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The de-tusking of boars

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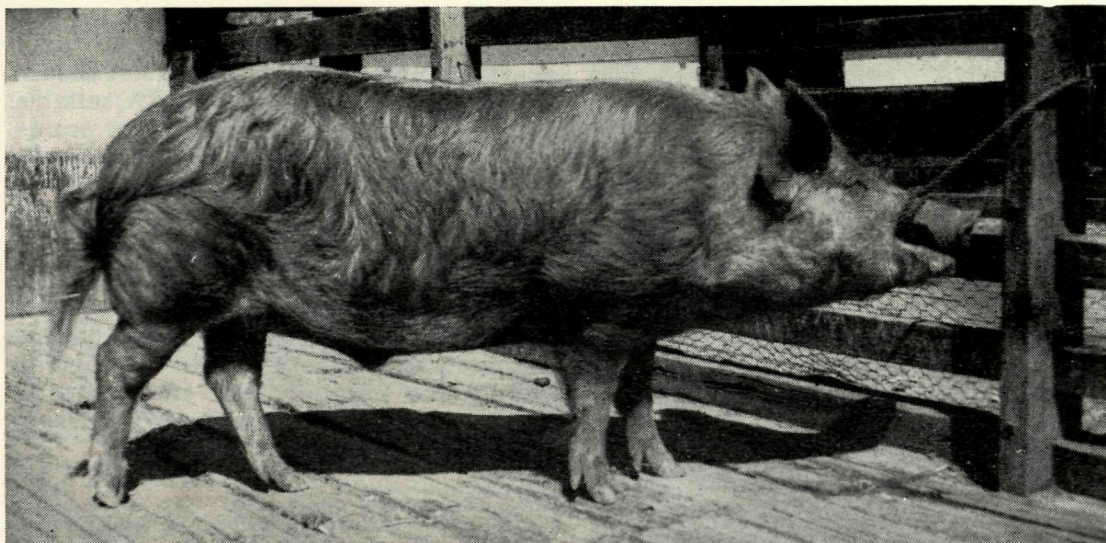


Fig. 1.—Boar secured with noose round upper jaw, behind the tusks.

THE DE-TUSKING OF BOARS

By P. GARSTONE, M.D.A., Pig Husbandry Instructor, Muresk Agricultural College

BOARS should always be regarded as potentially dangerous animals. Admittedly a well handled boar is usually docile, but it should always be remembered that the normally tractable animal is the one most likely to cause serious injuries if it does run amok. It is a wise precaution therefore to de-tusk all boars at regular intervals.

In its wild state a boar is an adversary which hunters and beasts of prey alike treat with marked respect. His razor-edged tusks, his courage, strength and lightning quickness make him one of the most dangerous wild animals in the world.

Boars of most domesticated breeds of pigs have inherited from their wild ancestors the possession of tusks which can inflict serious damage upon other pigs or upon human attendants. The tusks usually make their appearance when the animal is about nine months old and should be cut for the first time about three months later. Thereafter they need to be cut every four to six months. It is a good plan to shorten the tusks of even the quietest boar, and it is particularly important that boars should be de-tusked before being taken to a show or to the saleyards, as it is on such occasions that the animals are liable to become excited and become uncertain in their tempers.

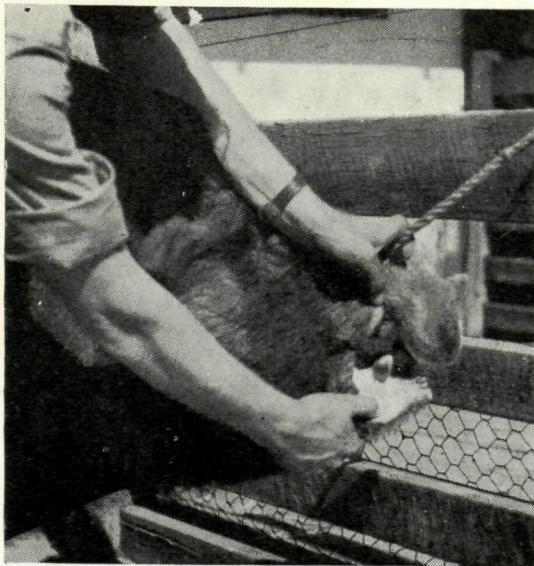


Fig. 2.—Showing tusks which have been cut back in previous years but are now ready for further attention.

