

## Suggestions for Growing Hogs in Southeast Alabama

**I**N 1931 experiments were begun on the Wiregrass Substation at Headland, Alabama, to determine if all the feed required by hogs could be grown under a system of management in which the hogs harvested the crops and also to determine the cost of producing hogs under such a system. The following discussions and recommendations relative to hog production are based upon the results of experiments obtained during the past six years, 1931-1936. The experiment was conducted on Norfolk sandy loam soil which was level in topography and which was capable of producing yields of 1,200 pounds of peanuts, 30 bushels of corn, or a bale of cotton per acre. It is believed that the recommendations are applicable to soils of a lower level of fertility than the ones used in this test.

### CROPS USED IN THE EXPERIMENT

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| (1) Green oats                                 | (7) Alternate rows of runner peanuts and corn    |
| (2) Mature oats                                | (8) Four rows running peanuts to one row of corn |
| (3) Permanent pasture                          | (9) Solid running peanuts                        |
| (4) Alternate rows of soybeans and early corn  | (10) Chufas                                      |
| (5) Solid green soybeans                       | (11) Sweet potatoes                              |
| (6) Alternate rows of soybeans and mature corn |  |

### TYPE OF HOGS USED

Pigs used in the experiment were produced by good grade sows and a good boar. Pigs were farrowed about March 1 and September 1. About 85 per cent were raised on this Station and 15 per cent were purchased.

### COST OF PRODUCTION

During the first year of the experiment such crops as chufas and ripe oats grazed in the field were used. The chufas and ripe oats proved to be rather unsatisfactory for hog grazing purposes, due to the high cost per pound and low yields. Interplanting corn with peanuts for hogs also proved to be undesirable. Experiments show very clearly that nitrogen to corn makes cheap corn. Where peanuts are planted with corn, they take some of the nitrogen if it is applied to corn, and nitrogen does not pay on peanuts. Again, there is twice the area to fence and twice the area for hogs to graze over. The hogs cannot get on peanuts until the corn is harvested, which is usually in November, and they should be on running peanuts in early September. Neither can this land be broken in the spring until the peanuts are hogged off. For

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these reasons, it is always advisable to plant peanuts solid where they are to be hogged off.

By eliminating such unsatisfactory crops and by using permanent pasture, green soybeans, and a larger percentage of runner peanuts, the cost of producing hogs in this experiment was reduced from above \$4 in 1931 to below \$3 per hundred pounds in 1936. Costs charged against hog production in this experiment were \$5 per acre for land rent, 75 cents a day for man labor, 50 cents a day for mule labor, and the current market value of such items as feed, seed, fertilizer, etc. The experiment definitely shows that hogs may be produced very economically under a cropping system such as is recommended in this leaflet.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

**Farrowing Times.**—Produce two litters per year, having one farrowed in November and the other in May rather than in September and March as is usually recommended. Pigs farrowed in September seldom reach “tops” by March when the fields have to be broken. This necessitates hand feeding or selling No. 2 hogs.

**Hogs to Use.**—The best sow for this section is one that is thrifty, weighs—when in good living order—175 to 200 pounds, has 6 to 8 pigs, is a good milker, is always hungry, and takes good care of her pigs. Breed this kind of a sow to a good boar. A **good boar** is one that is easily handled, has an arched back from ears to tail, has a strong bone—that is, stands up on his toes. If his bone is weak, he may get pigs that “go down in the lines” when fat on peanuts.

**Houses.**—Do not use permanent or portable houses or sheds with hogs at any time. Old houses and water holes are frequent sources of worm infestation. For the fattening hogs on the fields use temporary shade in hot weather and temporary windbreak in cold weather. These may be made cheaply from either old tin, lumber, or poles and brush. In case the latter are used, burn them when the hogs leave the field.

Watch the sow that is about to farrow. When she has made her bed, build her the same kind of protection as described above. Be sure there is no deep hole for water to run in. When the pigs are weaned, remove the shed and burn any bedding that may be left.

From August 1, 1930, to July 31, 1937, there were very few hogs lost on experiments conducted at the Wiregrass Station. There have been produced around 300 hogs without any cash outlay for medicine of any kind. The hogs sold have been almost free from losses caused by worms. These results are attributed to the following:

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| (1) No old buildings for hogs.        | (3) Sunshine on every piece of ground.         |
| (2) No permanent hog houses and pens. | (4) Bringing in no infected hogs from outside. |

**Minerals.**—The following mineral mixture should be kept before all hogs at all times, and a fresh supply added every two or three days:

100 pounds charcoal or wood ashes    100 pounds hydrated lime  
100 pounds salt

This should be kept in a trough with a long board nailed across one end so it cannot be rooted over. It should also be near the water supply as hogs drink water more freely just after eating this mixture.

