

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

Breed Better Livestock

➤ **HOGS** with more ham and bacon—and less lard—better beef cattle and hybrid chickens that produce more eggs are all on the way.

These menu-bound developments were disclosed in the annual report of Dr. B. T. Simms, chief of the U. S. Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Animal Industry.

Hogs with higher percentages of the preferred cuts (ham, loin, bacon, picnic shoulder and shoulder butt) are the result of breeding Danish Landrace swine with better known American breeds. Best bet, thus far, is a cross between the Landrace and the Poland China breed. Other American breeds are also being used in the experiments at Beltsville, Md., and elsewhere.

Discovery that beef calves' feed-lot gains and weight at 15 months are inherited to

an important extent may help develop bigger beef supplies for the future.

Crossbred hens with Rhode Island Reds and White Leghorns produced more eggs than either of the parent breeds. Hybrid chickens may mean for egg production what hybrid seed has meant to corn production, the report indicated.

Meanwhile, on the Mexican battle front, scientists have succeeded in confining foot-and-mouth disease to a slightly smaller area, the report stated. This is good news to Americans whose beef supplies might be seriously cut if the dread disease were to reach across the border into the Southwest.

A laboratory established in Mexico by American and Mexican scientists produced 1,750,000 doses of vaccine last month for use in vaccinating Mexican cattle.

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among zoologists, about the foresightedness of the California woodpecker in providing a future supply of worms for himself. Undoubtedly he does eat the worms that appear in his stored acorns, but whether or not he anticipates their appearance when he stores the acorns is the moot point. It may well be that the only one competent to give an authoritative answer would be the woodpecker!

Did you ever read Mark Twain's uproarious account of the bluejay that found a hole in a cabin wall, and tried to fill the whole cabin with acorns? Although told as a broadly humorous tale, it is actually a good account of the hoarding urge running wild.

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Letters To The Editor

Tales of Hoarding

➤ **THE** "Nature Ramblings" article in SNL Dec. 11, on the hoarding habits of some birds, suggests a variant of the same story I have heard for many years about the California woodpeckers, particularly in Tulare County. One of the difficulties a number of years ago, and it possibly still exists, was that woodpeckers riddled electric and telephone poles, and inserted hundreds of acorns into the holes. A few months later the woodpeckers would return to find a juicy worm inside. Most often they pecked out the worm and left much of the acorn meat still in the shell. Many of the holes would be cleaned out by removing the acorn hulls,

so that the same holes could be used again the next year.

The woodpecker apparently uses this method to select a portion of food for his exclusive use, then eats it in his own sweet time. Do you suppose the bird knows that by so doing he is cultivating a crop of animal food from his vegetable food and does it on purpose? If so we would have a good example of Brer Woodpecker playing Food Technologist, converting vegetable material into animal fats, proteins and vitamins which, to my way of thinking, is really something. You could delight many of us with other examples of animals who practice agriculture and animal husbandry.—W. Tresper Clarke, Brooklyn, N. Y.

There seem to be two schools of thought

Question Box

AERONAUTICS

How has Russia's attitude changed toward her air force? p. 50.

AGRICULTURE

What are some of the foods of tomorrow coming out of the laboratory? p. 55.

CHEMISTRY

What new qualities have been added to cotton? p. 54.

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GENERAL SCIENCE

What were some of the complaints registered by scientist-soldiers? p. 50.

MEDICINE

Clues to what diseases may come from research on blood? p. 60.

What device aids the surgeon in finding gallstones? p. 53.

PSYCHIATRY

What recommendations have been made to avert war? p. 51.