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DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION of The Alabama Polytechnic Institute, Auburn, Ala.

M. J. Funchess, Director

METHOD OF STORING CURED PORK TO PREVENT INFESTATION BY SKIPPERS

W. E. SEWELL, Animal Husbandman

The principal pest attacking cured pork is a white grub about one-fourth of an inch long, commonly known as the skipper. The name comes from the characteristics of its movement; it curls its ends together and then straightens rapidly to throw itself or "skip" a distance of several inches.

The grub is the larval stage of the "skipper" fly, which is about half as long as the common house fly. The female fly lays her eggs in clusters on the softer portions of the meat, particularly at the butts of hams and shoulders. The eggs hatch in about 24 hours and the grubs burrow as a mass into the meat, producing spoiled and unsightly areas. The grubs attain full size in about 5 days, and they leave the meat to change to long red cells called pupae. The pupae break and the young flies emerge in about 5 days.

The skipper is more active in warm weather, and is especially destructive in the South where farmers lose considerable meat from its infestations every year. At Auburn most of the infestations occur between April and November. However, it is well to guard against this pest during most of the year, especially in southern Alabama where the winters are mild.

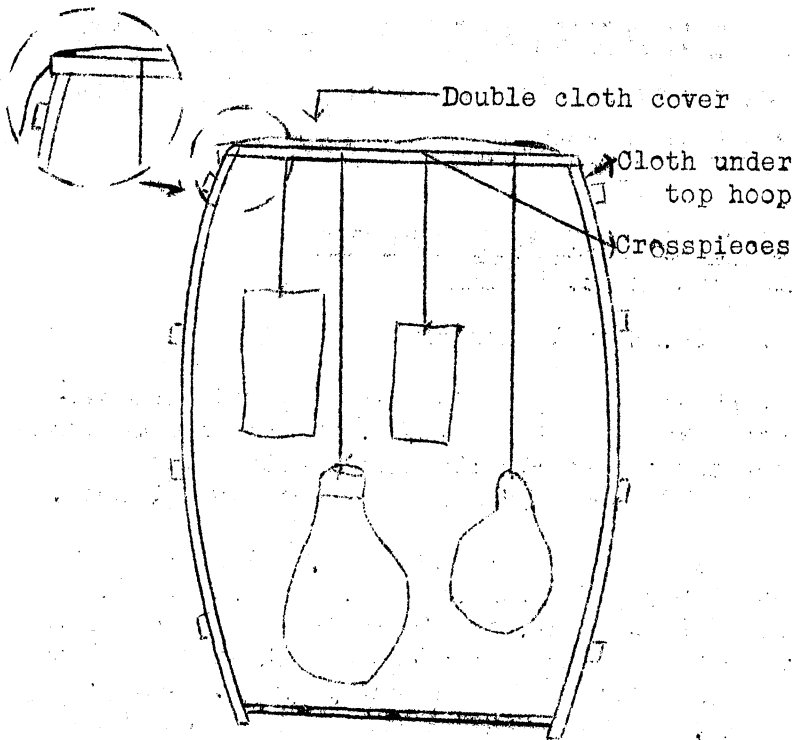
The method of control given here was tested in a closed room where skippers were grown in large number and allowed to come in contact with the containers throughout the test period. Pork was hung in each of five barrels and one box. Four of the five barrels and the box were covered according to the method described below and the fifth barrel was left open. The box was in the room 2 months and the barrels 5 months. Skipper flies were observed crawling over the coverings of the containers throughout the test period, but when the containers were removed from the room and opened, none of the meat was infested with skippers and no spoilage had occurred. Some small brown beetles were found in one of the containers, but had done no particular damage.

Directions

Either barrels or boxes may be used as containers, but, since it is difficult to make a box fly-tight, barrels are recommended. By hanging the meat at various levels, the meat cured in a barrel can be stored in the same barrel.

The essential features of the method are shown in the diagrams.

Where a barrel is used the procedure is as follows:



Cross section of barrel illustrating method of hanging meat

1. Select as cool a place as possible for storage.

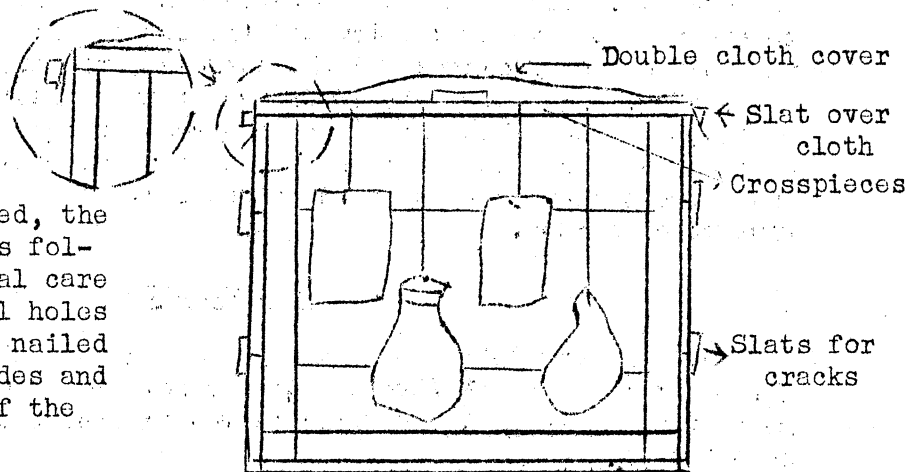
2. Wash out the barrel with hot water and soap and remove the top hoop.

3. Cut two boards 2 or 3 inches wide and long enough to lay across the top of the barrel and extend over about one-fourth of an inch. Place the boards to cross in the middle and tack them to the edge of the barrel.

4. Hang the meat from the crosspieces with strings of varying lengths to use all the available space in the barrel.

5. Drive out any flies and insects that may have entered the barrel after it was washed, and cover it with a clean salt sack or double layer of unbleached domestic cloth.

6. Work the hoop on around the ends of the crosspieces and drive it down tight over the cloth making sure the cloth is under the hoop all around.



Where a box is used, the same general procedure is followed, except that special care must be taken to stop all holes or cracks, and slats are nailed over the cloth at the sides and ends to take the place of the hoop used on the barrel.

Cross section of box illustrating method of hanging meat