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COMMERCIAL PIG PRODUCTION

IN

1960

by

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THE EDINBURGH SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE
WEST MAINS ROAD
EDINBURGH 9

Dept of Economics

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Hill Sheep Farms Stock-Rearing Farms	Reports for the years 1948-49 to 1959-60
Stock Raising and Feeding Farms Arable Farms	Reports for the years 1948-49 to 1959-60
Dairy Farms	Reports for the years 1948-49 to 1959-60

B. Enterprise Studies :-

Milk Production (Annual Reports)
Commercial Egg Production
Pig Production
Calf Production
Barley, Turnips and Sugar Beet Costs
Etc.

C. Miscellaneous

Piece-Work Potato Gathering
Hill Farming During the Post-War Period
Some Notes on Reseeding Old Grassland on Hill and Upland Farms, 1955-57
Diesel Tractor Costs and Performance in the East of Scotland, 1956-57
Some Notes on Grain Drying - 1957 Harvest
Report on Grain Drying - 1958 Harvest
Organisation of Hill and Upland Farming in Selkirkshire
Economic Aspects of Tractor Work, 1957-58
Some Notes on the Depreciation and Repair Costs of Farm Machinery
Hill and Upland Sheep Production Costs.

Copies of these publications may be obtained on request to the Secretary of the College or the Advisory Economist.

FOREWORD

This report, although concerned with a limited number of pig enterprises, indicates that the production of bacon pigs can still be regarded as a reasonably profitable undertaking, given good management and all that is implied by the term. Most of the factors which determine profitability will be well known to all interested in this sector of the livestock industry. The report stresses the importance of two basic considerations - the efficient use of feed to make the most of home-grown grain where this is available, and the importance of achieving a high rate of weaners per sow per annum. Food efficiency is, of course, also linked up with the capacity of the feeding pig to convert food into first quality pig meat and this entails the closest attention to the selection and management of the breeding herd as well as the necessity for careful supervision of the feeding during the fattening stages, both as regards quantity and quality of the foods fed. Roughly speaking, food accounts for 75 per cent of the total cost of a self-contained breeding and feeding herd and labour for another 10 per cent. Other costs are relatively unimportant though the cost of special housing will always be somewhat heavier than where adaptations are all that is necessary.

Given a reasonable degree of good management and stockmanship applied to good quality breeding and feeding stock, bacon pig production appears to offer a fair return to those who are prepared to carry out a consistent policy, whether on highly specialised, large-scale units, or even where conditions permit only a limited scale of operations.

J. D. NUTT.

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COMMERCIAL PIG PRODUCTION

1960

INTRODUCTION

This report gives the results of an investigation into the costs and returns from commercial pig production in the East of Scotland during 1960 - a year in which there was a marked increase in the numbers of breeding pigs; the December 1960 returns indicated an increase of 8%. This expansion in the national herd suggests that the award at the 1960 Price Review had made pig production more attractive. The figures available from the 1960 investigation suggest, however, that the increase in the award was insufficient to maintain the level of profit.

The Sample

Twelve farmers co-operated in the investigation, each supplying one record. Seven of the farms were described as arable and feeding farms and five were small holdings. All of the enterprises combined both breeding and feeding, the general policy being to transfer weaned pigs to the fattening herd at from six to eight weeks of age. Few pigs were purchased, except for replacing wastage in the breeding herd. On nine of the enterprises, bacon, pork and store pigs were produced in varying proportions, with the production of bacon pigs predominating; on three, only bacon pigs were produced.

Although there was a wide variation in the size of the individual herds, which ranged from a herd of 12 sows on a small holding to one of 82 sows on a large arable farm, the distribution by size groups showed that six, or half of the herds, were between 41 and 60 sows in size and three had less than 20 sows.

Breed of Pig

The breeding herds of ten of the enterprises comprised Large White pigs only; one enterprise used cross Large White and Wessex sows mated with a Large White or a Landrace boar and the remaining herd, pure Landrace stock only. These figures indicate the popularity of the Large White breed in herds producing mainly bacon pigs.

