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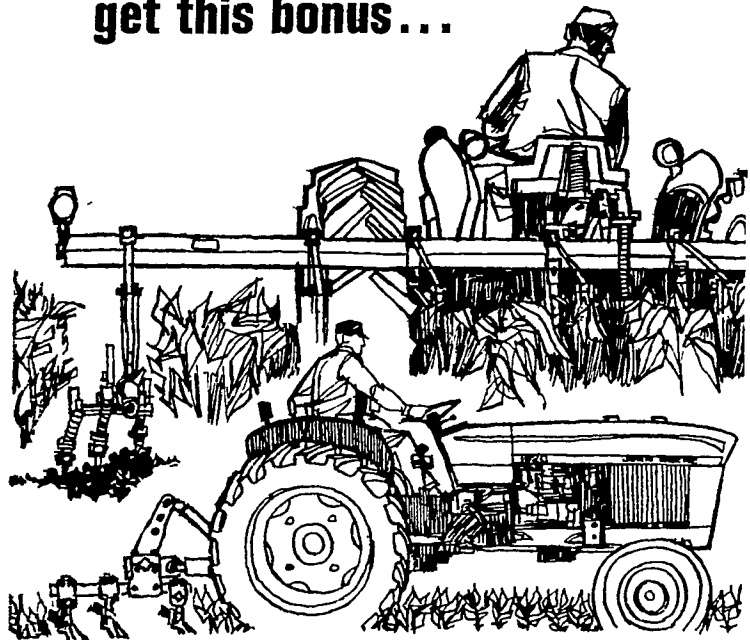
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Livestock Specialist Tells Swine Producers How To Boost Profits

A swine producer with 1400 feeders a year can increase his yearly farm income by approximately \$4000 through genetic improvements in litter size, growth rate and carcass quality, according to Dr. George Morrow, extension livestock specialist at the University of Delaware.

Large litters, high growth rate and good carcass quality of swine play an important role in profits from swine breeding and feeding operations. William Henderson, Sussex county agricultural agent; Roy Porter, Worcester, Md., agricultural agent; and James Ferguson, livestock extension agent at the University of Maryland, stressed this economic importance at the first of three swine management meetings held recently in Georgetown.

According to Morrow, swine producers can increase their profit through genetic improvements without an increase in the cost of producing the hogs. He said the heritability estimate dictates the type of breeding program a swine producer should use for herd improvement. The heritability estimate is the difference, due to heredity, in litter size, growth rate and carcass quality between individuals in a swine herd.

According to Morrow, if the heritability estimate is low, as is the case with litter size in swine, the best method of improving litter size is through cross breeding and a general improvement in overall management.

If the heritability estimate is moderate, as is the case with growth rate, improvements in this trait can be made using systematic methods of selec-

tion as well as cross breeding. If the heritability estimate is high, which is true for carcass quality, a substantial improvement is possible through better methods of selecting replacement animals.

If commercial producers are going to use cross breeding in producing hogs, it's necessary that they use high standards when they choose the breed and when they select individuals within the breed. Boar selection is particularly important because a boar will be mated to 30 gilts during the breeding season. Therefore, he is 30 times as valuable genetically as the average of the 30 gilts in the herd.

Genetic improvements in the herd are permanent and relatively inexpensive, as compared to improvements in management. However, genetic improvements must be carried out in a systematic fashion, through the use of good records, Morrow stressed.

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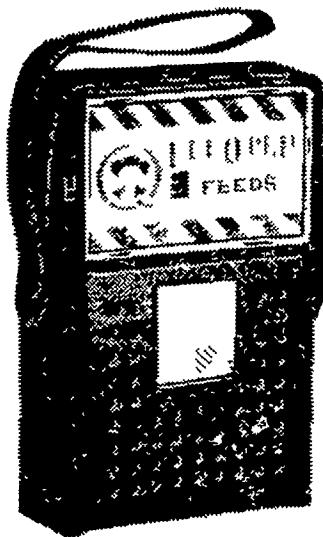
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