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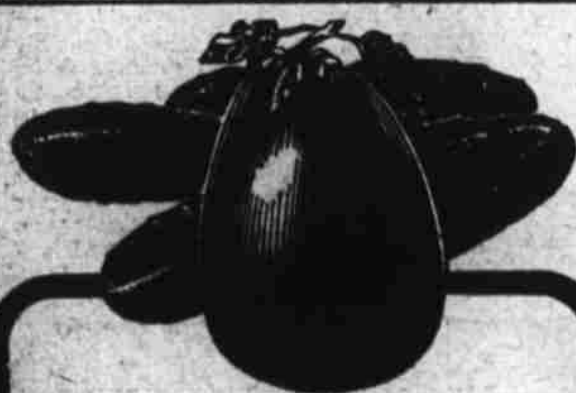
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FURROW SLICES

A FREAK HAM

Some Possible Reasons Why This Ham All "Went to Fat", and How to Prevent a Repetition

DURING Christmas week I boiled a large ham that I had saved especially for the holiday season. It was an unusually large, splendid looking one, and after it was boiled and baked awhile and allowed to cool, I began to slice it for dinner one day. To my utter surprise I sliced on and on through fat—and nothing but fat. In this fat the part that should have been lean looked pink, but was pure fat. Out of curiosity I kept on, and when one-third through the ham there began to be a rim of lean, and in the middle the lean grew wider, but with streaks of fat through it; then on again fat to the end. Huge platters of fat, but hardly enough lean to serve a meal. I called in a number of farmers and housekeepers, but none of them had ever seen anything like it.

If any reader of The Progressive Farmer can give a reason for this, we will appreciate it, as we do not want to repeat this experience.

My husband and his brother had vied with each other in the fattening of two special hogs. The brother's died from fat, weighing almost 500 pounds. Ours did not die, but was almost too fat to walk, and weighed over 400 pounds. Could surplus of fat have caused the hams to go to fat? The freak ham was from this hog.

MRS. JOHN A. EPPERSON.

Allgood, Tenn.

Editorial Comment:—If the following explanation is not the true one we would be glad to hear from any of our readers.

It is a well known fact by judges of hams that neither a very small nor a very large ham should be selected if the best quality is desired. The excess of fat in this case was probably due to methods used in feeding or fattening the hog, although possibly this individual ham was a "freak" in that hogs fattened in a similar way would not often produce a ham with such a large excess of fat.

An old hog, made very large and fat, is likely to produce an excessively fat ham, and if the hog is fed on fat-producing feeds like corn and kept in a small lot or pen where it can get but little exercise, the tendency to an excess of fat is increased. Some breeds of hogs also produce hams carrying more fat than other breeds. The lard type of hog, such as the Poland-China, when made very large and fat is likely to produce hams much too fat for the best quality. The bacon type, producing a leaner carcass, generally produces a ham carrying less fat.

We suggest that our inquirer should look for a ham of good quality from a hog weighing 200 to 250 pounds, in good condition but not over fat, and grown on legume pastures and a fair allowance of dry grain, or at least on a well balanced ration with plenty of exercise to maintain normal muscular (lean meat) development.

Conveniences for the Farm Workshop

ONE of the great conveniences in our shop is a tool cabinet for small tools and small repairs for implements.

A box of 7/8-inch poplar, 4x5 feet and 12 or 15 inches deep is fastened firmly by its back to the shop wall at the end of the bench. The door is the full width of box and only lacks about a foot of being as long, leaving an enclosed box at the bottom for nails, bolts, etc.

Wrenches, pliers, and some other small tools are hung on the back of the door on hooks or nails; we have probably 20 different kinds and sizes of wrenches, from the small flat one

to a big "eagle-claw" that will take a 3-inch nut.

The back of the box is also set with nails, hooks and pins, and there we have planes, square saws, odd pieces of chain, rings, blacksmithing hammers and small pulleys. On two shelves in the upper part are found small tin and wooden boxes containing all sizes of wood screws, small bolts, washers, iron and copper rivets, small drills and bits, horse-shoe nails, a box of borax for welding. A kit of shoeing tools, blacksmith tools, cold chisels, nail hammers, punches, and many other handy tools occupy one of the shelves.

The portable forge, anvil and machine vise are in use almost every day, doing some small repair job, mending chains, putting in a new handle, setting a horse or mule shoe or putting a pole or reach in a wagon. Last summer when busy harvesting grain the driver broke the pole of the binder; in an hour we had put in a new pole made of white oak, and saved half a day's time when a few hours mean a great deal.

All hand tools not in use must be returned to the shop and put in their proper places. Axes, wedges, sledge, shovels, posthole digger, crow bars, mattocks, picks, forks, scythes, chains, ropes, and belts—each has its place in the shop, and when we want a tool we look there for it, seldom having to look farther for a tool not in use.

ALTON M. WORDEN.

Tullahoma, Tenn.

RURAL CREDIT TRICKSTERS

Farmers Warned to Be Cautious in Dealing With Them

THE Department has recently received letters from a number of farmers who have subscribed for stock in rural credit companies, including so-called coöperative companies which appear to have no real coöperative features.

In some of these letters the complaint is made that the agents selling the stock make misrepresentations as to when loans may be obtained by subscribers and that the companies later disclaim responsibility for the statements made by the agents. In a number of instances farmers seem to have gained the idea from the agent that they would be able to secure loans within a relatively short time, and express disappointment on realizing that they must wait for an indefinite period for the promised loan and go on making payments just the same on the stock which they have agreed to take.

Where farmers are confronted with a proposition of this character, they should first read the prospectus and the contract very carefully and make sure that they know exactly what these mean, especially the contract. If the contract is so worded that its meaning is not clear after a careful reading, this in itself should be reason enough for extra caution. The agent's explanation of the contract is not a part of the contract, nor is his promise that the company will do things not specified in the contract by any means sure to be recognized by the company.

Farmers ought, first, to find out what provision has been made for the protection of the interests of subscribers, either through responsible Government supervision over the activities of the company, or in any other way, and if they are in doubt they should consult competent advisors with regard to the responsibility of the company before paying over or agreeing to pay over, their own good money. Always, in the matter of subscription to stock in any kind of a company, they should exercise caution.—United States Department of Agriculture.

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