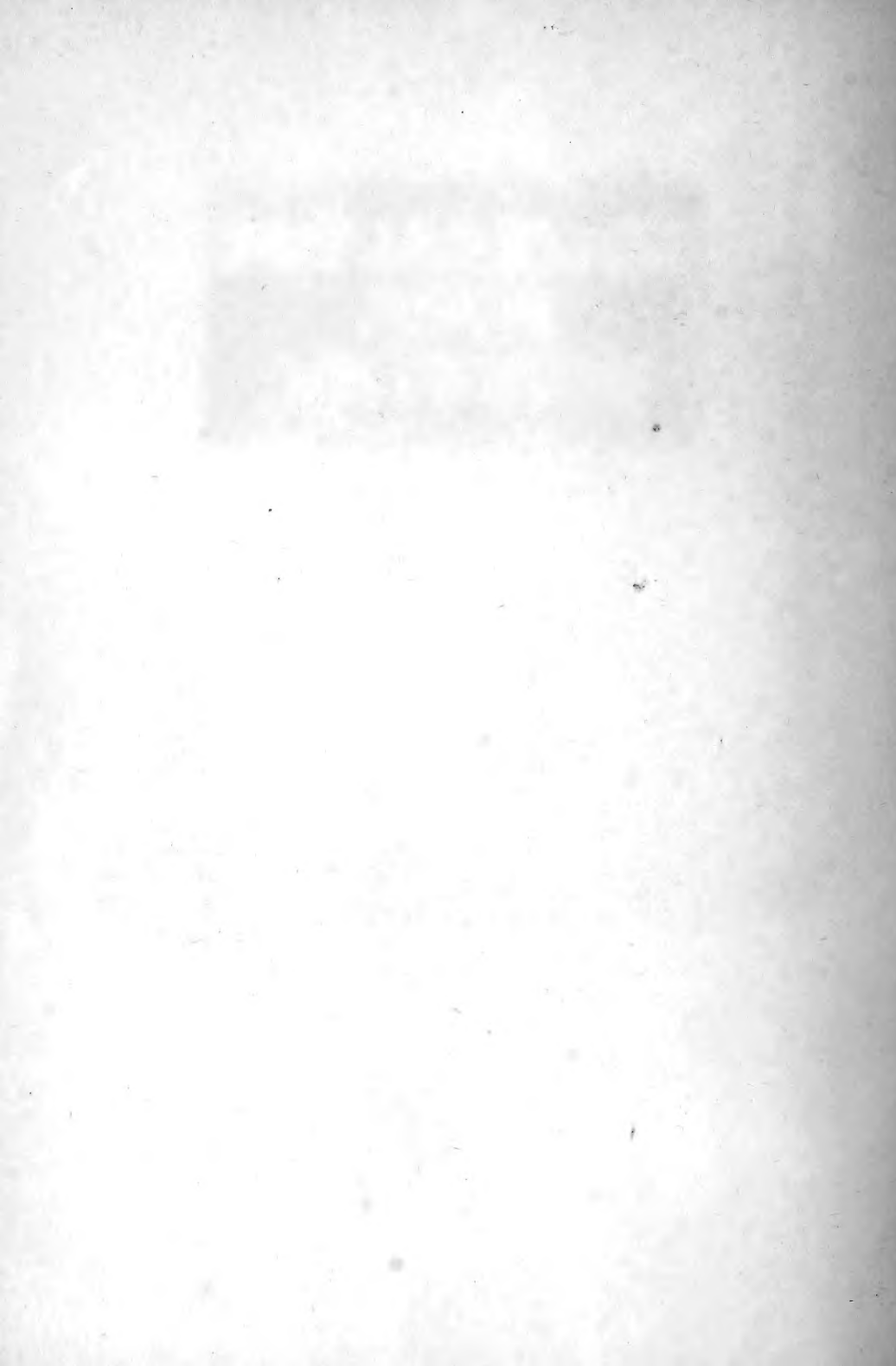


*The* LOUISIANA  
PORK  
INDUSTRY













# *The Louisiana Pork Industry*

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*By O. P. GEREN, President Louisiana  
Swine Breeders' Association*

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# *The Louisiana Pork Industry*

THE origin of the hog is lost in the mists of antiquity; but the hog has been an important factor in the life of mankind since the first records of history.

