

Farm And County News

BEST METHODS OF BUTCHERING AND CURING PORK ON AVERAGE FARM

Plans Used to Good Advantage by Farmers and Pork Raisers; Some of the Most Practical Methods Employed Under Varying Conditions.

Former Governor Lowden, of Illinois, in addressing the cotton reduction convention in Memphis, recently said that the reason the average farmer gives for his failure to produce the pork consumed on his place is that as only a portion of the hog can be used upon his farm as pork, it is cheaper to produce the hogs, sell them and then purchase the necessary pork supply from the packer. Theoretically there may be something in such a belief, but it is just this idea which has resulted in our failure to produce the pork to supply our own needs. It is also a fact, that the small farmer who produces only a few hogs a year cannot, as a rule, market them profitably unless he is in position to do so in cooperation with other farmers. We believe that the south should be self-supporting in so far as its pork supply is concerned. In some cases it may be more profitable to sell the live hog and buy the cured product, but at any rate we should produce the hogs, no matter whether we market them to ourselves or to the packer. Many farmers, however, will find it profitable to cure their own pork and it is for their information that this article is written.

Perhaps another reason why the farmer often fails to supply his own pork needs here in the south is the poor success that is often encountered in curing pork on the farm. As a general thing, country-cured meat is subject to three common faults. First, it often carries too much fat, especially the side pieces. Second, it is sometimes so fed, dressed, and cured as to taint the meat with undesirable odors. Third, it is frequently too salty. Of these faults, the first two may be corrected by the proper selection, feeding, and dressing of the animals which are to be slaughtered.

The Kind of Animal to Butcher.
Animals weighing from 175 to 225 pounds are best for butchering when the meat is to be cured at home. The highest quality of meat cannot be made from animals rolling in fat, and it is likewise true that the muscles of a thin hog are tough and the meat from such animals lacks the juiciness and good flavor so characteristic of well-marbled pieces of meat from suitable conditioned animals.

The animal must be fed properly if well-cured meat is to be obtained. When fed too liberally on slops or feeds like peanuts which produce an oily carcass, the meat is undesirable from several standpoints. In order to have a firm, well-cured meat it is advisable to feed the hogs mostly on corn or a mixture of one part corn and three or four parts cottonseed meal for a period of 30 to 60 days before killing. This insures firm meat and lard, and makes curing easier.

Killing.
It is generally supposed that zero weather furnishes the best temperature for hog-killing. This is not a fact. A clear, cold, crisp day should be chosen, and when the day promises to continue cold, the hogs may be killed in the forenoon. If the day is likely to be a warm one it is better and safer to kill in the afternoon.

The hogs to be slaughtered should be given no feed but plenty of clean water for 24 hours prior to killing. This is quite important, for as soon as a hog is killed, fermentation begins in the intestines and, if there is a delay in butchering, this fermentation may be sufficient to taint the meat. In addition to this reason for withholding the feed, we have the added fact that it is easier to bleed a hog that is not gorged with feed and the meat cures better. Again, there is no necessity of wasting feed, and it is wasted when given the animal just before killing. While this waste of feed may seem to be a small item, the Iowa Experiment Station estimates that with 50,000,000 hogs killed annually in the United States, it will mean enough corn saved to produce approximately 50,000,000 pounds of pork.

The tools and equipment necessary to accomplish the killing and dressing properly include the following:
A common 6 or 8-inch butcher knife, a steel, a hog hook, hog scraper (dull butcher knife will do) and a kettle for heating water.

For scalding, a small platform or table with a barrel slanted up to one end. This makes a convenient place to scrape and after this has been done the same table can be scalded and scrubbed thoroughly and used for a cutting table. There should also be a way of hanging the hog after the body is scraped.

Of the methods used in killing hogs, sticking without previously stunning the animal is best. The animal should be placed on its back and an incision made just in front of the breast bone at an angle of about 30 degrees or in other words with the point of the knife toward the root of the tail. Bleeding may be hastened by suspending the animal by the hind legs.

Scalding.
As soon as the animal is dead, the body should be placed in warm water, ear end first, and kept in motion constantly until the bristles along the back slip easily. Some think the water should be heated to 190 degrees Fahrenheit, but at this temperature the bristles may be set, and sometimes so high a temperature will cook the skin of young or thin-skinned animals. A temperature of from 150 to 160 degrees seems best. The head and feet should be cleaned first after

scalding because they are the hardest to get clean if they once get cold. After the hair has been fairly well scraped off, the hog is hung and the cleaning continued, using hot water at first and finishing with cold water. A sharp knife should be used to shave off any hair that was not removed by scraping. The head and internal organs are then removed. This should be done before gasses develop in the intestinal tract.

