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Farm Review and Forecast

Here's How To Produce Top-Grade Country Hams

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The Haywood County Agricultural Advisory Committee has selected the project of producing top-quality hams as one which shows excellent promise toward the increase of the county's farm income. To assist in this project, The Mountaineer is reprinting information from the pamphlet "Curing Hams Country Style," prepared by John A. Christian, meat specialist from N. C. State College. Mr. Christian was in Haywood County recently to conduct two meat-cutting demonstrations and to discuss the production of better country hams. This is the first of two articles on the subject.)

By JOHN A. CHRISTIAN

High quality country style hams are always in good demand. Although Tar Heel farmers produce a lot of high quality cured meats, we still lose a million dollars a year through hams that spoil, are off-flavored or are damaged by insects. The information in this circular is planned to help farmers reduce this loss and do a better job of producing high-quality hams.

Select a Meat Type Hog

It does not take any more feed to produce the right kind of hog. By the right kind of hog is meant that it should have the proper amounts of fat and lean. As a rule of thumb, the carcass should not have over 1 1/2 inches of fat on the average. The ideal weight ham is about 20 pounds. These will come from hogs weighing 225 to 250 pounds.

Consumers want a large amount of lean and a minimum amount of fat. Thus, hams from over-fat hogs or hams that are too heavy do not sell very readily. Some fat is necessary, however, for proper ageing. So avoid medium type hogs that have too little fat.

Chill Carcass Before Cutting

Where carcasses are handled completely on the farm, it is better to kill the hog about 2 or 3 p.m. and allow the carcass to hang overnight before cutting. It takes about 16 hours to chill a 150-pound carcass to 40° F. internal temperature. If the body heat isn't given enough time to escape, the hams probably will sour. Splitting the carcass down the center of the back helps get quicker chilling. Do not let it freeze though.

Bacteria are present in all fresh pork and quick chilling of the carcass is of utmost importance. The best temperatures for chilling carcasses are from 30° to 35°. If they are to be chilled on the farm, check the weather forecast and kill when the weatherman says light frost tonight.

Many farmers kill hogs early in the morning and have the carcasses cut and in cure before noon. This produces a ragged appearing product and may cause souring.

You may want to use the services offered by locker plants and food processing centers to chill the carcasses. If so, deliver the carcasses as soon after slaughter as possible so as to keep bacteria down. When the carcass is left at a high temperature for a considerable period of time before being refrigerated, spoilage may already be started before it is chilled. You may need to use chilling and slaughtering facilities during warm weather.

Sanitary conditions can affect the flavor of fresh or cured meats. Thus, it's very important to have your equipment and facilities clean at all times to get the most satisfactory cured product.

Use The Long Cut

The long cut ham is more desirable for a good country cured ham. It will not dry out as fast as the short cut or packer style ham. Also long cut hams do not crack as much during ageing, and are more resistant to insect damage.

Get a Uniform Cure

There are three primary methods used in curing meat in North Carolina. They are: shelf cure, pack cure and wrap cure. All will

4-H Work Trains Youth To Accept Responsibilities

"How old must a boy or girl be before they will accept responsibilities willingly?" asks Polk Assistant County Agent Robert D. Flake. "What influences their actions and interests?" he adds.

Flake says these two questions are constantly in the minds of both parents and leaders of youth organizations. But most important than any specific age, he feels that the beginning is what is so important in later efforts. There leaders can guide them into constructive activities. Flake believes this can be done by taking a real interest in their problems.

To prove the point that boys and girls do accept responsibilities, despite many criticisms to the contrary, Flake cites the case of Leon Stott, 14-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. R. C. Stott of Landrum, Route 1.

Leon is a member of the Green Creek Senior 4-H club. Flake says that through his 4-H projects, Leon has supported himself for two years. Mrs. Stott told Flake that Leon had paid for all of his school lunches, bought his clothing, paid his life insurance premiums, and had plenty of spending money. The cash all came from his 4-H projects. These have mainly been layers and dairy cows and calves. He's been outstanding in this latter activity, says Flake, and Leon has just recently returned from a week's visit to Chicago, a trip which he won in the 4-H Dairy Showmanship and Fitting class at the Piedmont Interstate Fair.

give satisfactory results, but shelf cure gives a more even cure.

Hams may be sugar cured or straight salt cured, depending on which you like better. The mix for sugar cure is 8 lbs. of salt, 3 lbs. of sugar and 3 ounces of salt peter. Salt is the primary curing ingredient. Sugar gives a more desirable color and helps keep the ham from becoming quite so hard during the ageing period. The type sugar used does not make much difference, but granulated, light brown, or white is usually used. Salt peter gives the bright red color to the lean and helps produce that good red gravy that we like with good country cured ham.

Apply the curing mix to the meat as soon as it's cut. Use 1 1/4 ounces of curing mix per pound of ham, or about 8 lbs. for each 100 lbs. Weigh the hams and use the exact amount for curing each lot.

