

Meaty, efficient hogs neglected in show-ring?

Several concerned swine experts think the show-ring is no longer placing enough emphasis on meatiness in hogs.

And some are concerned that not enough emphasis is being placed on feed efficiency, one of those indicators of the profitability of certain hogs.

The clincher for some observers was the fact that one of the top five barrows in divisional competition at the National Barrow Show earlier this month in Austin, Minn., had only a 3.8-square-inch loin eye.

Meaty hogs of a few years ago produced 6- and 7-square-inch loin eyes.

"I don't think many hog producers would check-off money to promote a product like that," Bernard Ebbing of Waterloo, a former Rath Packing Co. official, said last week.

The show-ring has been downplaying the "meatball-type" hog with large ham and loins in recent years in favor of white-colored hogs that show characteristics promising large litters.

As a result, the barrows entered in carcass shows haven't had loin eyes as big as those of a few years ago. Some blame the show-ring judging for this, while others blame purebred swine registries for not "certifying" litters that produce meaty carcasses.

Some say the show-ring has become enamored with the super reproductive efficiency of white sows at the expense of the fast-gaining, muscular, feed-efficient breeds.

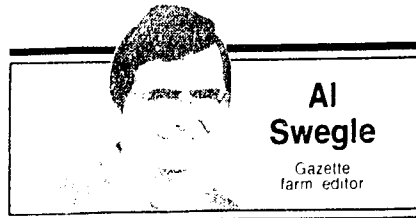
PALMER HOLDEN of Ames, Iowa State University extension swine specialist, spent a couple of days at the nation's premier hog show, the National Barrow Show, and he came away chagrined.

"The judges talked about length of snout, long forearm, length of stride and style when evaluating hogs," Holden said.

"But have you ever eaten a long forearm? This length of stride business would make you think they were talking about race horses."

Holden says hog judges today aren't talking about meat anymore: "They just aren't looking for meat. You write down the number of times that a hog judge mentions meat, and you'll find out how concerned they are about meatiness."

National Barrow Show Manager John Phillips says he agrees with Holden that the show-ring hasn't



emphasized meat production in the last year or so.

"The trend has been to a body type that indicates strong production characteristics," Phillips said. "But I wouldn't be as critical of the show-ring as Palmer is."

"Things haven't gotten as bad as he says they have."

Dick Juhl of Mechanicsville, who officiates at two different hog shows and is a hog instructor at Kirkwood Community College, agrees with Holden that the show-ring has neglected meatiness in recent years.

"We went overboard trying to associate certain reproductive traits with certain breeds," Juhl said. "The show-ring almost eliminated its emphasis on muscle in recent years."

Juhl is chairman of the sponsoring committee of Swine Expo, the state spring market hog show held in Cedar Rapids each February. He's also hog superintendent at the All-Iowa Fair in Cedar Rapids.

Bruce Henderson of Peoria, Ill., secretary of the United Duroc Swine Registry, thinks the judging has begun to swing back to an emphasis on meatiness.

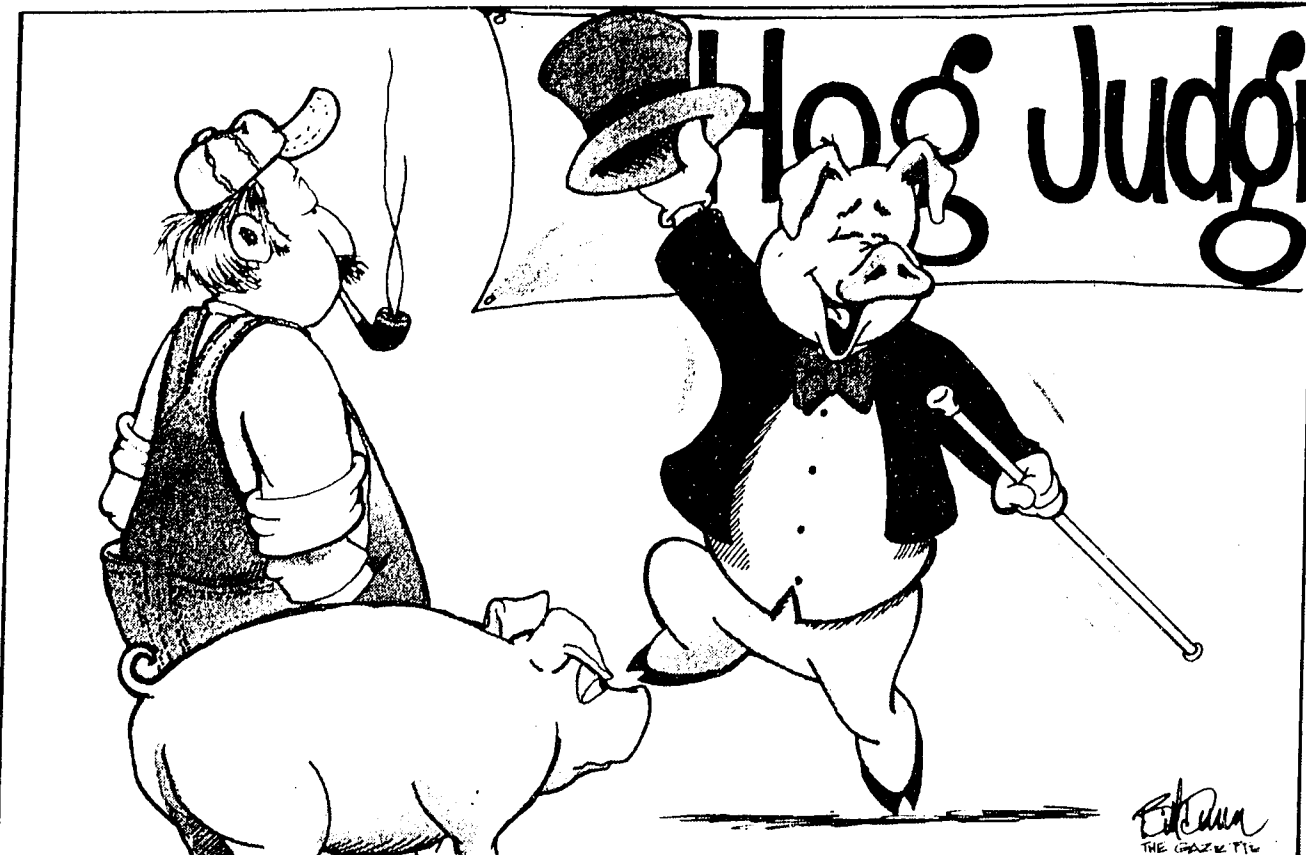
Henderson's Duroc hogs are noted for their ability to gain fast on a small amount of feed.