After dressing, the carcass should be opened as wide as possible in front, washed with clean, cold water, and then left hanging until the following morning. In fact, when the weather is cold, the hog should be left undisturbed until the thickest pieces of meat are thoroughly chilled to the bone, as it is necessary to have all the animal heat out of the meat before salting, or souring will occur near the bone in the larger pieces. It sometimes happens, however, that the weather turns warm, and in this case, the body is cut into rough pieces soon after the hog is dressed, so that cooling may proceed more rapidly.

As to curing, there are two methods; the dry cure and the brine cure. Many farmers have obtained good results by using the dry cure, but we have found that dry cured meat often becomes too dry, hard, and salty. With the dry cure, it is also more difficult to work the salt down to the bone and the danger of losing the meat is increased about 50 per cent. For those who care to use the dry cure, we suggest the following:

Dry Cure.
Make a mixture of clean fine salt 40 pounds, white or brown sugar 10 pounds, white or black pepper 4 pounds, red pepper 1/2 pounds. This will make enough cure for about 1,000 pounds of pork. If saltpeter is desired, use 2 pounds in the above mixture. It will give a red color to the lean meat, but has a tendency to harden the meat too much. Chili saltpeter may be used instead of the regular saltpeter by taking about 20 per cent less.

Rub each piece of meat thoroughly with the salt mixture. Take special care to work the salt around the ends of the bone of ham and shoulders. Pack skin down on a table or box in a cool, dry place. Do not place in direct sunlight, or in a damp, musty cellar. After four or five days overhaul the meat, rub thoroughly with the salt and repack; repeat this in about a week. Hams and shoulders should remain in the cure from 1 1/2 to 2 days per pound weight of the piece; the latter time is safer for meat that is to be kept during the summer. Bacon should be in the salt a shorter time. Ten days will give a very nice mild cure to six or eight pound pieces.

Brine Cure.
Prof. Dan T. Gray of the Alabama Experiment Station suggests the use of the brine cure and has given the following instructions in North Carolina Experiment Circular No. 4 as to the use of the brine cure, smoking, etc.

To each 100 pounds of meat:
12 pounds common salt,
3 pounds brown sugar,
3 ounces saltpeter,
6 gallons water.

As the brine must be perfectly cool when the meat is immersed, it should be made the day before using. Ordinary syrup may be used in place of the sugar. All the above articles should be placed in a kettle and boiled gently for about one hour. Any kind of a clean vessel, as an earthen jar or wooden barrel, may be used for holding the brine and meat; clean syrup barrels are very easily obtained. Extreme care, however, should be exercised, to obtain new and thoroughly clean barrels; old and tainted barrels should never be used. After the pieces of meat are neatly trimmed into the proper shape and size they should be laid in the barrel with the meat side up, a heavy weight placed upon them and the brine poured in to a depth not less than two inches above the top piece of meat. The brine should be examined every few days as it sometimes becomes rosy, especially during a long period of warm weather. If the brine shows signs of becoming rosy, or tainted, the trouble can usually be checked, by removing the meat, dropping in a small amount of common soda and stirring well. If this treatment does not immediately correct the trouble, the meat should be taken out, each piece thoroughly washed, and put down again in new brine and barrels. The small pieces of meat should remain in the brine 30 to 40 days. At one time the writer kept 35 hams of various size in a brine for 52 days. The small hams were in the brine too many days and became somewhat too salty. Fifty-two days was not, however, too long a brine period for the greater hams.

Smoking.
After the meat has been in the brine a sufficient length of time, it should be taken out, hung in the smokehouse, allowed to drip two or three days and the smoke applied. If the smokehouse will not hold the smoke, then it is necessary to prolong the smoking period. When the house is tight and the fire kept burning continuously there seems to be no reason why the meat should be smoked more than three or four days. Corn cobs, hickory chips, and various other

woods are used for producing the smoke.

Sacking the Meat.

As soon as the meat has been sufficiently smoked, the ventilators and windows should be opened and the warm air permitted to escape. When the meat is thoroughly cooled, it should be prepared for the summer season. The majority of farmers permit the cured meat to hang in the smokehouse, unprotected from flies and other insects, during the spring and summer months. This is an unwise thing to do, unless the house has a cement floor, is dark, and all openings are thoroughly protected by wire screening. Meat which hangs unprotected in the average smokehouse is almost sure to become infected with skippers. It should be taken down and prepared for the summer season. The individual pieces of meat should be first wrapped closely with old newspapers or wrapping paper. They should then be placed in strong sacks (flour sacks will do) and each bag tied tightly at the top. The sacks should then be hung exactly where they are to stay until taken down to be eaten or sold, and painted on the outside with a solution so as to exclude all flies and skippers. A thick paste of ordinary lime, glue, and water will answer the purpose very well. A better paste, but one somewhat tedious to make, may be made of the following materials:
For 100 pounds of ham and bacon:
3.0 pounds of barytes (barium sulphate),
.05 pounds of glue,
.05 pounds of chrome yellow (lead chromate),
.40 pounds of flour.