Second only to cattle, the hog has supplied the meat food for humanity for untold centuries, and has sustained races which otherwise would have perished.

Notwithstanding the debt which mankind owes to him, and the esteem in which the finely flavored meat is held, the hog has been the most slandered of all created things.

His name has been made the synonym for unrestrained appetite and all that is unclean, and his defamers are those who are indebted to him to a degree beyond computation.

His very docility has led to his undoing, as men subject him to treatment under which horses, cattle or sheep would perish. The hog is above all a hardy animal, adapting himself to all climates and conditions.

He is by nature a clean animal of the open fields, and modern practice proves that, where abundant food is found, he is as restrained in appetite as any animal that can be named.

Fortunately, the old days of inhuman practices and unsanitary methods are rapidly passing, and it will not be long before legislation prohibits the use of the cramped quarters of the filthy pig-pen, where unfortunate animals are

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fed conglomerate refuse, which in turn is converted into meat for human use.

The hog ranks second of all meat food producing animals, and the United States is the greatest of all the hog-producing countries of the world.

According to international statistics available prior to the outbreak of the European War, the other great hog-producing countries, given in the order of their importance as pork producers, are Germany, Russia, Austria-Hungary, France and the United Kingdom.

These countries, with the United States, produce the great bulk of the output, and the total of all other countries is insignificant by comparison.

In Germany the meat food situation is critical, as vast supplies are required to support the millions of soldiery in the field, as well as the civilian population, which has not only exhausted the regular meat supply, but has encroached upon the breeding herds, without imports to replace the abnormal demands; consequently, it will take years to re-establish conditions equal even to those prevailing before the war—and those conditions were unfavorable, showing as they did a constant decrease in production, with an ever-increasing population.

No authentic facts are available concerning Russia; but it is the conclusion of economists that the Russian swine herds are also greatly diminished to provision the armies in the field, and in the absence of the great number of stock breeders who are at the front, the normal production has not been maintained.

Through the war, Austria-Hungary has also

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made great inroads upon the herds of swine and other live stock, and, like Germany, its supply has not been augmented through importations, owing to the blockade by the Allied Nations.

France has cut deeply into her cattle, sheep and hog supply, and it is estimated that already the number of meat animals has been reduced to less than one-half the available supply existing prior to the declaration of war.

The United Kingdom of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, has drawn heavily upon the supply of Australia, New Zealand and Argentina, and of other foreign fields; but in spite of this, it is conceded that the British supply is already much depleted.

With the depletion of the world's food supply, the price of pork, already high, seems destined to go much higher, and America cannot look to any outside source for assistance in connection with pork production, or any other branch of the live stock industry, to overcome the growing meat shortage.

Observation and statistics confirm the statement that the citizens of the United States are the greatest meat-eating people of the world.

It is a rare exception to find an American household where pork is not served at least once a day, in some form—ham, bacon, chops, roasts, and so on.

A shortage of pork, therefore, would be a national calamity, and it is not too much to say that the American people would pay even double the present high prices rather than be deprived of this favorite meat.

The hog-raising industry, when properly con-

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ducted, is singularly free from risk, as the animal thrives even under neglect and improper treatment; and cholera, which is its only scourge, has long since yielded to the ministrations of science, and is no longer to be reckoned with.

The fecundity of hogs is amazing, and authorities on swine husbandry estimate that it is safe to calculate upon each brood animal of approved variety yielding an increase of ten healthy pigs annually.

The United States Department of Agriculture, which has issued many bulletins relating to cost of raising hogs in every state of the Union, says:

“Crops which can be grown in any other part of the country can be grown in the South, and there are many crops suitable for hog feed which can be grown in no other section of the country.