Rub the curing mix on the ham at three different times. This will prevent any red spots and give more even salt penetration. Put the first application on when the meat is cut and ready to go on the shelf. The second application should be applied on the third day and the third application on the 10th day, or seven days after the second application. You need not rub the ham a lot—just enough to cover it good. Too much rough handling will break the surface membranes and cause the hams to get hard and dry during ageing. Be sure to pack some curing mix in the shank end at each application.

Ideal temperatures for shelf curing hams are from 36° to 40° F. When temperatures go above 50° F. for any length of time there is some chance of spoilage. There's little chance of spoilage due to temperature as long as the internal temperature stays below 45° F.

Follow the curing schedule closely to get the correct amount of salt in the hams. One of the main objections to farm cured meats is that they are too salty. This can be prevented by following this curing schedule:

15 lb. ham stays in cure 2 days per lb., or 30 days.

20 lb. ham stays in cure 1 1/4 days/milk.

WOULD-BE SUICIDE HAULED BACK TO SAFETY



WITH ONE OF HER SHOES flying, an 18-year-old girl is hauled back from the edge of a high cliff in Lima, Peru, after she had threatened to jump. The girl, whose name was withheld, had perched herself on the cliff overlooking a beach for more than an hour. She resisted all appeals of police until she was finally roped like a steer. She said she had been disappointed in love. (International Soundphoto)

per lb., or 35 days.  
25 lb. ham stays in cure 1 1/2 days per lb., or 38-40 days.

For each day the temperature averages below freezing during the curing process add an extra day to the curing schedule. Be sure to mark your calendar at start of cure for date of each application and when meat is to come out of cure. If hams are not going to be smoked, just brush off excess cure at the end of the curing schedule. They may be washed, but this is not necessary. Do not soak the hams, as this may get excess water on surface of ham.

If hams are to be smoked, remove them from cure and soak in cold water for 1 1/2 to 2 hours to remove surface salt. This prevents salt streaking and gives the cured product a better appearance. Hang the hams to dry after soaking. Heat during smoking will remove some of the moisture they picked up while soaking.

Let The Salt Equalize

When hams are taken out of cure at the end of the curing schedule most of the salt is still near the surface. Very little has gotten near the bone or skin side of the ham. The salt goes through the meat very slowly—taking about 20 to 30 days longer to equalize, or spread evenly through all parts of the ham.

Hams lose the most weight during the curing period and during the first month of cure. As the salt goes into the ham and equalizes, moisture comes out. Altogether, they will lose 25 to 30% of their original weight while curing and ageing.

Keep all cured meats under refrigeration, natural or otherwise, for 20 to 30 days after they come out of cure. Hams should not be smoked or exposed to high temperatures until the salt is equalized. This is one of the main causes of spoilage of country cured hams, especially those being smoked. Farm cured hams should be put in cure during November, December and January. This way the salt is equalized when warm weather arrives. This is one reason why November and December hams are better flavored and keep better than hams cured in February and March.

Salt mix must be dissolved in the water from the ham before it will penetrate. The salt draws the water from the ham as it penetrates. Wash from the ham is greatest during the first few days of the curing period. That's why it's important to apply the curing mix at intervals instead of putting all of it on at one application.

Since 1925, milk used for butter has decreased 12 billion pounds. But there has been an 18 billion pound increase in the use of fluid

Here's How To Preserve Your Christmas Poinsettia

By M. E. GARDNER

State College Answers Timely Farm Questions

QUESTION: How much land can a farmer put under a Conservation Reserve tree planting contract? Can he put all his land in trees?

ANSWER: First of all, he cannot sign up for less than two acres except in certain counties where the local ASC Committee has received approval to lower this to one acre. As far as a maximum is concerned, no producer can earn more than \$5,000 per year in annual rental payments. Therefore, at the regular \$10 annual payment rate, a farmer could not put more than 500 acres under a tree planting contract.

Within these limits the acreage he can enter depends on how much eligible land he has and his soil bank base cropping history over the two-year period before the signing of a contract. He can work this out with ASC office of the county in which his land is located.

QUESTION: What is the main objection to farm cured meats?

ANSWER: Many meats are too salty. This can be prevented by following a curing schedule. The information on how to do this is available through your county agent's office.

QUESTION: What should I do to control scale insects on ornamental shrubs and trees?

ANSWER: Now that the plants are dormant is the best time to control these pests. Apply dormant sprays containing either liquid lime sulphur or oil. Remember, however, lime sulphur stains buildings or fences painted with any of the lead containing paints.

QUESTION: Does anyone know how much land will be planted to trees under the Conservation Reserve phase of the Soil Bank program?

ANSWER: Recently all the county ASC committees were asked to submit estimates on this. They reported, first of all, that over one-half million acres of existing cropland in the state should be planted to trees. They estimated that nearly 200,000 acres of this would be planted over the next three years if tree planting stock is available to do so.

