

Diseases of Pigs

Tuberculosis.—This is one of the chief causes of condemnation of pigs on inspection. In the absence of any cheap and effective method of pasteurization of milk by-products, particularly skim-milk, the incidence of the disease in pigs will remain high unless the disease in dairy herds is reduced. The pig is so susceptible to the disease that the skim-milk forming the major part of the diet is an excellent medium for transmitting the disease from cow to pig.

Suipestifer Infection.—This disease continues to cause losses in several districts. There is evidence that the disease may be introduced on to clean properties through purchased animals.

Sarcoptic Mange.—One outbreak of this disease was reported and was successfully treated.

Necrotic Ulceration of the Skin.—This disease is still frequently seen on farms, and although a successful line of treatment has been recommended it is surprising that owners continue to find difficulty in dealing with the disease on proper lines.

Swine Husbandry

The report of Mr. H. M. Peirson, Superintendent of the Pig Industry, is submitted herewith :—

Production of Pig-meat.—March, 1946, marks the end of a year of adjustments and a return to pre-war normal practice.

The termination of our contracts with the United States Joint Purchasing Board in December, 1945, and the lifting of the restrictions on the sale of pork for local consumption has brought about a change in the kind of pig-meat produced, with the result that there has been a definite swing toward the production of pigs within the pork weight range of 60/120 lb.

While drought conditions may have been responsible in some measure for the increased killings of light-weight pigs, the general outlook is for pork, as this is the class of production best suited to the conditions and feed-supply of the average pig-producer.

During the war emphasis was placed on the production of bacon pigs, and in order to encourage this weights and schedules were lifted to include pigs up to 200 lb. The response by farmers to the demand made upon them for heavy-weight pigs was extremely gratifying. Although normally the production of pork carcasses is more favoured, this effort on the part of the producer to increase weights was continuous throughout the war years.

Much has been said about the drop in production, but this is more apparent than real when consideration is given to the difficulties the producer has been working under. By numbers pigs have reduced considerably, but on the tonnage basis of pig-meats produced, because of the increased average weight of carcasses as a whole, production has been maintained at a satisfactory level during the past four seasons.

For the twelve months ending 31st March slaughterings have improved by just over 56,000 carcasses and represent an increase by weight of 1,316 tons in excess of the previous year.

The production up to 31st March for the last six years is set out in the table below :—

Year.	Breeding-sows.	Total Pigs slaughtered.	As Pork.	As Bacon.	As Choppers.	Average Weight.	Total Weight of Pig-meat.
						lb.	Tons.
1941	100,378	986,985	433,068	505,478	48,439	118	52,170
1942	91,338	1,002,211	553,818	414,017	34,376	112	50,280
1943	81,882	839,882	392,996	410,561	36,325	120	45,191
1944	77,300	726,282	281,153	421,947	23,182	128	41,375
1945	77,202	678,834	178,300	479,759	20,775	138	41,874
1946	80,000*	734,937†	262,300	449,815	22,822	132	43,190

* Estimate only.

† This figure includes farm killed pigs.

A reduction in the number of breeding-sows was to be expected with the change over from pork to bacon production, but with the reversion in favour of lighter average weights there will be a tendency toward an increase in the sow population. A move in this direction is already taking place on many farms, and the indications are that there will be an improvement in not only the number of sows carried, but the number of pigs produced per sow. Some time must elapse, however, before marked improvement is evident.