COSTS, RETURNS, PROFITS

The enterprises can be broadly classified into two main groups, those on arable and feeding farms and those on small holdings. In the former group the pigs were housed in modified farm buildings and hence tended to have a relatively low cost per sow for buildings and equipment; feeding was based on a higher proportion of home-grown foods and most of the foods were milled and mixed on the farm. The work was performed by paid labour, except at week-ends when it was occasionally done by the farmer. By contrast, the pigs in the latter group were housed in specially constructed buildings and hence had a relatively high capital cost per sow for buildings and equipment; the bulk of purchased foods comprised proprietary brands. The labour was chiefly that of the farmer himself.

Except for the cost of food fed to the breeding and feeding stock it was not possible to obtain separate records of all the costs incurred. Costs and returns have therefore only been shown for the enterprises as a whole. An additional difficulty, in view of the different types of pig produced, was the choice of a suitable standard of measurement. To overcome this difficulty the results have been expressed either in terms of the average number of breeding sows in the herd during the year or per £100 output, output being defined as sales less purchases and adjusted for differences in the valuations.

As /

As could be expected with such a large variation in both the size of the individual herds and systems of management there were also wide differences in the average profit per sow. The highest profit, £77:12s. per sow, was for an enterprise on an arable and feeding farm on which the pigs were housed at a low capital cost per sow, were fed on relatively cheap meals (these were purchased "straights" plus home-grown foods mixed and milled on the farm) and there was a high rate of weaners per sow per year. On the other hand, the least profitable enterprise, also on an arable and feeding farm, incurred a loss of £38:13s. per sow. In this case feeding was based mainly on purchased feed at a relatively high cost per cwt. and the number of weaners per sow per year was low; although the pigs were housed in old farm buildings, the cost of modification was high, leading to a high annual depreciation charge.

Distribution of Profits

The distribution of the profits per sow for the whole sample, given in Table I, shows that the majority of enterprises earned profits of between £21 and £60 per sow. The average profit per sow for all the enterprises was £29:15s.

TABLE I. DISTRIBUTION OF PROFITS PER SOW PER YEAR

	Losses	£1-£20	£21-£40	£41-£60	£61-£80	Average £29.15
Number of Enterprises	2	2	3	4	1	12

Profitability - Two Groups Compared

In view of the differences in conditions between the seven enterprises on arable and feeding farms and the five on small holdings, the costs, outputs and profits per sow and other data for the two groups have been shown separately in Table II for purposes of comparison.

TABLE II. COSTS, OUTPUTS AND PROFITS PER SOW

Items	7 Enterprises on Arable and Feeding Farms		5 Enterprises on Small Holdings		Average of 12 Enterprises	
	£ s.	£ s.	£ s.	£ s.	£ s.	£ s.
Net Food Costs -						
Purchased	119:11		178: 7		144: 1	
Home-Grown	44: 3	163:14	-: -	178: 7	25:15	169:16
Labour		19:11		34: 4		25:13
Other Costs		31: 8		34: 9		32:13
Total Costs		£214:13		£247: -		£228: 2
Profit		40:13		14:10		29:15
TOTAL OUTPUT PER SOW		£255: 6		£261:10		£257:17

It may be noted that the output per sow for the enterprises on the arable and feeding farms was £255:6s., i.e. slightly lower than for the small holdings, at £261:10s. The respective total net costs per sow were £214:13s. and £247, giving the former group an overall advantage of £32:7s.; on balance the enterprises on arable and feeding farms showed a higher profit /

profit of £26:3s. per sow. Each of the individual items of cost for this group was lower, the biggest differences being in the net food and labour costs, each of which was less by £14:13s. per sow. Other costs were lower by £3:1s. per sow. Total net costs per sow for the whole sample amounted to £228:2s. of which net food costs accounted for £169:16s. or 74% of the total. The total output was £257:17s. giving an average profit of £29:15s. per sow.

The factors responsible for these variations in the costs and output per sow are shown in Table III.

