A Plan of Economical Swine Production for the Coastal Plain Area

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INTRODUCTION

It is estimated that Georgia grows approximately 1,500,000 hogs per year. It is generally thought that this number could well be increased.

One of the major factors that will determine the advisability of increasing the swine production on the average farm in Georgia will be that of lowering the cost of production.

The average Georgia farm should produce more hogs because it will give the farmer a better balanced farm program. More hogs will give additional farm income at different seasons of the year, will give a better distribution of labor on the average farm, and the practice of the system suggested in this plan will mean increased fertility of the soil.

Low prices that are sometimes received for hogs make it imperative that the farmer decrease his cost of production if he hopes to make swine production one of the important enterprises in this farm program. Lower cost of production is always necessary if the Georgia farmer expects to make a profit on his hogs during periodic low prices.

Many millions of dollars are being lost every year by hog farmers because of internal and external parasites and because of various swine diseases. The sanitation phase of swine production must be reckoned with.

Many hogs are lost on Georgia farms each year because of poor management. This poor management is evident all the way through the swine program, especially in regard to breeding and to providing feed crops. A plan of economical swine production is submitted below:

THE PLAN

An effort was made in developing this plan to make it simple and practical and if followed should mean more profit for the hog producer. It is realized that a complicated system of hog production can not very
readily be followed by the average farmer of the State. A good plan of swine production must embody feeding, breeding, management and sanitation.

It is thought that as near 100 per cent as possible of the feed consumed by the hogs should be produced on the farm.

It is thought that the most economical hog production can be had by hogging off crops rather than harvesting the crops and feeding the feed to the hogs in dry lot or otherwise. This is true except in the case of sows and suckling pigs. The feeding of sows and suckling pigs is discussed in a later paragraph.

Numerous experiments have proven that hogs make their most economical gains when green grazing is made available.

Pigs, to make the economical use of their feed, should be as free as possible of both internal and external parasites.

A good meat hog will have a good sire and a good dam.

A practical breeding program is necessary for the hog farmer. Sows should be bred to farrow pigs at the time that will enable the growing pigs to make the best use of the feed crops that will be available. The type
hogs produced should be the one best adapted for our most economical production. Generally speaking, that will be the intermediate type hog.

**Breeding Program**

Use only good type sows that are capable of producing large litters. Brood sows should be selected from large litters and from sows that are good milkers. The boar is one-half the herd and should be so considered.

All sows should be bred to farrow as near the same time as possible. The farmer can develop a feeding and sanitation program much easier if the brood sows are bred to farrow within a few days of each other. The pigs are much easier to handle during the suckling period and after weaning if they are approximately the same age. Sows will almost always breed within three to seven days after the pigs are weaned. The gilts can be watched and bred during the “heat period” nearest the time it is desired to breed the sows. Sows will farrow approximately 114 days after breeding.

It is usually advisable to breed sows so that they will farrow in March and September. The farmers in the lower part of South Georgia would probably find it advantageous to have sows farrow in January and July; those in Central Georgia, in April and October.

Economical swine production can be had only if the sows produce two litters per year.

*Sows with their litters need plenty of green grazing.*
Care of Bred Sows and Bred Gilts

Gilts should be well developed and bred so that they will produce their first litter of pigs when they are one year of age. The breeding gilts and breeding sows should be carried in fair condition—not too fat and not too poor. This condition can be controlled by the amount of grain fed. The sows and gilts can be used to clean up fields where market hogs have hogged off the crop. The bred sows and gilts should have green grazing available. Bred sows and gilts should have approximately one-half pound of protein supplement per head per day. A good mineral mixture should be kept before the breeding animals at all times.

Care of Sows and Pigs from Farrowing to Weaning

Farrowing Lot: A small field should be provided as a farrowing lot. This should be growing a green grazing crop for the sows and pigs during the suckling period. Approximately one-fourth to one-half acre should be provided for each brood sow and her litter until the pigs are weaned. This lot should be planted in oats in the fall to provide green grazing for sows that farrow from October until May. This same lot should be planted to cat-tail millet, or cow peas or velvet beans or soybeans to furnish green grazing for sows that farrow from June until frost. It is recommended that a bare strip 20 to 30 feet wide be provided at one side of the lot for the “A” shaped hog houses and for pens for feeding sows and pigs and for sanitary water supply. A narrow strip about three feet wide should be plowed along the fence all around the farrowing lot. These bare strips are necessary for the control of kidney worms and round-worms in pigs. Provide a rubbing post with a horizontal 2 x 4 piece or pole, both post and horizontal piece being wrapped with burlap bags saturated with crank case oil for the prevention of lice on sows and pigs.

Houses: If practical, provide A-type farrowing houses, each house enclosed by temporary portable fences. It is best that this house be floored. The house or houses should be placed on the bare strip on one side of the farrowing lot. If it is not practical for the farmer to have hog houses, temporary shade and bedding should be provided in a pen for each sow at farrowing time.
Sows and suckling pigs on sanitation set-up. Note bare strip on which are placed pen for feeding sows separate from pigs, A-shaped hog houses, sanitary water supply and creep for feeding pigs. Green grazing is abundant to the right of the bare strip.

A clean supply of water should be provided for the sows and pigs. It is impossible to produce strong, healthy pigs if mud holes are present in the farrowing lot. Keep mud holes from forming around water supply or other places in farrowing lot.