Fill a three or four gallon bucket half full of water and mix in the flour. Dissolve the lead chromate in a quart of water in a separate vessel and add this solution and the glue into the flour water. Bring this to a boil and while boiling add the barium sulphate slowly, stirring constantly. The solution should be spread on the outside of the sack with an ordinary paint brush.—Progressive Farmer.

WEST HENDERSONVILLE.

Misses Gertrude and Thelma King spent the week-end with their parents, Mr. and Mrs. M. King, of Crab Creek.
Born January 28 to Mr. and Mrs. Woodson Drake a son.
Mr. and Mrs. Glapsy Newman spent Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Newman.
The little infant of Mr. and Mrs. Singletary Sentell died Saturday of pneumonia. The burial service took

place at Green River Sunday.
Fanning Saltz of Pisgah Forest spent the week-end with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Saltz.
Misses Mantille McCall and Mae Belle Osteen were the week-end guests of Mrs. W. S. Pace.
Born January 22, to Mr. and Mrs. Will Heaton, a daughter, Johnny.

EDNEYVILLE.

James Hipps, who has been conducting a singing school at Edneyville church, will close the school Friday and Friday night with songs and recitations given by the school.
The News' correspondent of this place last week made a mistake by saying Miss Daisy Barwell had charge of the high school work here this year. Frank Clark was principal both this year and last, and Miss Barwell was his assistant this year. Mr. Clark came here and took charge of the school two years ago when there were only eight to ten children going daily. Now he has an enrollment of one hundred and sixty and grades running through the ninth. I think the entire community will join me in saying Mr. Clark certainly did his best to make for Edneyville a better school than it was two years ago. To him we owe this credit and we truly hope he will be our principal next year.
Mrs. R. Edney.

HOLLY SPRINGS.

Mrs. S. A. Gash had as her week-end guest her daughter, Miss Lucile Hubbard, from Brevard, and her brother, Thomas Moore.
R. M. Brannon is the guest of his daughter, Mrs. Shem Allison.
Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Stepp were entertained on Saturday night by E. Allison and sons, Rankin and Raymond, whose violin music was very much enjoyed.
L. F. Gash was the dinner guest of his mother, Mrs. Rachel Gash, on last Friday.
A. W. Gash is remodeling his dwelling.
Shack Anderson is living in the old Murray homestead.
Thomas Underwood, Miss Sally Green Allison, Mrs. Mary Hollings and Mrs. Harry Moffitt are on the sick list.
T. V. Carland visited his parents, Mr. and Mrs. H. W. Carland, at Mills River on last Wednesday.

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BLUE RIDGE.

Pink McCall of Flat Rock spent the week-end here with friends.
Mrs. N. O. Fausler, who has been quite ill, is improving.
Shannon Mitchell of Fruitland Institute is at home for a few days.
Mrs. Sarah Knight, owner of Sunny Field Farm, is having some additions made to her home.
The school at Pace Hill closes Friday, February 3. Miss Ruby Edwards, teacher, has done some excellent work.
Mr. and Mrs. F. A. Niblack had the following dinner guests Sunday, 29th: Mrs. Harriet Hyder, King, Justice and daughters, Misses Mae and Joansie, and Pink McCall.
N. O. Fausler has been in Asheville for several days on business.

FLAT ROCK DRIVE.

Fralo Kuykendall is expected home this week from Greenville where he has been on a business trip.
Mrs. O. S. Kuykendall returned home from Spartanburg, where she attended the Billy Sunday meeting.
Miss Gena Bradburn, who has been very ill, is improving.
Mrs. Henry Hamilton and children

were the guests of Mrs. H. P. Kuykendall Sunday afternoon.

Misses Mary Stepp and Gertrude King visited friends and relatives at Pinnacle last week.
Lee Hoots has returned to Lynchburg, Va., after visiting friends on the Flat Rock road.
"Weedle."

GYPSY AND MILLS RIVER.

P. B. Lance had the misfortune Saturday afternoon to get his right arm broken while working with a wood saw.
Misses Ellen and Sue Meece spent Sunday afternoon with Miss Pauline West.
Miss Blanche and Thurman Lance, who have been ill, are able to be out again.
C. J. Jeffress has returned home from Lakeland, Fla., where he has been on real estate business—the past

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