**Size of Fields to Graze.**—The size of field to graze depends upon the number and size of hogs going on the field. In general, there should be from 800 to 1,200 pounds of live hog per acre of solid runner peanuts.

The peanuts should be near water, not farther than one-fourth mile from the farthest corner of the field to water. For greater distances than this, it will pay to graze the peanuts nearest the water in September, October, and November and then haul water to hogs in December, January, and February while grazing those peanuts that are over one-fourth of a mile from water.

It is always advisable to cut up the peanut area with temporary fences, and graze small areas. This eliminates what farmers call "**standing still**" of hogs. They eat over a field and just eat enough daily to hold their own, even though the field has plenty of feed. Grazing small areas eliminates this condition. Again, by grazing small areas, the big hogs can be moved out and the November pigs let in to clean up the field so plowing can be started.

#### CROPS

The following crops may be used in the most economical production of pork:

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| (1) Green oats                 | (4) Runner peanuts    |
| (2) Oootan soybeans            | (5) Permanent pasture |
| (3) Spanish peanuts (possibly) |                       |

**Green Oats.**—Plant one acre of oats for each sow for grazing in November, December, January, February, and March. Plant 2½ bushels of oats per acre in October and turn the hogs on the oats as soon as they will not pull up. If oats are grown to be harvested in the spring, graze sows and pigs on them until time to top dress, or about March 1. If oats are not planted to harvest, allow the pigs and sows to graze on them until next spring, then break the land and plant any crop desired. The sows farrow the November pigs on these oats and are fed a little corn. In addition to the oats, let the pigs clean up the field behind the fattening hogs or where peanuts were gathered, or run in a corn field or potato patch. These pigs are the "clean up" hogs which make a living on "waste" until April, when planting begins; then they go to the permanent pasture.

When the November pigs are weaned, breed the sows to farrow again in May. Leave them on the oats and feed just enough corn to keep them in living order. **Never** let sows get fat. When they leave the oats, move them to the permanent pasture.

**Soybeans.**—About cotton planting time, plant one acre per sow in Oootan soybeans. On good land soybeans need no fertilizer. On thin land use 400 pounds of basic slag, or 200 pounds

of superphosphate, or 200 pounds of mixed fertilizer per acre at planting. Plant in 3-ft. rows with hills 10 inches apart. A 10-inch running peanut plate may be used for planting. This will take about 20 pounds of seed per acre. Cultivate the soybeans sufficiently to control weeds. When the soybeans are about knee high, they are ready for grazing by hogs. This should be about July 1.

**Spanish Peanuts.**—On land that grows Spanish peanuts well, plant in early April one acre of Spanish peanuts, per sow, in 18-inch rows and 6-inch hills. Put the November pigs on these in August.

**Runner Peanuts.**—On fairly thin land, plant 4 to 4½ acres per sow in solid runner peanuts during the first half of April. This will provide runner peanuts ready for grazing in early September. Hogs should be turned in on these just as soon as the peanuts are ready to be grazed.

**Permanent Pasture.**—This pasture should be free of shade (except a few high trees), mudholes, old buildings, and permanent hog houses and pens. To make a good hog pasture, clean up a branch bottom or other moist land, break the land, and broadcast 1,000 pounds of basic slag per acre, disc the slag in, sow 30 pounds of common lespedeza seed per acre in early March, and drag a brush over it to cover seed. One acre per sow of this kind of pasture is sufficient. Keep November pigs and sows on this pasture during April, May, and June. Feed enough to keep in fair living order. The sows farrow the May pigs in this pasture.

#### MOVEMENT OF HOGS

<b>Sows:</b>	On oats from November to April. On pasture from April to July. On soybeans from July to November.
<b>November Pigs:</b>	On oats from November to December. Gleaning from January to April. On pasture from April to July. On soybeans from July to August 15. On Spanish peanuts from August 15 to September 10. On runner peanuts in September and October. Sell the pigs in October.
<b>May Pigs:</b>	On pasture in May to June. On soybeans in July to August. On runner peanuts from September to February. Sell the pigs in February.

Farmers will find it desirable to grow hogs on the thin sandy land near streams and ponds which are handy to water. These rolling thin sandy lands are the poor cotton lands and will make poor yields of peanuts if they are harvested from year to year. By clearing the bottom land along branches and ponds for pasture purposes and planting hog grazing crops on the thin sandy lands adjacent to streams, hog production may be added to the farm program in South Alabama without materially curtailing cotton production. In this way the farm income may be definitely increased by having both cotton and hogs for sale.

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