TABLE III. FACTORS AFFECTING PROFITABILITY BETWEEN TWO GROUPS OF ENTERPRISES

Factors	7 Enterprises on Arable and Feeding Farms	5 Enterprises on Small Holdings
Factors Affecting Food Costs		
a) Total weight of meal equivalent per sow per enterprise	122.5 cwt.	122.6 cwt.
b) Average cost per cwt. of meal equivalent (all meals)	26s.9d.	29s.1d.
Factors Affecting Labour Costs		
a) Total labour hours per sow per year	94 hours	147 hours
b) Wage rate per hour	4s.2d.	4s.8d.
Factors Affecting Output		
a) Average number of weaners per sow per year	16.40	17.49
b) Average price per pig sold	£16:13s.	£15:10s.

As may be seen the amounts of food fed per sow per year for the enterprises as a whole were similar at about 122½ cwt. meal equivalent for both groups. Consequently the greater net food costs per sow for the enterprises on small holdings was due primarily to the higher cost per cwt. of meal equivalent of all foods fed, greater by 2s.4d. This group also showed a much larger total number of labour hours per sow per year and at a higher rate per hour, more by 53 hours and 6d. per hour respectively. The chief factor responsible for the larger number of hours per sow for this group was the relatively heavy use of family labour which, being unpaid, tended to work longer hours than was economically justifiable. It may also be noted that although the group on small holdings had a lower average price per pig sold than had the group of enterprises on arable and feeding farms, less by £1:3s. per pig, it had a greater number of weaners per sow, more on average by 1.09. This greater breeding efficiency was largely responsible for this group's greater output per sow.

FACTORS AFFECTING PROFITABILITY

Some of the factors affecting profitability can be brought out more clearly by comparing the most profitable enterprises with the least profitable ones.

With food costs accounting for such a large percentage of total costs per sow per year it is clear that a strict control of feeding is essential /

essential if net food costs are to be kept as low as possible and a good level of profitability attained. The importance of this is borne out in a comparison of the main factors which affected the profitability per sow between the three most and the three least profitable enterprises in the sample. The comparative data are given in Table IV.

TABLE IV. MAIN FACTORS AFFECTING PROFITABILITY - A COMPARISON

Factors	3 Most Profitable Enterprises	3 Least Profitable Enterprises
Factors Affecting Food Costs		
1. Breeding Herd		
a) Meal equivalent per sow per year	31 cwt.	32 cwt.
b) Cost per cwt. of meal equivalent	31s.1d.	31s.6d.
2. Feeding Herd		
a) lb. meal equivalent per lb. live weight gain	3.4 lb.	4.3 lb.
b) Cost per cwt. of meal equivalent	25s.5d.	27s.9d.
Factors Affecting Output		
a) Weaners per sow per year	17.4	14.6
b) % Total sales by value (bacon pigs)	36%	26%
c) Average price per pig sold	£16:10s.	£16:3s.

It may be seen that the main factors were associated with the food costs of the feeding herd and with the output per sow. Comparing the factors affecting the food costs in the breeding herd it may be seen that there was relatively little difference either in the total weight or in the cost of food fed per sow, the most profitable group consuming 1 cwt. less food, at a cost lower by 5d. per cwt. meal equivalent. In the feeding herd, however, there was a marked difference in both the food conversion rate and the cost per cwt. of meal equivalent fed. These were lower for the most profitable group by .9 lb. meal equivalent per lb. live weight gain and 2s.4d. per cwt. respectively. Some indication of the saving in weight and cost of the food by the most profitable group is made clear if it is assumed that both groups produced only bacon pigs, which, as weaners, had been transferred to the fattening herd at 35 lb. live weight and sold at 200 lb. live weight. If so, then those enterprises in the most profitable group would require 5 cwt. of fattening meal equivalent per baconer as against 6 1/3 cwt. for the least profitable one, with a difference in cost of £2:8:8d. in favour of the former.

The most profitable group averaged 17.4 weaners per sow per year and the least profitable one 14.6, a difference of nearly three weaners per sow per year; this increased output was achieved at a slightly lower food consumption per sow per year. It is apparent that a higher output of weaners does not necessarily entail a higher food consumption per sow in the breeding herd. Much will depend on the fecundity and the management of the herd. When it is remembered that the market price of a weaner can be as high as £5:10s., a high average number of weaners per sow per year is /

is an important factor in achieving profitability, provided, of course, that the constitution of the weaners and the average weaning weight are not unduly affected. It may also be noted that this increased number of weaners per sow per year for the profitable group was also related to a higher average price per pig sold (mainly due to the greater production of baconers) and resulted in a higher output per sow.

