chusa;* Herod's steward or chamberlain. Some suppose him to be the nobleman whose son Jesus healed at Cana. *Suzanna.* Nothing more is known of her. *Ministered unto him.* In their deep gratitude they sought to make some return. They helped Jesus in the way they were able, by using their possessions to procure necessities of life for Jesus and his company.

ment. Proximity in the narrative may have led to that inference. The artists in their paintings have given a pathetic touch of beauty to the thought of Mary. And yet some of the great scholars of the early church, like Origen, denied it, while Ambrose, Augustine, and Jerome were doubtful of it. Again, the Gospel record that out of her our Lord cast seven devils, has been misunderstood. Dr. Adeney says, very clearly and emphatically, "There is no reason to suppose that the brain and nerve symptoms associated with the idea of possession were accompanied with a corrupt moral character. The popular idea of the 'Magdalene' is a baseless libel on Mary of the Watch-tower."

If there has been misunderstanding, there have been magnificent compensations. Some of the most notable churches of Christendom have been named after her—the Russian Church of St. Mary the Magdalene, the Mount of Olives, and the Magdalene, one of the well known churches in Paris, while Oxford has its Magdalene College. Moreover, in the name of St. Mary Magdalene, the church has done much beautiful, merciful work in the redemption of sinning sisters.

Even though there may have been a mistake as to identity, and she was not necessarily a specially sinful woman, she was an afflicted woman and whatever her delinquency, she was grateful for it, and showed it in practical ways. She was one of the poor, menial women, who were responsive to the "good tidings of the kingdom of God," and with a glad, grateful heart, she found ways of helping the Lord in the founding of the kingdom. It is no discredit to the Church that there are so many women in its membership and service; their sensitive souls have responded intuitively to the high calls of Christ. He has done much for womanhood, and they know it.

## The Dairy

**Why Hens Become Broody and How to Break Them**

A rest period follows after a hen has laid a series of eggs and is usually accompanied by broodiness. This means that the succeeding egg series must remain dormant for two or three months until the hen has hatched a brood, reared it and gained the vigor for further development. This will probably bring her into the molting season, in which case there will be little chance of egg production for 100 days. If the hen is interrupted in the beginning of broodiness, however, the whole dormant period is changed to one of activity.

The broody hen, if allowed to remain on the nest, soon becomes thin and emaciated. She eats and drinks very little and thus draws heavily on her internal storehouse for sustenance. Egg production results from a secondary circulation—a circulation that can progress no faster than it can be supplied from the ordinary daily wear and grind on the body tissue. If the circulation is insufficient to meet the daily need, or just equal to it, there is no surplus for egg development.

Hence, it is a matter of dollars and cents that this self-imposed starvation, as a result of the broodiness, should be intercepted at the earliest possible moment. It is much easier to discourage a hen from broodiness the first or second day than it is to break her after she has been so for several days; her appetite is still active and the habit of sitting is not so confirmed. During the spring and early summer months the nests should be examined every evening for hens that show a tendency toward broodiness; those that show signs by clucking, ruffling of feathers and general defensive attitude should be removed. There are many ways of breaking up broodiness, but subjecting the hen to some form of cruelty or privation, as was the old idea, may result in further loss in egg production. A sit-drink freely as well as to exercise. This will revive her appetite, and if this is accomplished in the first few days of broodiness, the egg organs will resume activity.

One of the most efficient ways of breaking up broodiness, where large flocks are kept in long laying houses, is to partition off the end which has plenty of sunshine and remove all nests and other fixtures that might offer secluded spots. Put the hens in this pen, remembering to keep plenty of feed and water before them and, where possible, to encourage exercise. If they still show tendency to construct nests, put a couple of lively cockerels in the pen. In a warm climate, or when weather is mild the same results can be obtained in an outdoor yard constructed at the side of a building to afford protection in case of storm.

If there are only a few fowls, a coop with a slatted bottom raised about six inches from the ground will serve. The hens are not able to squat comfortably and the air currents passing under them is not just what they like; they soon become disgusted and are glad to join the flock when released. Water and food should be kept before the hens in the slatted coop.

Plan your kitchen and home arrangement so that you do not do your housework in a workhouse.

## Variegated Alfalfa

Common alfalfa has a violet flower which differs in degree of density from a very pale to a comparatively deep color. The flowers of the Variegated Alfalfa, however, include shades of blue, green and yellow as well as violet and also blends of these colors with each other. The July blossoms, in a series of thirty plots of different varieties and strains of alfalfa being tested in the Field Husbandry Department at the Ontario Agricultural College, show a variegation of from one to eighty-five per cent. In past experiments at the College, the common alfalfa of Ontario has proven tender and the variegated hardy. This variegated alfalfa is being grown successfully in a number of counties in Ontario, such as Welland, Lincoln, Peel and Halton. In Peel County an Alfalfa Club has been organized and this season over one hundred fields of variegated alfalfa have been entered and inspected for seed production. Several carloads of hardy alfalfa seed was shipped from Peel County in 1922 in addition to a considerable amount which was sown locally—Ontario Agricultural College.

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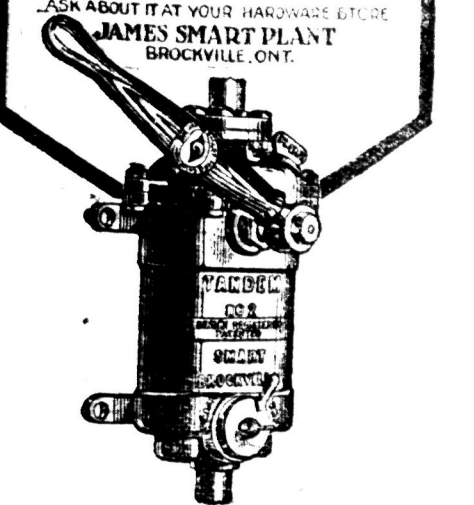
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