"The trend in recent years has been to forget the loin eye," Henderson said, "and trends in livestock shows are notorious for going to the extreme. The emphasis on swine reproductivity may have swung too far."

But the meatball type of hog of a few years ago that was dominating the show-ring "forgot how to reproduce," so some switch from that extreme emphasis on ham and loin was necessary, Henderson said.

TODAY'S HOG JUDGE is looking for hogs that walk well and are sound on their feet to stand the stress of walking on concrete floors in confinement buildings. Judges like hogs that are long, deep and wide-chested, with muscle throughout. The ham and loin should be long rather than bulging as in previous years.

"The big push in the last year or



so has been to find hogs that will reproduce well and produce one or two extra pigs per litter," Holden said.

Now Holden, like Henderson, Ebbing and Juhl, hopes the show-ring pendulum will swing back to emphasis on meat production again.

Holden says the best indicators of hog profitability are rate of gain and feed efficiency. Both indicators are hard to determine by simply eyeballing hogs in a show-ring.

A few years ago, purebred breeders had litters "certified" to show that their particular breeding combination of boars and sows would produce meaty hogs.

A packing plant would certify that one of the offspring produced a high cutability carcass, one with lots of ham and loin.

But swine breed registries haven't been doing that lately, and Henderson blames this trend on packers.

"Packers won't certify hogs for purebred breeders anymore," Henderson said, "because it costs them to stop their production line to get the carcass data on just one hog."

"It became too costly for the purebred breeder."

Juhl says packers haven't been cooperative with breeders trying to certify their litters for meatiness. As a result, breed registries have de-emphasized certification.

Henderson says most breed registries have added barrow shows to their spotlight events to show off their meaty hogs: "This shows breed

registries are concerned about meatiness."

JUHL SAYS says the trend in hog shows in recent years has been to have special classes for hogs raised in central test stations or in "derby" classes for on-farm performance-tested hogs.

These relatively new shows are for pigs with known birth dates, and breeders can compare the rate of gain performance of the different animals.

Juhl's Swine Expo has both a central test division and an on-farm performance division. The All-Iowa Fair has not yet adopted the new concept. Hogs shown there are evaluated for their muscular and reproductive conformation without regard for their age or rate of gain.

What seems to be lacking in the show-ring today is any way of evaluating feed efficiency. About the only indicator show judges have of feed efficiency is the rate of gain. Usually fast-gaining hogs utilize feed more efficiently.

But recording a hog's rate of gain isn't as good as actually measuring how much feed it takes to put on a pound of gain. And the only people who do that are officials at swine testing stations, such as Paul Kepler,

manager of the Farmland Swine Testing Station at Lisbon.

Buyers who go to the Farmland Swine Testing Station and pick out a herd sire can know the amount of feed that it took to produce 100 pounds of pork. They also know how fast the hog put on its rate of gain.

Kepler was tickled last week that one of the Hampshires he raised this summer turned out to be the high-selling boar at the National Barrow Show. The hog sold for \$10,000.

The latest issue of Successful Farming says hog men aren't doing well in terms of producing feed efficient hogs. The Des Moines-based magazine noted that the University of Illinois had a goal of producing hogs that would gain a pound of weight on only 3.75 pounds feed by 1985.

Nonetheless, the 900 hog men on the University's Farm Business Management record program aren't doing that well. Successful Farming says: "In 1976, the average feed

conversion was 4.10. It's been poorer every year since then, and was 4.18 last year."