A Case Study

The significance of the profitability factors is brought out in the results from an enterprise on an arable and feeding farm for which records were received during each of the three years 1958 to 1960.

This enterprise produces mainly bacon pigs, is self-contained and the boars and sows are of the Large White breed. Most of the foods are purchased as "straights" (except for a relatively small quantity of home-grown grain) and these are milled and mixed on the farm. By doing so the farmer has been able to reduce the cost per cwt. of all meals fed to a figure appreciably below that for standard purchased meals. Stress is placed on achieving a good food conversion rate and a good number of weaners per sow per year. The former has been achieved by purchasing a good strain of pig, using well insulated buildings (at a moderately high cost per sow) and controlling the feeding of the bacon pigs during the later stages of fattening. Good breeding results have been achieved by careful attention to sow management, by constructing separate feeders for the empty sows and also by providing well designed farrowing quarters. The extent to which the food conversion rate, the number of weaners per sow per year and the profit per £100 output have changed during the three years is shown below.

	1958	1959	1960
Profit per £100 Output	£16: 2s.	£15: 1s.	£14
Factors Affecting Food Costs			
a) Cwt. meal per sow per year	29 cwt.	30 cwt.	30 cwt.
b) Lb. meal per lb. live weight gain	3.9 lb.	3.7 lb.	3.7 lb.
c) Cost per cwt. (all meals)	26s.5d.	26s.9d.	26s.7d.
Factors Affecting Output			
a) Weaners per sow per year	14.1	17.9	17.9
b) Return per score baconer live weight	36s.3d.	34s.3d.	33s.5d.

It may be seen that the food conversion rate improved from 3.9 to 3.7 lb. meal per lb. live weight gain and that there had been little change in the cost per cwt. for all meals fed. The total number of weaners per sow per year showed a marked improvement, increasing from 14.1 to 17.9 without an appreciable increase in the food consumed per sow per year in the breeding herd. Over the same period the profit per £100 output dropped by a relatively small amount, being less by £2:2s. per £100 output, despite a drop in the price per score live weight which fell from 36s.3d. to 33s.5d.

CAPITAL COSTS

It was mentioned earlier in the report that the capital cost of buildings and equipment for the enterprises on arable and feeding farms (mainly housed in adapted old farm buildings) tended to be lower than for those enterprises on small holdings housed in specially constructed buildings. The average investment per 20 sows in buildings, equipment and livestock is shown in Table V.

TABLE V. /

TABLE V. AVERAGE CAPITAL INVESTED PER 20 SOWS - GROUPS OF ENTERPRISES COMPARED

Description of Capital Invested	5 Enterprises on Small Holdings		7 Enterprises on Arable and Feeding Farms	
	£	£	£	£
A. Deadstock				
1) Buildings and Fixtures	1947		1466	
2) General Equipment	438		129	
Total Deadstock		2385		1595
B. Livestock				
1) Breeding Pigs	692		656	
2) Gilts	111		47	
3) Sucklers and Store Pigs	1031		1224	
Total Livestock		1834		1927
C. Working Capital for one Month		400		355
TOTAL CAPITAL		£4619		£3877

The total invested in deadstock per 20 sows on the small holdings amounted to £2385 which is £790 greater than for that on arable and feeding farms. It may be noticed, however, that the capital invested in livestock was £93 greater for the latter group. If it is assumed that the respective working capitals for one month for each group are £400 and £355 (the figures being based on the data given in Table II for food, labour and other costs) the total capital investment per 20 sows is £4619 for those enterprises on small holdings and £3877 for those on arable farms. With profits estimated at £290 and £813 respectively, the returns to capital for the two groups amounted to 6% and 21%.

CHANGES IN COSTS, RETURNS AND PROFITS PER £100 OUTPUT

During the three years 1958 to 1960 there have been noticeable changes in the general level of costs as well as in the guaranteed price per score deadweight for fat pigs. For example, the costs of "straights" for milling and mixing not only varied monthly but also from year to year. Wage rates also have shown a progressive increase and sundry costs have tended to increase as price levels generally moved upward. With regard to selling prices, although there was no change in the guaranteed price (related to the standard ration) between 1958 and 1959, between 1959 and 1960 it increased by the equivalent of 9d. per score deadweight. It is, therefore, interesting to examine how the costs and profits per £100 output for an identical sample of seven enterprises varied during the three years. The results are shown in Table VI.

