did your pigs weigh when you bought them and when you sold them, how much feed you bought to bring them to market weight, how old were they when you sold them, how much feed did your sow consume to produce her litter and carry them to weaning weight? All this information about dates and dollars and weights - we put under the head 'Record keeping' which is simply making a note of what you have been doing to serve as a guide to the future.

* PLEASE NOTE THAT PIGS FED ON A POOR DIET MAY DEVELOP BONE AND ORGAN ABNORMALITIES WHICH THEY NEVER GET OVER. IT MAKES NO SENSE TO BUY GOOD STOCK AND IMPROPERLY FEED THEM.

BREEDING IS AN ART

THE LARGER THE LITTER YOU CAN RAISE TO MARKET SIZE, THE MORE MONEY YOU WILL HAVE TO PUT IN YOUR POCKET.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADVANTAGES OF CROSSBREDS OVER PUREBREDS</th>
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<tr>
<td>LITTER SIZE ................................</td>
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<tr>
<td>SURVIVAL ....................................</td>
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<tr>
<td>154 DAY PIG WT. ..........................</td>
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<td>154 LITTER WT. .............................</td>
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<tr>
<td>*FEED EFFICIENCY ...........................</td>
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<tr>
<td>*MEATINESS .................................</td>
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* Feed efficiency and meatiness are improved by selection and testing of purebred animals.

A great deal has been written to help farmers become good livestock breeders - this includes the ability to spot good stock. However, the longer you spend at it and the more you study and talk about the business, the better you become.

SELECTING GILTS FOR THE BREEDING HERD

by H. Patterson, R. Quinotyne and G.A. Proverbs

This publication was produced with assistance from The Barclays Development Fund in the Caribbean.
It is not hard to find small farms with very good cattle anywhere in the Caribbean. Often the owner of one or two cows has no land at all on which to pasture his animals, but they are well-bred and well-fed. This is not generally the case with the smallholder’s pigs. Here farmers seem to be less particular as to the quality of animal they keep. It is probably true to say that the best pigs are found in large herds.

An explanation of this staff of affairs comes easily to mind. The history of improved breeding of cattle in the Caribbean goes back many generations and it has not been difficult for the small farmer to see good quality in cattle and to have access to bulls to improve the quality of his small herd. Nowadays there are Government studs farms where the farmer can find boars of high quality and many private farmers also keep a good stud boar and will accept gilts and sows for service. However, sows brought for service are sometimes poor in quality and condition. It is important that farmers should not depend upon the boar alone to improve the quality of the next generation of pigs on his farm. Remember that the female side of parents is equally as important.

**Skeletal soundness** - Gilts with feet and leg problems which will interfere with normal breeding, farrowing and nursing functions should not be saved. Sows that are unable to get up and down in farrowing crates should be culled.

**Soundness** - Soundness means being free from flaws or defects. In selecting replacement females, being sound means being free of defects or flaws with interfere with normal reproductive and maternal functions. Three areas are of particular concern: (1) reproductive, (2) mammary, and (3) skeletal.

**Reproductive soundness** - Replacement gilts should exhibit normal reproductive development, both anatomically and behaviorally. The external genitalia should be normally developed.

Most anatomical defects of the reproductive system are internal and not visible. Gilts with small vulvas, indicative of infantile reproductive tracts should not be kept. Replacement gilts should begin to show signs of puberty at least a month prior to anticipated breeding. Sows which have difficulty farrowing, are extremely slow farrowing or have damaged reproductive tracts (uterine prolapse or severe uterine infections) should be culled.

**Mammary soundness** - Replacement gilts should possess a sufficient number of teats to nurse a large number of pigs. Current industry standards stipulate at least 6 functional teats on each side. Well-spaced udder sections are preferred. Gilts with inverted or scarred nipples should not be saved. Now concrete, rough floors and corrosive chemical compounds on the floors of farrowing houses can cause abrasions to gilts' underlines which result in non-functional teats. As the gilt approaches puberty, her underline should become prominent, indicating normal development.

**What to Look for in a Gilt**

**Conformation:**
1. Smooth shoulder.
2. Clean cut head.
3. Firm trim jowl.
4. Strong bone.

Non-functional teat caused by concrete burn during first week of life.

**Select gilts with normally developed external genitalia [top]. Gilts with small infantile [center] or abnormal [bottom] vulvas should not be kept.

Which Gilts and Sows to protect
The fastest growing, leanest gilts which are sound and from large litters should be saved for replacement females. Sows which fail to rebreed should be culled. Sows which had small litters, failed to milk or had problems farrowing should be culled.

**Performance:**
- Weight: 200 lb [31 kg]
- Feed efficiency: within 180 days
- 3. Feed efficiency: per 100 lb
- Daily Grain [from 40 to 200 lb] - 1.3 lb [0.6 kg] per day.

**The ideal underline**
The ideal underline comprises 12 well-developed, evenly spaced nipples, six on each side. Three sets of the nipples should be forward of the navel.

**The Ideal Underline**

**REMEMBER:** A good underline is just as important in a boar as it is in a sow because of the large number of offspring to which he may transmit his underline configuration.

**Records are Important**

The faster they grow to market size the less your cost will be.

If you do a good management job on your pigs this year, you'll naturally want to do better next year. So there are certain facts of the first year's business that you'll want to recall - what