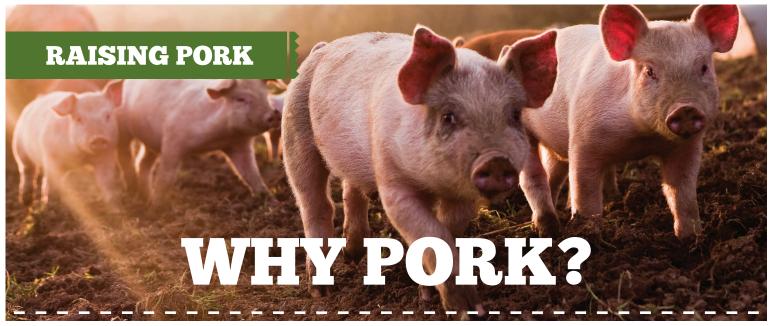


MEAT EDUCATION





There are many advantages to raising swine:

- 1. Swine are very efficient and can convert feed to meat better than other animals. Cattle require about 7 to 10 pounds of feed per pound of beef. Chickens require about 2 pounds of feed per pound of live weight. Hogs can produce a pound of meat with about 3.5 pounds of feed (and that amount is decreasing).
- 2. A sow can produce 7 to 12 pigs per litter. Gestation time is 114 days (3 months, 3 weeks and 3 days), which allows farrowing twice a year. Farrowing is the process of a sow giving birth.
- 3. Hogs have a high dressing percentage 65 to 80% of live weight compared to beef at 50 to 60% and sheep at 45 to 55%.
- 4. Hogs require less labor because they will not overeat. They are typically on a self-feeder, which allows them to eat whenever they wish. Swine are also very clean animals. Typically, they will not expel waste where they eat or sleep.
- 5. Depending on the type of production system, capital investment is generally low. Because of their size, pigs require little land or little space in buildings.
- 6. Controlled environments call for greater investments in buildings and waste disposal. However, production is higher, and timing of returns is short.
- 7. Returns on hogs can be seen within 10 months. Hogs are ready for market at 155 days, on average, allowing a producer to see a return on investment within a short period.
- 8. The swine industry provides many jobs, including producers, truckers, processors, researchers, veterinarians, and feed suppliers.
- 9. Swine provide an interest to FFA and 4-H projects.