THIS WEEK'S BEST SELLERS

- FICTION: Peyton Place, Grace Metalious. Don't Go Near The Water, William Brinkley. The Tribe That Lost Its Head, Nicholas Monsarrat. The Last Hurrah, Edwin O'Connor. NONFICTION: The Nun's Story, Kathryn Hulme. This Hallowed Ground, Bruce Catton. Men To Match My Mountains, Irving Stone. The New World, Winston S. Churchill. Profiles In Courage, John F. Kennedy.

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Chilly Weather Best Time For Slaughter Of Hogs

Round Nest Will Save Steps When Gathering Eggs

R. S. Ferguson of the Lileadoun community in Alexander County has just installed a Kitson egg parlor in his laying house, says County Agent Grover C. Dobbins. Ferguson says he thinks he will like the egg parlor better than the community nest.

According to Dobbins, the egg parlor is shaped like a barrel with nests all around the outside. A door leading into the parlor enables the person gathering the eggs to pick up all of them without walking more than six or seven steps.

Ferguson believes this will be a labor saver when it comes to gathering eggs. Dobbins reports that this is the first such parlor to be installed in Alexander County, and it is causing quite a bit of interest among the commercial egg producers there.

"Recent weeks have brought cold weather," says John Christian, animal husbandry specialist at North Carolina State College. "And," he adds, "hog killing time is well underway here in the state."

However, Christian points out that the recent warm weather presents a problem to livestock slaughter. He warns farmers that it is very important to have those hog carcasses properly chilled if they are to assure themselves of high quality meats. Without proper chilling, farmers run the risk of losing hams due to souring.

Christian advises farmers to slaughter hogs between 2:00 and 3:00 p.m. and allow the carcass to hang overnight before cutting. He points out that the time to kill is when the weatherman says: "There will be a light frost tonight." This means that the temperature will be in the upper 20's or the lower 30's. This should be sufficient to chill the carcass rapidly, states Christian.

In the event that the weather is warm, Christian advises anyone killing hogs to take them to a locker plant or processing plant where they can be slaughtered and chilled properly. These facilities are available in almost every community, says Christian, and folks may want to take advantage of their services, especially if they do not have the facilities at home for handling very large hogs.

Prices of poultry should improve as supplies decline below last year's says Clayton P. Libeau, poultry and egg marketing specialist at North Carolina State College. But September 1956 poultry slaughter totaled 497 million pounds, ready to cook basis. This was 21 per cent above September 1955 and 37 per cent above the ten-year average for the month. Prices for poultry during the same period of time were approximately 21 per cent below a year earlier. Prices declined for the month about as much as supplies increased.

Fall is a good time to plant spring flowering bulbs, say State College horticulturalists.

Irrigation Helps Maintain Good Silage Program

Jim Selley, manager of the Sunbeam Farms in the Cherryville section of Gaston County, is sold on the value of good alfalfa hay and silage in his dairy program.

Assistant County Agent Thomas A. Taylor says the need for alfalfa on the farm is apparent when you see the approximately 300 head of registered Jersey cattle Selley has to feed. "We couldn't do without it," says Selley, "especially for our calves and heifer replacements."

Taylor says Sunbeam believes in growing its own stock mostly from their great bull, Jester's Sparkling Basil. They feed the stock on the silage and hay harvested from their 150 acres of alfalfa. "It's still not nearly enough," says Selley. But Taylor points out that due to irrigation, they get almost double the production the rest of the county does.

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Haywood County CHECKERBOARD NEWS By Joe Cline and Dick Bradley CLINE-BRADLEY COMPANY

Good Chicks Started Early Best Money Makers It's not too early to start thinking about baby chicks. Soon it will be time to put them down if you're planning to get them into heavy production for the months of Sept. through Dec., when egg prices are usually highest.

PURINA CHEK-R-MYCN WORKS FOUR WAYS Keep it handy on the farm because you'll save time in treating poultry and animals with Chek-R-Mycin, valuable Aureomycin product of Purina Research.

HOW TO FEED THOSE ORPHAN PIGS It's best to start orphan pigs on Purina Nursing Chow in the dry form, even though they may squeal or appear to be on a starvation strike before starting to eat.

PURINA PROGRAM FITS 4 TYPES OF DAIRYMEN Naturally, one product or program is not best for all cows. We spend several hours monthly attending our Purina Training Programs which give us the latest developments in dairying from Purina Research. Much of this information comes directly from the giant 738-acre research farm at Gray Summit, Mo., where dairying is a full-time business.

1. Dairymen in complete feed areas with cows producing 350 lbs. of fat per year or more. 2. Dairymen in grain areas with cows producing less than 350 lbs. of fat a year. 3. Dairymen in grain areas with cows producing 350 lbs. of fat per year or more. 4. Dairymen in complete feed areas with cows producing less

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