

# Opportunities for Expanded Hog Production Seen for Farmers in View of Ample Feed Grain Supplies

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One of the principal problems confronting many Nebraska farmers is the lack of volume in their farming operations.

In many instances, additional land is not immediately available either for rent or purchase. There is the alternative, however, of intensifying the operation through the enlargement of present livestock enterprises or the addition of new livestock enterprises.

Currently a large proportion of Nebraska's feed grain production is not fed on Nebraska farms. Increased production of feed grains, more stable produc-

tion from year to year and a growing demand in the western part of the United States offer real opportunities to capable livestock-minded farmers.

## Large Amount of Feed Grains Available

Feed grain production in Nebraska was approximately 55 per cent higher in 1960 than it was 10 years earlier. A number of things contributed to this large increase. The weather, of course, was favorable to large yield, but the increase in irrigation which had taken place during this decade, as well as the introduction and adoption of hybrid grain sorghum, and increased use of commercial fertilizer were also important contributors to the increase. Much of this increase is here to stay (except for the possible effects of government restrictions on production).

Both irrigation and the increased acreage of grain sorghum will serve to stabilize production of feed grains from

year to year in Nebraska. This is an important consideration to the livestock producer.

Rough calculations indicate that only about 40 to 50 per cent of Nebraska's feed grains is being fed on Nebraska farms. The rest is either being placed under government loan or is being shipped out of the state to be fed elsewhere or to be used for other commercial purposes. Hence, there is a large amount of feed grain which could serve as the basis for substantial increases in livestock feeding operations within the state. Farmers needing additional volume of business might well afford to take a look at opportunities in hog production.

Historically, hogs have been produced largely in the Corn Belt and to a lesser extent in the eastern fringes of some of the Great Plains states. Since feed makes up 75-80 per cent of the total cost of producing hogs, it seems probable that most of the hogs will continue to be produced in those areas where feed grains are produced.

## Demand Prospects Are Good For Plains Farmers

Although the per capita consumption of pork has been experiencing a downward trend during the past ten years, consumption per capita has been relatively stable over the past 60 years. During this time it has averaged approximately 65 pounds per capita. It does not seem likely that this will change significantly for any length of time during the next 10 to 15 years.

The rapid growth of population along the west coast and in southwestern United States during recent years is expected to continue. It is estimated that by 1970, there will be approximately 12 million more people in the western half of the United States than there were in 1960. Even if the current trend in per capita consumption of pork continues downward, this growth in population would mean an increased demand for pork amounting to roughly 700 million pounds. This is the equivalent of 4 to 4.5 million hogs.

Feed grain production in the states west of the Great Plains has never been large. And this situation is not likely to change materially. Consequently, it is expected that western United States will continue to look to the feed grain producing areas for its supply of pork. The Great

Plains states, being the nearest feed grain producing area of consequence, have a competitive advantage in this western market over states farther to the east. The shorter distances mean lower freight rates and hence, lower marketing costs.

## Capital And Labor Requirements

Many farms lack pasture, fencing, and water supplies away from the buildings. In such cases, hog production or cattle feeding are logical possibilities. Of these two, hog production is less speculative and requires a considerably smaller annual cash or credit outlay.

Investments in buildings and equipment may be larger, however. Figures are not available on the amount of investment in buildings and equipment used for hog production on Nebraska farms but study of hog production on 76 farms in Indiana in 1957 indicated that the amount invested in buildings and equipment on these farms amounted to approximately \$250-265 per sow (two litters).

The one litter system can be carried on with a smaller investment in buildings if the pigs are farrowed in May or June. Weather is mild enough at this time of year that cold is not a factor. Heating equipment, ventilation, and insulation are not needed, thus permitting a lower investment per sow. This may be offset to a large extent, however, in that less complete use can be made of buildings and equipment as compared to the two litter system.

Labor requirements vary tremendously from one farm to another depending on equipment and facilities for handling hogs. Indiana studies conducted in 1956-1957 indicated that the most efficient producers with large hog enterprises were able to produce pork with as little as 52 hours of labor per hundred-weight. The least efficient required 1.30 hours per hundred-weight. The average labor requirement amounted to just under one hour for each hundred pounds of hogs produced. The farmer who can raise and market close to 7 pigs per litter weighing an average of 215 pounds can expect to spend approximately 30 hours per sow if two litters are farrowed.

## Factors Affecting Costs

The large herds have some advantage over small herds from the standpoint of costs. The average cost of producing each hundred pounds in the Indiana study was \$15.30 in the small herds, \$14.28 in the moderately large herds, and \$13.29 in the large herds.

The fewer pigs raised per litter, the higher the cost of production. In other words, it costs almost as much to keep a sow that weans 6 pigs as one that weans 8 or more pigs. Likewise, the fixed costs (depreciation, taxes, and interest on investment of maintaining buildings and equipment) are largely independent of the number of pigs weaned per litter. The man who succeeds in raising 8 or 9 pigs per litter has a lower cost per pig or per hundred pounds of pork produced than the man who raises only 5 to 6 pigs.