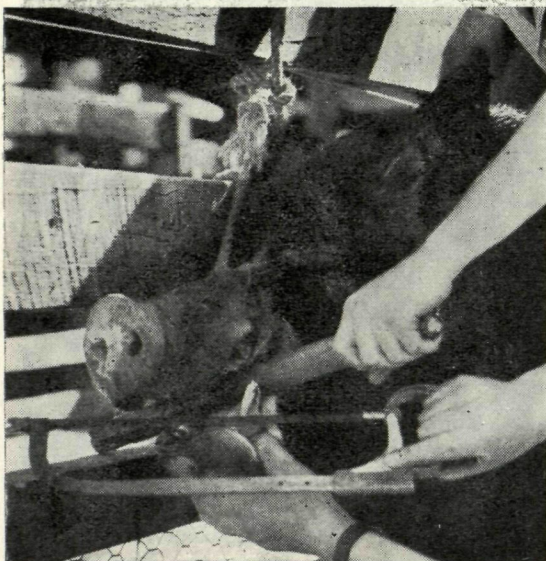


Fig. 3.—Using a hacksaw to cut off the lower tusk.

Before commencing de-tusking, the boar should be restrained by placing a noose around the upper jaw behind the tusks and pulling it tight over the animal's snout. The rope should be sound and strong enough to hold the animal safely. The free end of the rope should be given two or three turns round a post or strong rail pulling it up short so that the animal is allowed very little free movement.

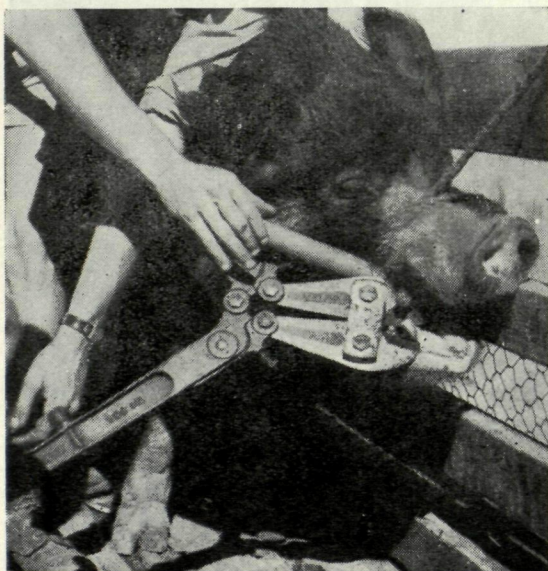
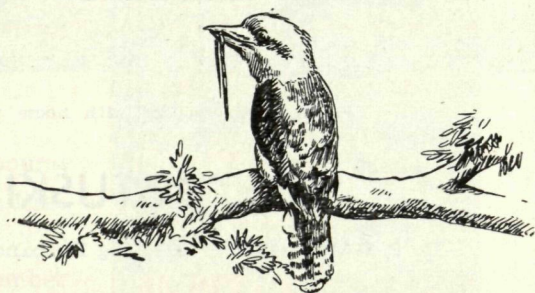


Fig. 4.—Bolt-cutters are sometimes used in detusking, but the hacksaw is preferable.

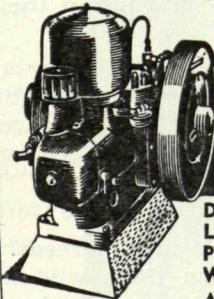
A tapered wooden gag placed in the boar's mouth is used to keep the jaws apart and prevent injury to the soft tissues when the cutting takes place. A suitable instrument for the operation is an ordinary hacksaw with a fairly coarse blade. This will cut through the tusks quickly and neatly and permit working very close to the gums.

An alternative method is to snip off the tusks level with the gums using bolt-cutters. This method is not recommended however, as the cutters are awkward to handle and usually break off the tooth, leaving a jagged edge which requires to be smoothed down with a rasp.



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