Feeding the Sow: A small pen should be provided to enclose the farrowing house or farrowing bed and the sows and her pigs kept together until the pigs are from one to two weeks old. The sows should be fed sparingly until the pigs are approximately one week old. After the pigs are from one to two weeks old the sows should be fed twice per day in a pen located in the bare strip. Sows should be fed in a pen separate from the pigs. The sows should be fed all the grain they will clean up twice per day. They should be fed from one to three pounds of protein supplement per day. The amount of protein supplement will depend on the per cent protein available in this supplement as well as the amount and quality of green grazing available. A mineral mixture should be kept before the sows and pigs.

Caring for Suckling Pigs: Pigs make their most economical growth during the suckling period. Pigs well developed at weaning time will
March pigs hogging-off mature oats in late June.

be set back less at weaning than those not well developed. A creep should be provided for the pigs for feeding corn and protein supplement. Pigs should be fed this feed from three weeks of age to weaning.

Pigs should be double treated for cholera before they are weaned. It costs less to immunize pigs against cholera than to immunize older hogs. Pigs should be castrated during the suckling period. Castration and cholera treatments set young pigs back less than older pigs. Pigs should be weaned at from nine to eleven weeks of age.

**Developing the Weaned Pigs**

The weaned pigs should be developed as fast as possible. Except under certain conditions the most economical swine production can be had by keeping the pigs on full-feed.
Hogging-off corn and Spanish peanuts in late August and in September.

The most economical production can be had when the pigs have all the green grazing they want. This is available in the fields where pigs are hogging off crops from May until frost.

A mineral mixture should be kept before the growing pigs at all times.

When the growing pigs are on a full-feed of grain or other fattening crop, it is economical to have a protein supplement mixture before the pigs at all times. If they are not fed a full ration of grain or other fattening crop the pigs should be hand fed from one-fourth to one-half pound of protein supplement per pig per day. Pigs will consume much less protein supplement when green grazing is available. The green grazing cuts down on the amount of protein supplement consumed and
cuts down on the amount of protein supplement and grain required to put on 100 pounds of gain.

Crops to Provide for Pigs Farrowed in the Winter and Spring: Based on the work at the Georgia Coastal Plain Experiment Station, the following crops should be provided for hogging off by pigs that are farrowed in the late winter and spring.

Oats can be hogged off as a mature crop from approximately May 1 until July 15. Where oats produce approximately 30 bushels per acre, one acre will provide feed for four to ten pigs during this period, depending on the size and age of the pigs. This yield of oats should produce approximately 200 pounds of pork. It is recommended that the pigs be fed corn during the time they are hogging off the oats. Especially is this true if pigs just weaned are placed on mature oats.

Early Dent corn can be ready for hogging off by July 1 to July 10. Field corn alone, or interplanted with Spanish peanuts can be ready for hogging off by August 15. It is necessary that the Spanish peanuts be hogged off within a period of from four to six weeks because Spanish peanuts sprout if left in the ground very long after maturity.

Corn and soybeans are ready for hogging off by September 15. The
recommended varieties of soybeans to provide mature soybean seed for hogging off by September 15 are Hayseed, Pluto and Matthew varieties.

Crops to Provide for Pigs Farrows in the Summer and Fall: The three crops that have been found best adapted for hogging off during the fall and winter at the Georgia Coastal Plain Experiment Station are sweet potatoes, runner peanuts and field corn. The sweet potatoes and runner peanuts should be hogged off by February 15. A greater return per acre can be had from these crops if they are hogged off by January 1. It has been found that runner peanuts start to decay rather badly by the middle of February and sweet potatoes start decaying by the first of February. Corn, if planted alone, stands up well in the field and can profitably be hogged off as late as the first of April.

Acreage of Crops to Provide: It has been found at the Coastal Plain Experiment Station that it requires from .5 to .8 of an acre of land to produce sufficient crops to develop a pig from weaning (35 pounds) to 225 pounds in weight. An acreage requirement for one sow and two litters of pigs per year following this system would be as follows: One-fourth acre farrowing lot for both spring and fall farrowing (same lot

*Fall pigs being finished on a field of corn in March.*
for both spring and fall farrowing). For six pigs weaned in the spring, one acre of mature oats and two to three acres of other crops suggested. One acre of mature oats for carrying sow during gestation period. For a fall litter of six pigs three to four acres of crops suggested. One acre of green oats for sow during gestation period. Total acres for one sow and two litters for the year equals 8½ to 12 acres.

Shade: When the hogs are hogging off crops in the field it is necessary that a temporary shade be provided in the summer and a wind-break and bedding in the winter.

Water Supply: A clean supply of water should be provided for the hogs during the time they are hogging off the crops. To produce clean, healthy hogs they must be kept out of branches and mud holes.

Sanitation: If clean, healthy, worm-free hogs are placed on clean, cultivated ground they should develop into hogs that are free of internal parasites. To do that, it is necessary to not have any mud holes in the fields. Keep the growing pigs out of branches, swamps, permanent pastures and away from older hogs. If possible, it is recommended that a strip one to three feet wide be plowed along the fence all around the field

*Shade is necessary for pigs that are hogging-off crops in the late spring, summer and early fall.*
A clean water supply is essential in the production of worm-free pigs.

that is being hogged off. Provide a rubbing post wrapped with burlap bags saturated with crank case oil in each field to control lice.

Supplementary Feeding: Where hogs are hogging off the grain crops mentioned above, it is recommended that a protein supplement be kept before the hogs at all times. It is also recommended that a mineral mixture be kept before the hogs at all times.

Marketing: If pigs are being developed for the commercial market, it is usually economical to sell them when they weigh from 185 to 240 pounds. If the pigs are to be used on the farm it will often be advantageous to slaughter them when they reach 150 to 230 pounds.