To the extent that the SPF program can improve feed conversion rates and cut down on death losses, this relatively new development in the hog business holds real promise. As yet, very little information is available on the economics of SPF hog production.

## 'New Markets Ag Products'

By Pearl F. Finnigan  
State Director of Agriculture  
Nebraska's success in developing a survival ration acceptable for the Federal Government's civil defense program has opened the door to new markets for the state's agricultural products as well as aided the state's industry.

The encouraging early orders for the Nebraskit wafer have served to justify the state's research program as well as demand increased efforts during the next three months.

Proposals extending the present contracts with Midwest for the further development of rations have been requested.

Additional efforts will be made to perfect the milk bar and cereal bars made from corn and milo. Midwest personnel will also work with the industry to perfect manufacturing techniques.

One of the approved items for civil defense stockpiling is bulgur made from wheat. This product is now made on the west coast from white wheat grown in the Pacific Northwest. Efforts will be made at Midwest to develop milling methods suitable for use in Nebraska to process Nebraska wheat into bulgur products.

The wheat bulgur products are already receiving a good accept-

## Groundhog

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away a bean patch at one sitting. For dessert, the vegetarian likes cabbage heads, pumpkin vines, and young corn.

When he isn't plundering gardens and hayfields, the groundhog digs holes that can cause cattle to stumble. The mounds of earth piled up at the burrow exits also wreck farm machinery.

In 1883, New Hampshire pronounced the groundhog "destitute of any interesting qualities" and put a 10-cent price on his head.

## Was European Legend

Despite its bad habits, the groundhog is an honored animal in the United States.

Parkusutawney, Pennsylvania, which claims to be the official residence of the furry animal, though this is disputed by Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, celebrates February 2 with a Groundhog Banquet and teen-age Groundhog Hop.

A recent book entitled "Cooking With the Groundhog" explains how to prepare the animal with almonds, rhubarb, and zucchini.

The Old World legend of Groundhog Day was brought to America by the Pilgrims. They substituted the indigenous groundhog for the European hedgehog which in earlier tradition cast a shadow on Candlemas Day.

The North American animal is a heavy-bodied, white-nosed, myopic species of marmot (Marmota monax). It lives in open woodlands and meadows, and enjoys a lazy, short-sighted life.

When chased by coyotes, dogs, or an irate farmer, "woodie" whistles a warning, chatters his teeth, and heads for a burrow.

Young are born in late spring, four to six to a litter. The father assumes no parental responsibility. He spends his time feasting, sunning, and digging den holes.

By August, the young "whistling pigs," as woodchucks are sometimes called, are ready to find dens for a new life on their own.

## Koubeks

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bottle holds a replica of the Holy Rosary Church where the Koubek family has long been active.

A tiny six-sided bottle holds the intricately carved names of the six members of the Koubek family. Over 100 of these bottles, each a separate marvel of patient craftsmanship, have been made by Mr. Koubek.

Mr. Koubek, like many Bohemians, is a true artisan. Bohemian families have a natural talent for the artistic and musical and the quiet charm with which they fill their homes is uplifting.

Plattsmouth may well be proud of its Bohemian families, for just as the soul, without music or art to lift it above the humdrum plane of everyday life, is dead; so the town, without people who can keep a fast hold on beauty, is a drab place to live.

Another fact stands out concerning our Bohemian settlers. Each one has been a good American from the time his foot touched this soil. They put their shoulders to the wheel of industry and worked hard. They applied their old world thrift and skills to their lives here and gave a solid loyalty to this new country.

One needn't go far into the Koubek home to tell that they are also deeply religious. The Koubek family was one of the families who helped in the building of the Holy Rosary Church and have since been active in it. The Koubeks still receive and enjoy a Bohemian paper from New York.

Mr. and Mrs. Koubek have four children, all Cass County residents. Mr. and Mrs. Mark Hohman are farming at Wabash. Mrs. Leo Hohman's husband is in the water company at Plattsmouth.

The third daughter, Helen, married John Svoboda, also of Plattsmouth, who works in the bank.

The Koubeks' son Frank, better known around the town as "Abe," is a machinist in the shops.

ance in the school lunch programs in Peru, according to the report of a department representative. Bulgur is used in a manner similar to rice and is becoming a staple in the lunch program there.

By aiding in the development of an arsenal of civil defense weapons for the United States, Nebraska has gained a reputation for its aggressiveness in research and finding new markets to aid its agricultural economy. This reputation has brought inquiries from numerous industries interested in commercial production of the items being developed.



NEW BUSINESS—This new Sinclair Service Station will begin operating Tuesday at Chicago Avenue and Hill Street. Proprietors are Les Hutchinson, bulk man, and Joe Gochenour, service station operator. The station was constructed by Young and Jose Building Contractors.

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