“Green feed and pasture crops can be raised during twelve months of the year, and with the use of its luxuriant pastures, the South is in position to make pork cheaper than any other section of the United States.”

The mild climatic conditions and fertile soil of Louisiana make the production of all classes of leguminous feeds, such as clovers, soy beans and cowpeas in great abundance at all seasons very simple.

“Westward, Ho!” was long the American slogan, and the lure of millions of acres of public domain available to the settler without cost, is the explanation of why the lands of the South, more favored by nature, were so long overlooked.

The agricultural press of the country and authorities generally, have long advocated more extensive development of the hog-growing indus-

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try in the South, as it is to this section that the country must look for protection against future conditions of virtual meat famine.

The decreasing supply and impending serious shortage of meat food have inspired the greatest activity by the United States Government, the various states, the agricultural colleges, experiment stations, and others identified with the industry, in the encouragement of improved methods and increased production.

It has been demonstrated time and again, and all authorities on swine husbandry are united in the conclusion, that to produce hogs of satisfactory size and quality, it is essential that only selected breeds be used.

The breeding of hogs has standardized production, and has made it possible for the grower to know in advance, in every particular, the results that he may depend upon.

Furthermore, the market of today is a market of quality above all else.

It pays to produce only the best, and high-grade stock combines in the most perfect proportions the best grades of fat and lean, without an abnormal percentage of bone or sinew.

The strong meat and rancid lard produced from the porker of a generation ago would not be acceptable in any market today.

The tendency has been steadily toward the production of higher grade animals, and to market them at an early age; and the market now demands a one-year-old pig of good breed, weighing 200 pounds on the average, and anything below these requirements does not garner the top prices.

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An examination of the earliest records and archives of the old Colony of Louisiana, including the period commencing at the time of the Louisiana Purchase, reveals nothing authentic concerning the introduction of swine into this territory.

It is interesting, however, to note that among the records of the earliest travelers in this region, mention is made of the fact that the Indians of the Gulf Coast used as an article of diet the small wild native pig resembling the peccaries, which are still found in Mexico and Central and South America.

Shortly after the occupation of Louisiana by the French, hogs were introduced into the territory from the New England States, whither they had been brought from Great Britain by the early English colonists.

Despite the fact that the attention of the agriculturist of Louisiana has been concentrated almost exclusively upon the great staple crops of sugar-cane, rice and cotton, this has been a hog-producing state on a large scale always.

It is only within a decade that Louisiana could claim tens of thousands of thoroughbred hogs, which are gradually taking the place so long held by the herds of porkers without pedigree.

Iowa is the banner state of the Union in the swine industry, in spite of the lack of pasturage six months of the year, and of the tremendous cost incident to housing and feeding throughout the other six months of the year.

The distinguished Iowan, James Wilson, former Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture, said at the National Live Stock Show in New Orleans in 1916:

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“You can grow just as good hogs here as in Iowa—every bit—and I am good authority on hog-raising and what you can grow in Iowa.”

Statistics gathered by Federal and state authorities, experiment stations, agricultural colleges and private investigators, disclose that in Iowa, and throughout the corn-belt states generally, the cost of hogs delivered at the market will average \$7 per hundredweight, and under the most favorable conditions will average \$5 per hundredweight.

The natural advantages of the section, according to authorities, enables the Southern Louisiana grower to produce hogs at 60 per cent lower cost than in the North.

It is recorded by authorities, in well-authenticated cases, that by the proper rotation of crops, and by making the hogs gather each crop, hogs have been raised in the State of Louisiana for as low as half a cent a pound.

In the North, 30 per cent of the feed consumed during the winter season, according to authorities, goes to keeping up animal heat; whereas there is no such wastage in the Gulf Coast country, where every pound of feed goes to the production of meat.

In the corn-belt states little pasturage is available for hogs, as the land must be given over during the entire growing season of six months to the production of the corn crop; whereas in Southern Louisiana the fields are open and crops growing twelve months of the year, thus making an ideal combination of pasturage and corn-raising.