Holden says Iowa hog men are doing better than that. He cites a study of the top hog producers in the state, which shows that farmers making the most money feeding hogs have the best feed efficiency.

Extension swine specialists in Iowa keep track of a selected group of hog farmers through Iowa State University's Swine Enterprise Record Program.

Last year 69 hog farmers participated in the program and reported feeding 3.9 pounds of feed to produce a pound of gain. That compares with 4.2 pounds fed in 1978 and 4.0 pounds fed in 1979 to produce that pound of gain.

"That shows we've been knocking off two-tenths of a pound of feed per pound of gain since we've started our program," he said.

THE TOP THIRD of the farmers in the record program, the ones who made the most money, fed only 3.63 pounds of feed per pound of gain.

"That shows we've been making progress," Holden said.

Boars fed out each year at the central boar stations around the state also are doing quite well. Last year all the boars on test averaged 2.08 pounds per day gain. Their feed efficiency was 2.45 pounds of feed per pound of gain.

Some of the most efficient boars this past year at swine testing stations in Iowa used only 2.04 pounds of feed to put on a pound of gain.

The fastest gaining boar on test at Lisbon this summer was a Yorkshire that gained 3.08 pounds per day and was owned by Everett Mattox's Iowa Yorkshire Farm at Wyoming. The three boars in the pen used only 2.33 pounds of feed to put on each pound of gain.

Holden says he's concerned that swine testing stations in Iowa are only testing 2,000 boars a year for the state's 50,000 pork producers. The Lisbon test station is one of the largest in Iowa, testing nearly 1,000 boars a year.

"The test station is the only place to test feed efficiency, and this is one of the most important ways farmers can cut down their production costs," Holden said.

State Department paper advocates foreign sugar

Cox News Service

WASHINGTON — Government support for domestic sugar producers should be removed and foreign growers allowed to take over larger shares of the U.S. market, an unpublished State Department paper concludes.

The report, which in effect advocates allowing U.S. sugar producers to be driven out of business by cheaper foreign sugar and corn sweetener, says U.S. allies abroad would benefit from such a development.

Elimination of government price supports would thus have a beneficial effect on U.S. foreign policy, according to the paper. It also argues that U.S. consumers would pay less for sugar in the long run.

Although it is marked "Limited Official Use," the report apparently has circulated for several weeks among members of Congress and officials of organizations of sugar and sweetener producers. Written April 15, it comes to light at a time when sugarcane and beet growers are lobbying in Congress for renewal of a government price support program.

The Senate has included provisions in the new federal farm bill to support the wholesale price of raw sugar at 18

cents per pound. The House has not acted.

On this date

In 1978, the Senate passed a bill to deregulate natural gas prices by 1985.

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Located on Prospect St., or east of the school in Blairtown, Iowa.
Saturday Oct. 3rd at 1:00 P.M.

Will sell miscellaneous household items from trailer first, then at 2:00 P.M. we will sell a 12-ft. x 60-ft. Champion trailer, furnished with stove, refrigerator, washer & dryer, new carpeting, also other furnishings. This trailer is located on Morris 3rd addition Lot 4 Block 3 and Morris 3rd addition W 1/2 Lot 5 Blk. 3. Measurement of these lots is 97'6 1/2" x 162'. Terms, 10% down on real estate on day of sale and balance when merchantable title is given. Taxes will be prorated according to possession. Immediate possession can be had. Any other announcements on sale day take precedence over previous advertising. Sale subject to court approval.

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Prairieburg, Iowa
Saturday, October 10, 11 a.m.

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See complete listing in next Sunday's Gazette.

Mary Kula — Owner
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AUCTION
Sat. Oct. 3, 1981

Mrs. Douglas is moving out of state and will sell the following items at public auction at
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Early American table with 5 chairs, buffet, china cabinet; Dining room table, extra leaves and 6 chairs; Glass door cabinet; Sewing machine cabinet; Kneehole desk; Metal office desk; 2 office chairs; Twin bed complete; 3 metal utility cabinets; Kitchen Aid portable dishwasher; 15 cu. ft. chest type Coronado freezer, real good; Refrigerator; Wet and dry vacuum; Book shelves; Butchers block; Sheet music and books; electric blanket, dual control; 8 MM movie camera and projector; Adding machine; Picture and picture frames; 2 ice cream freezers; Step ladders; 14 ft. extension ladder; Sears 21 inch lawn mower; Complete set of Queen Anne dishes; Complete set of Brown stone dishes; glasses; odd dishes; vases; flower pots; jars; old bottles and jars; some old dishes; bottles and jars of antique motif.

Special Mention
Fisher slate bumper pool table, this table is in perfect condition and will sell complete with cues and balls. If you're looking for table like new, see this one.

1967 Mustang 1967
Mustang 302 engine, white color this car will be inspected and ready to transfer sale day.

Note: The above appliance will be represented sale day. Partial listing lots of small items not listed. Be on time, will start promptly at 1 P.M.

Not responsible in case of accident
Owner Marilyn Douglas

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