

# Tested boars mean more profit

BY DORIS HENRIQUE  
Delaware Ag Writer

NEWARK, Del. — "A performance tested boar can save his owner up to \$3000 over his productive lifetime in feed efficiency passed on to his offspring," says University of Delaware extension livestock specialist Richard Fowler. "This is one reason there's little trouble selling the young boars that make it through the state's official boar test each year."

Forty-four animals in 11 pens are involved in the 1980 trials, which started at the end of May. The trials are being run at the state's Swine Test Station on the farm of Mrs. Carlos Elliott, just south of Laurel.

Five breeds — Berkshire, Yorkshire, Duroc, Landrace, and Chester White —



Animals like this Yorkshire boar are participating in tests aimed at identifying top-performing breeding stock. A high indexing boar can save his owner thousands of dollars in feed-efficient offspring.



Hogging it down — competitors in Delaware's 1980 Boar Test have nothing better to do than eat, sleep and grow.

are represented, coming from Pennsylvania, Maryland, New York, and North Carolina.

The purpose of the test, which is sponsored jointly by the Delaware Pork Producers Association and the Delaware Cooperative Extension Service, is to identify animals that score well in such heritable traits as backfat thickness and average daily gain and feed conversion. Animals are also scored for conformation.

All these factors will affect the production efficiency and marketability of their offspring. Conformation traits and amount of backfat are highly heritable. Feed conversion and average daily gain are 30 to 40 percent heritable, Fowler said.

A good tested boar has the capacity to improve the feed efficiency of his offspring by about one-tenth of a pound, explains Fowler. This adds

up to a potential savings to the producer of about \$1.50 per market hog.

A single boar can sire a minimum of 650 pigs a year. This means a savings of nearly \$1,000 per year, probably for three years.

Delaware farmers who've bought tested stock from previous trials don't require any convincing. They want to buy more. In fact, reports Fowler, people are already lining up to buy boars from this latest trial when they go up for auction next September.

In spite of the fact that no Delaware boars are involved in this year's trial, the livestock specialist strongly favors continuing the program.

"My feeling is that we'll test boars from other states as long as they have good sales acceptance here," he says. "I see us continuing to

distribute boars to local producers."

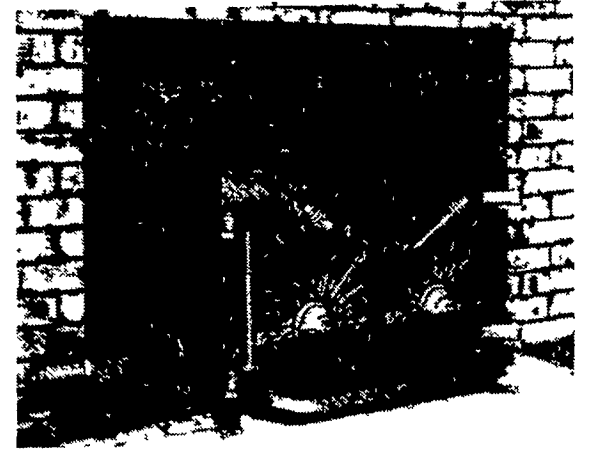
In following up on animals from previous trials, he's found the performance of pigs they've sired to be good—a noted improvement, in fact, over non-test boars.

"I think the proper way to use a tested boar is to take him home and mate him to your best gilts," says Fowler. "Don't try to mate him to everything on the

farm. By using him with your best replacement gilts you should be able to make rapid herd improvement in terms of litter size, growth rate and conformation."

It's going to take this kind of good herd management to make money raising hogs over the next decade, he predicts. Everybody agrees the 70's were a good time to be in the pig business.

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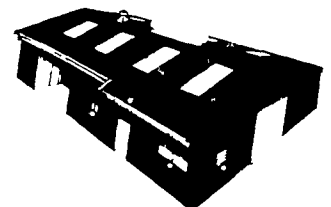
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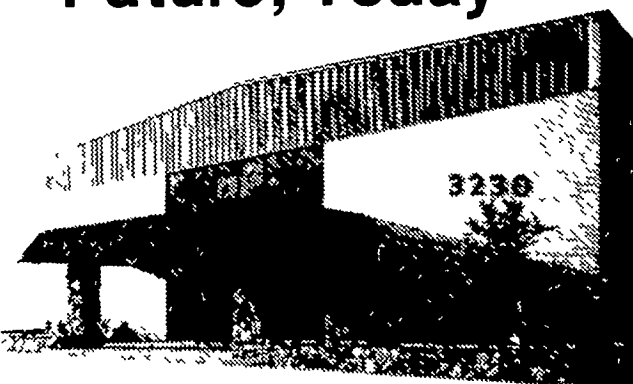
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