In this connection, a bulletin of the United States Department of Agriculture states:

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“The cost of raising hogs when fed upon corn alone, is generally estimated at 5 cents a pound, live weight, when corn is worth 50 cents a bushel, and 7 cents when corn is worth 70 cents a bushel; that is, a bushel of corn will usually make 10 pounds of gain, live weight, when carefully fed to thrifty hogs. When raised on corn alone, hogs are seldom very thrifty; consequently the cost will average much greater than this. The best way to make hog-raising profitable is to graze the hogs upon pasturage prepared especially for them, supplementing the green food by the addition of a small grain ration. Upon this plan, hogs can be raised at an average cost varying from 1½ to 3 cents a pound, depending mainly upon the management of the sows and pigs, and upon an economic plan of feeding.”

Climate is the fundamental factor in the attainment of greatest success in live stock raising, and is the one element which the genius of man cannot alter.

It is possible to fertilize and enrich inferior soil—and at great expense, to water the arid wastes by irrigation; but temperature is not subject to control.

In the fertile fields of the North, hogs must be taken off pasturage in October and housed and fed until May. One-half the grower's time therefore, is unproductive, and the crops which he has labored one half the year to produce are consumed during the other half of the year, when the country is stripped of vegetation and snowbound.

In Southern Louisiana, twelve months of mild weather, with abundant pasturage for grazing



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throughout the year, enables the grower to produce pork at the minimum cost.

With an average temperature of 55 degrees in midwinter, there are no rigors of climate to endure, and hogs farrow and thrive in all the months of the year.

A long summer is a long growing season; a long growing season means more crops. The growing season in Southern Louisiana is nearly twice as long as in Indiana and Illinois, and for many crops is continuous.

An examination of the Weather Bureau records shows that the normal summer of the coast region of Louisiana is more pleasant than in the interior states—even those north of the Ohio River—and temperatures do not go as high as in St. Louis, Cincinnati, Chicago, Indianapolis, Pittsburgh, or in the territory surrounding those cities.

From the United States Weather Bureau reports we find the mean annual temperature of Southern Louisiana to be 68 degrees; the maximum temperature about 98 degrees; the minimum temperature 30 degrees.

Next to climate, moisture ranks as the prerequisite to success in the production of vegetation, and therefore of live stock.

Thin soils can be built up; but whether the soil be rich or poor, water is essential, if soil is to have value.

In the arid states of the Great West, vast outlay is required for irrigation, entailing a fixed annual expense, sometimes as much as \$30, and never less than \$5 per acre, with all the problems that go with the maintenance of great reservoirs

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and the network of canals through which water is distributed.

In the great Middle West, including the famous corn belt, the annual rainfall averages about 30 inches, and there is never a year but that some localities, and in some years whole states, are visited by long-continued drought, causing losses that run into untold millions.

Southern Louisiana is the world's most favored spot in this respect, with an average annual rainfall of nearly 60 inches, well distributed over the year, and with no record of destructive drought in the hundred years that weather records have been officially kept.

In Southern Louisiana land is divided into drainage districts under state control, and the small state tax assures the landowner well-drained lands every day of the year, including sub-irrigation as a safeguard against any possible freak of nature which might cause a long dry spell.

The marvelous fertility of the alluvial soil of Southern Louisiana has been the theme of countless papers emanating from authoritative sources.

It is not too much to say that investigation over the whole world has failed to disclose another body of land so nearly perfect for the production of all plant life—a soil that will produce double, and often quadruple, the crops that can be grown in any other section.

The combination of fertile soil, temperature that gives a continuous growing season, and abundant moisture at all times, is unequaled elsewhere.

On the alluvial lands of Southern Louisiana

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the modern grower who follows scientific methods can make one acre of ground support twenty-five head of hogs.

