



# MEAT EDUCATION



## RAISING PORK

# WHY PORK?

### **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.