TABLE VI. /

TABLE VI. AVERAGE COSTS, RETURNS AND PROFITS PER £100 OUTPUT
SEVEN ENTERPRISES - THREE YEARS COMPARED

ITEMS	1958	1959	1960
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Net Food Costs	64:17: 7	63:14: -	64:19: 5
Labour	9: 4: 9	9:19: 4	9:10: 9
Other Costs	9:19: 1	10:18: 2	11:18: 9
Total Net Costs	£84: 1: 5	£84:11: 6	£86: 8:11
Profit	15:18: 7	15: 8: 6	13:11: 1
Output	£100: -: -	£100: -: -	£100: -: -
OTHER DATA			
Average Herd Size	39 Sows	44 Sows	47 Sows
Factors Affecting Food Costs			
1. Breeding Herd			
a) Cwt. meal equivalent per sow	31.7	31.3	31.5
b) Cost per cwt. meal equivalent	29s.11d.	29s. 8d.	29s. 9d.
2. Feeding Herd			
a) Lb. meal equivalent per lb. live weight gain	4.1	3.7	3.9
b) Cost per cwt. of meal equivalent	26s. 4d.	26s. 6d.	26s. 5d.
Factors Affecting Labour Costs			
Labour cost per hour	3s.10d.	4s. 2d.	4s. 7d.
Factors Affecting Output			
a) Weaners per sow per year	17.3	17.5	18.1
b) % Total sales of baconers (by value)	85%	79%	74%
c) Average price per score baconer live weight	35s. 7d.	33s.11d.	33s. 8d.

It may be noticed that net food costs per £100 output dropped in 1959 but the levels in 1958 and 1960 were practically identical, despite a drop of 1s.11d. per score live weight in the price of bacon pigs (the most numerous type of pig produced in each of the years). As there was little or no difference either in the weight of food consumed per sow in the breeding herd, or in the price per cwt. of meal equivalent fed between the years, the two factors mainly responsible for maintaining the net food cost per £100 output at approximately the same levels, were the improvement in the food conversion ratio, better by .2 lb. meal equivalent per lb. live weight gain, and the increase of .8 in the number of weaners per sow per year. The fact that labour costs per £100 output showed little change over the period (though they rose sharply in 1959) despite a progressive increase in wage rates, can be attributed to increased labour efficiency in the enterprises as a whole. The item of other costs has shown a steady increase, rising by 19s.1d. per £100 output in 1959 and £1:-:7d. per £100 output in 1960. Total costs per £100 output amounted to £84:1:5d. in 1958, £84:11:6d. in 1959 and £86:8:11d. in 1960. The corresponding profits per £100 output were £15:18:7d., £15:8:6d. and £13:11:1d. respectively.

SUMMARY /

SUMMARY

1. Records were received for twelve enterprises, seven being on arable and feeding farms and five on small holdings. The average size was 39 sows and the predominant breed the Large White.

2. The average cost per sow for the enterprises on arable and feeding farms was £214:13s., the total output, £255:6s. and the profit, £40:13s. The corresponding figures for the enterprises on small holdings were £247, £261:10s. and £14:10s. per sow respectively.

3. All the individual items of cost for the enterprises on arable and feeding farms were lower than for those on small holdings, net food and labour costs per sow both being lower by £14:13s. and other costs lower by £3:1s. per sow. The factors responsible for these reductions in cost were a lower average food cost per cwt. meal equivalent for all foods, fewer labour hours per sow per year and a lower average wage rate, less by 2s.4d. per cwt., 53 hours and 6d. per hour respectively.

4. A comparison of the factors affecting profitability between the three most and the three least profitable enterprises showed that the most profitable group had a better food conversion ratio, a lower cost per cwt. meal equivalent for fattening foods and a higher number of weaners per sow per year.

