

## Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Saturday, December 18, 1937

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "NEWS NOTES FROM WASHINGTON." Information from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Animal Industry, Plant Industry, and Chemistry and Soils, United States Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

This week's letter from our Department of Agriculture reporter begins with news of Uncle Sam's pig count. Did you know that Uncle Sam counts his pigs each year? That he estimates by that count something about the little pigs that go to market and the little pigs that stay home? And did you know that the pig counting is going on right now? Well, listen to this:

"During the first week in November an army of rural mail carriers dropped 'pig cards' in the mail-boxes of some 750 thousand farmers who raise hogs the country over. These cards ask the pork and lard producers how many little pigs were born on their farms during the past 6 months and the number of pigs saved from these litters and other questions that will help the men in the Bureau of Agricultural Economics here in the Department estimate the pig population for the coming year. Two days before Christmas the count will be finished and the yearly pig crop report will go out showing the number of pigs saved this fall and predicting something about the coming generation of pigs.

"This pig count is an annual event here at the Department of Agriculture, but people are especially interested in it this year because of the short meat supplies, principally of pork. Pig production in 1937 has been estimated at 4 million head less than in 1936. But a big increase is being forecast for 1938 because of the big corn crop this year.

"Speaking of pigs, reminds me of another bit of news I heard recently about styles in pigs.

"You may know, but I didn't, that styles in hogs have varied widely from the short, fat type of years ago, to the larger, longer and narrow hogs of recent years. Just now the style trend is toward a medium type that gains as economically as the larger type hog, but produces the medium-sized cuts of meat that the market now favors. Buyers like hams of from 10 to 14 pounds and bacon with plenty of lean meat.

"In general, the long narrow hogs have a higher proportion of lean meat, of ham, loin, picnic shoulder and shoulder butt. And they have less of fat cuts such as bacon. At the National Agricultural Research Center, breeders now hope to develop hog strains that will butcher well both for the lean hams and loins and also for a good proportion of bacon. Their most promising breeding stock for this purpose is the herd of Danish Landrace hogs, imported recently for the purpose.



12/18/37

"Favored weights vary over the country. In the Corn Belt buyers like 220-pound hogs in the eastern centers, and 250-pound hogs farther west. New England packers prefer rather heavy hogs -- 250 to 260 pounds. New York City slaughtering is mainly for the fresh-pork trade, and 175-pound hogs are favored. Baltimore likes them even lighter.

"So much for news from the men engaged in hog breeding. From the Bureau of Plant Industry comes some news about cabbage breeding. Cabbage breeding is one line in which the plant breeders have already reached their first goal and are now going forward to others. Cabbage breeders have already developed yellows-resistant varieties of all the principal cabbage types. That happens to be one of the most important single achievements of publicly supported research in plant breeding, because cabbage yellows, the disease caused by a fusarium fungus, threatened the whole cabbage growing industry, particularly in Wisconsin.

"So the scientists went to work to select cabbages for their resistance to this disease. L. R. Jones of the Wisconsin Experiment Station was one of the first to start this work. J. C. Walker and other Department of Agriculture plant scientists cooperated with him. The expense of the breeding work was only a trifle in proportion to that saved by its results.

"So now they are going ahead to develop cabbage that will resist diseases other than yellows -- strains particularly well adapted to a definite locality and strains that have superior eating quality or that store particularly well.

"Which reminds me of sauer kraut. Which in turn reminds me of sauer ruben. Sauer ruben, you know, is the product made from turnip instead of cabbage. H. E. Goresline and L. H. James in the Bureau of Chemistry and Soils tried out 17 varieties of turnips and 6 other kinds of vegetables by fermenting them for sauer ruben. The best product they made came from the Purple Top Strap Leaf turnip. Sauer ruben from this kind of turnip received a grade of 'excellent.' Then several other spring and fall turnip varieties made a product that rated as 'good.' (Such vegetables as carrots and radishes didn't rate at all for this purpose.)

"Dr. Goresline advises that turnips ranging from 2 and a half to 3 and a half inches are best for sauer ruben and that salt should be added at the rate of 2.2 percent rather than 2.5 percent usually added for sauer kraut. The sauer ruben will ferment in closed glass jars and store for considerable periods at temperatures ranging from 42 to 80 degrees Fahrenheit without sterilizing. But if it is exposed to air, it will turn dark and eventually spoil."

That concludes this week's news-note letter from the Department of Agriculture in Washington.

\*\*\*\*\*