An interesting recommendation—to market half the pig crop under a year old—is made by Dr. W. R. Dodson, President of the Louisiana Agricultural College and Director of the State Experiment Station, who says:

“Hogs should be bred so as to give one litter of pigs in the early fall and the second in the late spring. The fall litter should be carried through the winter and spring largely on green crops that may be grazed, and brought to maturity in late summer. The spring litter should be maintained largely on green crops until about the first of August, and marketed at six or eight months old, with more grain and concentrated feed than received by the first litter. Exclusive feeding for a period of two weeks on concentrated dry feed, just prior to selling, will give meat equal to that fed exclusively on grain through the fattening period.”

Frequently hogs run to great weight, especially if aged; but the tendency of the market is to give a decided preference to the younger and smaller animals.

The progressive grower now plans to market his pigs at one year old, and 200 pounds is a safe calculation of the weight at that age.

As illustrating the trend of weights over a period of nineteen years, the Union Stock Yards, Chicago, reports the average weight of hogs received in 1897 at 242 pounds, 237 pounds in 1910, and 210 pounds in 1916.

The pork is of best quality at one year old, and

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this is also the age when the grower can market with the greatest percentage of profit.

The varieties of grasses and forage crops in Southern Louisiana are legion and the yield enormous, due to the combination of exceptional natural conditions.

The pasturage is far superior to the famous blue-grass pastures of the North at their best. The mild climatic conditions and wonderful fertility of the alluvial soil produce at all seasons the most abundant yields of peas, beans, vetch, alfalfa, clovers, peanuts, and a multitude of other forage crops.

Corn, the greatest of all crops from the standpoint of hog-raising, produces enormously, with records of 100 bushels per acre, sown broadcast and without cultivation, with stalks of immense height and great growth of fodder, making the product incomparable for ensilage.

It is interesting to know that analyses of over 500 samples of Louisiana and Illinois corn, made by the Bureau of Plant Industry in 1915, show an average of 13.4 per cent moisture in Louisiana corn, and 19.1 per cent moisture in Illinois corn; thus proving conclusively that the corn of the Gulf Coast country is superior to the famous product of the corn-belt states.

Mr. Frank Funk, of Illinois, who enjoys a national reputation as an authority on corn-growing, says:

“In the Louisiana delta the Northern corn-grower will find his Utopia. No soil in the world contains more of the elements essential to the maximum crop of corn.”

The Commissioner of the Louisiana Department of Agriculture, says:

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“On account of the mild and congenial climate, with the consequent long growing-season, the well distributed and sufficient rainfall, there is good grazing almost the entire year.

“The fertility of the soil, in conjunction with the climatic conditions, enables one to grow more corn, soy beans, and other ensilage crops per acre here than in any other state of the Union.

“The fact that cattle are out of doors on pasturage at all times of the year, keeps them free from tubercular and other diseases.

“Corn grows and produces as much, if not more, per acre than in the great corn belt of the Middle West. I have seen corn crops in the last few weeks that would yield from 80 to 120 bushels per acre.

“Oats are among our best feed crops; 50 bushels per acre is a common yield, and I know of some instances where the yield was from 60 to 85 bushels per acre. Our oat crops are planted in the fall, may be pastured during the winter months, are harvested in the spring, and are followed by other crops, such as corn, soy beans, lespedeza and peas.

“In my opinion there is no other locality that can produce pork as cheaply as Louisiana, and I know of farmers who have produced pork for 2½ cents per pound.

“The reason for the cheap production of pork lies in the large diversity of the feed crops that can be cheaply grown. There are several rotations which give continuous pasturage; for instance, Bermuda grass, oats, rye, rape, lespedeza, white clover, crimson clover, red clover and alsike, alfalfa and sorghum.

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“To finish the pork we can and do grow enormous crops of corn, soy beans, velvet beans, peanuts and sweet potatoes.”

Authorities deem it a safe calculation that in a well-organized hog-raising enterprise in Southern Louisiana, a pig at one year old, weighing 200 pounds, costs the grower not to exceed 3 cents per pound delivered at market, and brings an average of 10 cents per pound.

The prolificacy of the animal, combined with the low cost of production and the high market prices, makes the hog-raising industry in Southern Louisiana the most profitable of all businesses that have stability.













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