5. The capital investment for a 20 sow herd on small holdings amounted to £2385 for fixed capital in buildings and equipment, £1834 in livestock and an estimate of £400 for working capital, giving a total capital investment of £4619. The corresponding figures for the seven enterprises on arable and feeding farms were £1595, £1927, £355 and £3877 respectively.

6. Average total costs per £100 output for an identical sample of seven enterprises during the three years 1958 to 1960 were £84:1:5d. in 1958, £84:11:6d. in 1959 and £86:8:11d. in 1960. Total other costs was the only item to show a progressive increase, rising by 19s.1d. per £100 output in 1959 and £1:-:7d. in 1960. The profits per £100 output were £15:18:7d., £15:8:6d. and £13:11:1d. respectively.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Grateful acknowledgment is made of the help given by the farmers who took part in the investigation and supplied the various records and other information and who always gave the investigator considerate and courteous attention on the occasion of his visits.

COSTING PROCEDURE

Sales

This is the net figure after commission etc. have been deducted. In all cases sales included the appropriate deficiency payments.

Purchased Pigs

The cost is the price paid at the time of purchase and does not include transport costs to the farm.

Output

This is the total sales of pigs plus the closing valuation, less purchases of pigs plus the opening valuation.

Purchased Foods

These have been charged at the price paid plus any charges for milling and mixing of "straights".

Home-Grown Foods

These have been charged at their estimated cost of production on the farm, plus the cost of any milling and mixing.

Unexpired Manurial Residues

Credit has been given for the residual value of foods. If manure was sold credit was given for the actual sale price.

Labour

This was charged at the rate paid and includes the value of any perquisites. Where the farmer looked after the pigs his time has been charged at standard rates.

Other Costs

These include the following :-

a) Grazing at cost

b) Depreciation of buildings and equipment at standard rates

c) Overheads at agreed rates

d) Veterinary expenses

e) Miscellaneous costs - carriage, repairs, heating etc.

f) Purchased litter at cost.

Meal Equivalent

Foods other than meals and grains were converted to meal equivalents at the following rates :-

4 lb. potatoes
2/3 gallon skimmed milk } = 1 lb. meal

Food Conversion Rate

This is the ratio of meal equivalent to live weight increase in the fattening section.

Managerial Salary and Interest on Capital

No charge has been made in the costs for managerial salary or interest on capital.

AGREED SUPPLEMENT FOR PIG RECORDING SCHEME

TABLE I

Total Stock account for Herds Concerned in Scheme

No. of Herds : 12

No.			£	No.			£
	Opening Valuation				**Closing Valuation**		
43	Boars	£1198		46	Boars	£1176	
542	Sows and Gilts	14231		615	Sows and Gilts	16949	
251	Suckling Pigs	624		218	Suckling Pigs	563	
3419	Feeding Stock	25230	41283	3459	Feeding Stock	25413	44101
	Purchases				**Sales**		
7	Boars	£329		88	Boars	£3077	
27	Sows and Gilts	1519	1848	297	Sows and Gilts	9119	12196
43	Weaners	£258		886	Stores	£5684	
24	Stores	201	459	1485	Porkers	19234	
9353	Pigs born alive		-	4524	Baconers	77064	
			£43590	248	Other Fat Pigs	5141	
				52	Casualties	403	107526
	Livestock Output		120233		**Deaths**		
				1537	Pre-weaning		
				240	Post-weaning		
				14	Boars and Sows		
13709			£163823	13709			£163823

TABLE II

Costs per £100 Output

		£ s.	£ s.
Food			
Purchased :			
Concentrates	37.1 cwt.	56: 6	
Others	1.7 " M.E.	2: 6	
Home-Grown			
Concentrates	12.2 cwt.	15: 5	
Others	.6 " M.E.	-: 9	
Total Cost of Food			74: 6
Labour			10: -
Miscellaneous			10: 5
			£94:11
Surplus			5: 9
			£100: -

TABLES III and IV. None available

TABLE V

FEEDING HERDS

Conversion Factor per lb. Live Weight Gain

(Post weaning period - Simple average)

a) No. of pigs sold 7143

b) Total live weight of pigs sold 1,220,153 lb.

c) No. of Herds 12

Factor - Meal equivalent per lb. live weight gain = 3.8 lb.

- Average live weight of pigs sold = 170 lb.