

# Iowa Expert Tells Local Producers He Is Is Optimistic About The Hog Business

BY EVERETT NEWSWANGER  
Managing Editor

HARRISBURG — A University of Minnesota faculty member on sabbatical leave to study pork production records in Iowa told a group of Pennsylvania hog producers here Wednesday evening that whoever can raise pigs more efficiently than the average will continue to be in business for the next 20 years. Dr. Al Leman, DVM, told the Pennfield Hog Round Table Meeting that if you are in a system where you get high productivity, you are going to make a profit. "It is so easy to be better than average, and I am convinced that will be good enough to survive," Dr. Leman said.

"In the east, you have a market advantage. You are close to a lot of people. I would think this will continue. You don't have quite the building and labor economy of the midwest, and you pay a little more for grain. So it comes down to who can get the highest productivity. But I've worked enough cash flows on paper recently that I'm convinced that you don't need to be afraid to invest a lot of capital into this industry. You can see I'm optimistic about the future," Leman said.

Using research data from records on 175 Iowa farms that includes from 75 to 1,000 sows, Leman showed that in 1986 weaned cost on a cash basis was \$20.62. If you figure in farm labor at \$7.50 per hour and at least a \$5 per pig facility charge, the cost goes up to \$27.28. Pounds sold per breeding unit per year (including entire breeding herd; boars, gilts and

bred animals) was 3,800 pounds or about 4,000 pounds when based on sow numbers only. Cost per ton of feed in Iowa was \$1.08 per ton. And that was 53 percent of the total cost of production.

The study shows that gilt litter size is highly related to the age of the gilt when bred. A gilt bred less than 190 days had an average of 8.8 piglets per litter. When the age was increased to 191 to 210 days, the average went up to 9.9. And over 210 days the average litter size was over 10 piglets per litter. In addition, over a four litter period, the gilt bred at less than 190 days had one fewer pigs per litter than the animals bred 191 to 210 days and two fewer pigs per litter than the animals bred over 210 days of age.

Another significant finding in the study was that multiple mating was easier when the sow came in heat within the first six days after weaning. Eighty-two percent of the 60,000 to 70,000 matings in the study were in this category. Dr. Leman found this wean to first service period a very significant tool to gauge how the breeding operation was succeeding. In a grow/finish operation, feed consumption and mortality were listed as the most important factors. However, a lot of feed is wasted so Dr. Leman made a difference between consumption and disappearance. While the computer program uses disappearance to factor operating expenses and gains that could be different if wasted feed was also considered on each farm.

Dr. Leman listed repeat breeders as very poor risks. "I try



Dr. Al Leman

to watch the herd closely and not get over 10 percent repeat breeders. I prefer it to be in the five percent range. Space is your most expensive variable. And if the sow is a repeat breeder, she is a poor risk and it may be best to put another sow in her place," Leman said.

Leman has found that seasonal fluctuations in breeding cycles has started to disappear in confinement operations. Though the fluctuations still show up very pointedly in outdoor operations.

In the midwest they are being encouraged to market larger animals. In 1986, the average weight was 230 pounds. In 1987 that will likely be closer to 245 pounds according to Dr. Leman. "And we'll continue to market heavier animals," Leman said.

"Loins are the only thing we produce that aren't reconstructed.

Everything else, including the carcass, can be bigger if it doesn't have fat on it. Right now in central Iowa, our best market is around 270 pounds. Many producers are reluctant to go that high because it has been historically wrong. But on a straight out market value, it is the best market. Pork is good," Dr.

Leman said. "Animal muscle tissue has turned the corner and is getting better press. Animal fat is not good, and we need to work to get excessive fat out of our products. Lean meat is a good product medically. And I expect to raise pigs for the next 20 years. And I expect that you will do that, too," he said.

## Fruit Spray Booklet Available

An 18-page booklet on sprays for home fruit plantings is now available from the Delaware Cooperative Extension System.

Published jointly by the University of Maryland and the University of Delaware extension systems, the bulletin lists spray materials and spray schedules for tree fruits

and raspberries, blackberries, blueberries and grapes. It also identifies specific fruit diseases and fruit-attacking insects and methods of their control.

To obtain a copy, contact extension offices in Newark (451-2506) Dover (697-4000) and Georgetown (856-7303).

## Chambersburg Livestock

Chambersburg, Pa.  
Thursday, May 28

Report supplied by PDA

Last Sale As Livestock Auction

CATTLE: 238. Sl. cows unevenly steady. .50 higher to .50 lower; Good steers individual hol. 55.75; individual Standard 52.00; 2 Choice holstein heifers 58.50 & 61.00; few standard 52.00-54.00; Breaking Utility & Commercial cows 46.50-51.50, couple to 52.25; Cutter & Boning Utility 44.50-48.75; Canner & Low Cutter 40.00-44.75; shells down to 38.00; YG 1, 1220-1760 lb. sl.

bulls 51.00-58.60; individual 62.75.  
CALVES: 310. Few Choice 88.00-97.00; few Good 75.00-85.00; Standard & Good 75-95 lb. 65.00-80.00; Utility 55-80 lb. 50.00-62.00.  
FARM CALVES: Hol. bulls 85-90 lb. 82.00-90.00; 90-125 lb. 90.00-129.00, mostly 105.00-120.00; hol. heifers 85-120 lb. 70.00-93.00.  
HOGS: 15. Lot 2-3, 260 lb. barrows & gilts 56.00; few 1-3, 370-670 lb. sows 44.50-46.50; few boars 35.00-38.50.  
FEEDER PIGS: 4. Lot 1-3, 60 lb. 50.50 per head.  
SHEEP: No sales offered.  
GOATS: No sales offered.



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