

Holdings of sows and production per sow have continued to fall over the past six years ; the number of pigs per sow has been reduced from 10·7 to 9·0 per annum. It takes just one year for the effect to be shown, and the following figures show the trend of production :—

ANALYSIS FOR THE SIX YEARS ENDED SEPTEMBER, 1946

Year.	Breeding-sows.	Total Pigs slaughtered.	Pigs per Sow.	Slaughtered as—			Total Weight of Pig-meat (as Carcasses).
				Porkers, 40–120 lb.	Baconers, 121–200 lb.	Choppers, Over 200 lb.	
1941	100,378	1,006,686	10·7	488,973	474,329	43,384	Tons. 52,623
1942	91,338	925,982	10·1	494,126	397,717	34,139	47,987
1943	81,882	772,744	9·4	321,049	418,943	32,752	44,320
1944	77,300	740,913	9·6	254,126	464,558	22,229	43,251
1945	77,200	681,280	8·8	170,852	489,220	21,208	42,378
1946	72,000	664,275	9·0	256,821	385,782	21,672	38,437

In spite of the continuance of the £5-per-acre crop-subsidy scheme and progressive increases in the price schedule for pig-meats, production has continued to fall. Killings at all export and rural slaughterhouses, abattoirs, and on farms have decreased annually, and show a drop, by comparison with the year ended September, 1941, of 342,411 carcasses as at September, 1946.

The falling-off in production is bound up in some measure with the reduction in cows milked, the increase in the amount of milk-powder produced, lack of efficient labour on farms, and the absence of imported grains and concentrates as supplements to farm-grown crops for wintering pigs ; the two major factors are lack of labour and an inadequate winter feed-supply.

Crop-subsidy Scheme.—Introduced in 1944, the £5-per-acre crop-subsidy scheme has not received from farmers the support expected. As a means of making producers self-sufficient and independent of imported feed-supplies for wintering pigs, it cannot be claimed to have given satisfactory results. This is borne out by the fact that in any year since its inception only just over 5,000 of 40,000 pig-producers have taken advantage of the scheme. That the subsidy on crops grown for pigs has not given incentive to greater production of pig-meats is shown by the claims made since the scheme has been in operation :—

Year.			Number of Claims.	Area of Crops.	Subsidy paid.	Pigs produced.
1945 .. ..	..	..	5,023	Acres. 19,664	£ 98,330	681,280
1946 .. ..	..	..	5,088	25,419	113,000	664,275
1947* .. ..	..	..	5,860	29,503	..	620,000

* Estimated.

Instructional.—The National Pig Industry Council has again given great service in the instructional field. Lectures, demonstrations, and field-days have been carried out by all District Pig Councils, and many new and improved piggeries have been erected.

Publicity schemes have been operative in all Council areas, and the National Pig Industry Council launched a drive for increased production of pig-meats early in 1947.

Grading standards for baconer pigs have been revised to include differential prices for pigs in the various weight ranges, and it is anticipated that these will be put into operation with the lifting of meat rationing.

MEAT INSPECTION AND SLAUGHTER OF STOCK

The standard of meat inspection has been maintained at a satisfactory level during the year. Many works have found it difficult to obtain labour to carry out the incision of glands in mutton carcasses. Inspection for evidence of lymphadenitis has included palpation, together with whatever amount of incision work could be carried out.

A lowering of the standard of dressing of lamb and mutton carcasses has been noted in several works. The standard of hygiene at some works has been difficult to maintain, mainly owing to difficulty in obtaining labour.