

Pork Prose

(Continued from Page C11)

Table 1. Carcass measures from barrows shown at KILE:

| Year | Fat Depth | Loin Eye Area |
|------|-----------|---------------|
| 1960 | 1.3 | 4.6 |
| 1986 | 1.0 | 4.7 |
| 1987 | 1.0 | 4.6 |
| 1988 | 1.1 | 4.8 |
| 1989 | 1.1 | 4.9 |
| 1990 | 1.0 | |
| 1991 | 1.1 | 5.3 |
| 1992 | 1.0 | 5.2 |

Between 1960 and 1986, there was a significant drop in fat depth. Since then, it has been relatively stable, and by industry standards, about average. Admittedly, these are barrows (which are already on the fat side). But these are also show hogs, most of which are hand fed in the weeks preceding the show, which should reduce backfat.

Secondly, producers are competing in a contest for a \$1,000 prize, so we should expect the averages to be superior to that of the industry in general.

Muscle also remained stable

until 1991, when loin eye areas took a nice jump. That clearly will help on a Hatfield system, but a decrease in fat depth would help a lot more.

Now let's look at trends in the Pennsylvania boar test station. First, a word of caution. Since these are ultrasonic scans, often done by different operators, we have to be careful making year-by-year comparisons. And because the measurement of loin eye areas are more approximate than that of backfat, they are not reported.

Finally, fat depth measures are rounded to the nearest tenth of an inch.

Table 2. Fat Depth of Boars in PA Performance Boar Test Sales:

| Year | Fat Depth, in.: |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1985 | .8 |
| 1986 | .9 |
| 1987 | .9 |
| 1988 | 1.0 |
| 1989 | .7 |
| 1990 | 1.0 |
| 1991 (winter) | .9 |
| 1992 (summer) | .7 |
| 1993 (winter) | .7 |

Some reduction in backfat, but not as obvious as we'd like.

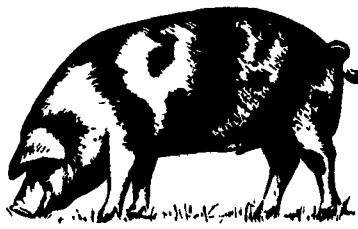
It could be argued that these two programs do not represent the purebred industry. Perhaps not, but it is still perplexing that there is no clear response to the demand for leaner hogs since 1988, when Hatfield began its grade and weight program.

Where Is The Industry Going?

We'll always need purebreds. Because of the nature of contract production of commercial hogs, and because of the nature of com-

pany production of seedstock hogs, the demand for purebred boars and gilts has diminished. That's a given, and a factor over which you as a seedstock producer have little control.

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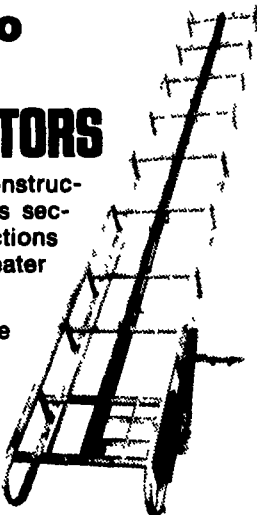
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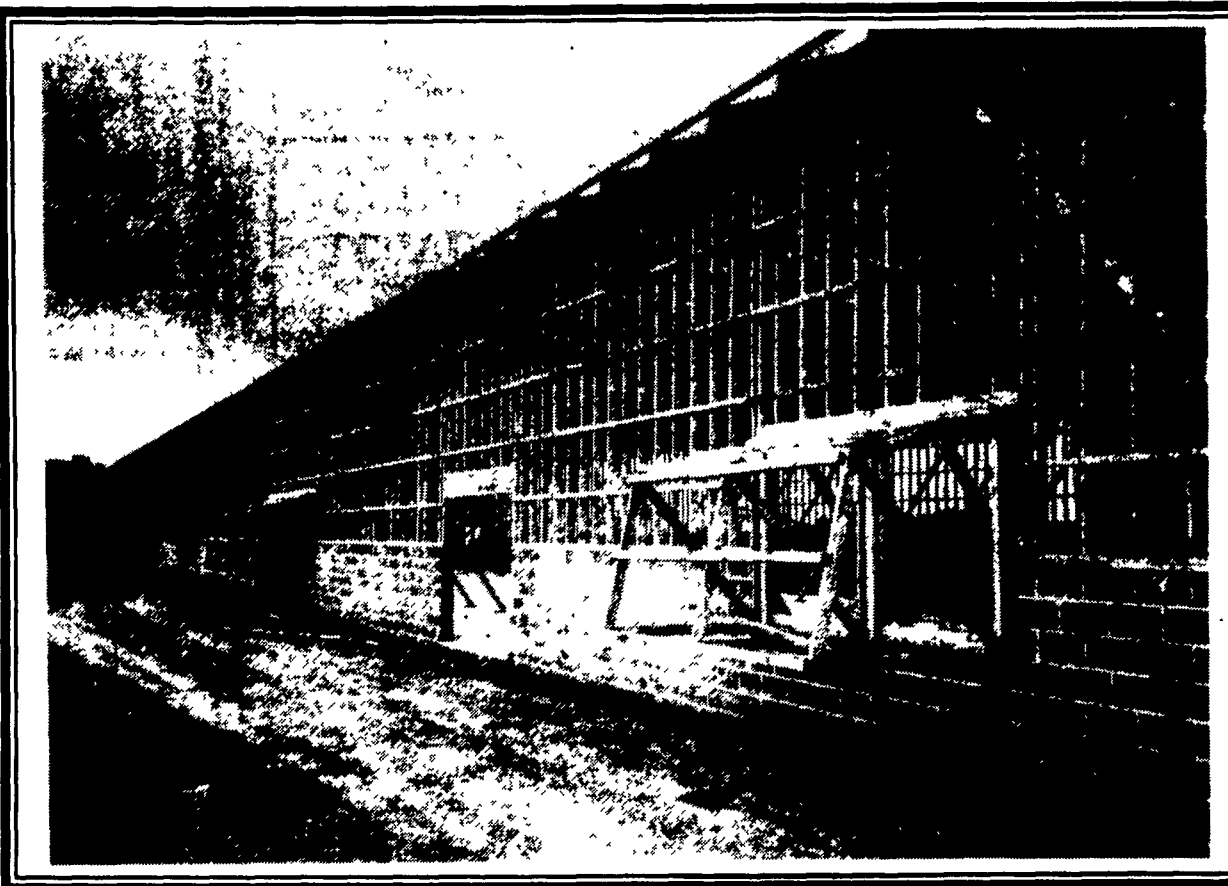


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