

Pigs



What are pigs?

Pigs are mammals and have hair (though it is sparse and bristly), and are raised mostly for their meat, which is called "pork".

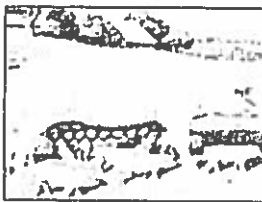
Pigs come in different styles, or breeds. Just like dogs, some are bigger, some are smaller, some are white, others are black. Some farms specialize in one breed of pig. Purebred breeding farms then sell their high quality males and females to other farmers. Most pigs raised today are a combination of two or three different breeds for the best traits from each breed.

The Canadian Yorkshire, the most popular breed of pig in Canada, is known to grow quickly, have many piglets, and produce very lean, high quality pork.



Yorkshire

Landrace are large, muscular white pigs, recognizable by their droopy ears. The Landrace breed is known for its strong maternal abilities and adapting to different climates.



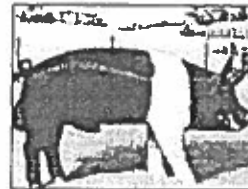
Landrace

The Canadian Duroc is a solid red pig, known for fast growth, stamina and high quality meat products.



Duroc

Hampshires are black and white pigs, known for fast growth, muscling, and really lean pork.



Hampshire

Some "pig" words to know:

Barrow: male pig that has been neutered.

Boar: adult male pig kept for breeding purposes.

Farrow: to give birth.

Feeder pig: piglet after it's weaned from the sow, also known as 'weaner' pig.

Gilt: female pig that has never farrowed.

Litter: group of piglets born at one time from the same sow.

Market hog: barrow or gilt raised for meat production, weighs up to 110 kg.

Piglet: newborn pig, weighs 1-2 kilograms.

Pork producers: farmers, the people that raise pigs.

Runt: smallest piglet in the litter.

Sow: adult female pig.

Interesting facts:

- One myth about pigs is that they are stupid. Actually pigs are quite smart. In terms of animal I.Q., they are more intelligent than horses, cows or even elephants.
- People often talk about sweating like a pig – the truth is pigs don't sweat. Pig barns are designed to have good ventilation with lots of airflow to keep pigs cool – some barns even have water sprinklers to help keep the pigs cool.
- Messy rooms are often compared to a pig sty – this is unfounded. Pigs are naturally very clean animals and will establish areas in their pens for dunging, for eating and for resting. Outdoor pigs will wallow in mud only on hot days – it helps them cool off since they can not sweat. A pig will choose cool water over mud anytime it has a chance.

Interesting facts from the barn:

- A sow will have between 2 and 2.5 litters of pigs per year producing approximately 22 pigs per year on average.
- A litter averages is nine to 14 pigs.
- A sow might weigh on average 135 kilograms and the boar 185 kilograms.
- A baby piglet will average 1.2 to 1.7 kilograms at birth.
- The time from breeding to farrowing, called gestation period, is three month, three week and three days.

Where are pigs produced in Nova Scotia?

Kings County produces the most pigs, followed by Digby County and Cumberland County.

How many pigs do we produce?

Nova Scotia has about 83 registered hog farms that raise about 196 000 hogs per year. The province is also known for its high quality hog breeding stock. The industry has a farm gate value of \$30 million.

How are pigs produced?

From birth to 3-4 weeks of age, the piglets are with the sow (mother) in the farrowing house. After weaning, the pigs are moved into the nursery facilities until they are 9-10 weeks of age. The last stage of production is the grow-finish barn. The pigs are in this stage of production until they are approximately 5-6 months of age. Most pigs are transported to market at this age. There are three main types of hog operations:

- Farrow to finish operation, the piglets are born and raised to market weight on the same farm.
- Farrow to wean operation, the piglets are kept until they weigh approximately 16 kilograms and then they are sold to other producers to be raised to market weight.
- Finishing operation – pigs come to the farm from the weaner barn and grow to market weight at this operation.

Pigs eat grains like corn, barley and soybeans, mixed in with vitamins and minerals. Pig feed is usually all mixed together, often in a pellet form, kind of like dog food. Animal feed can be mixed on a farm or purchased from a feed mill. In Nova Scotia, most of the ingredients to make pig feed must be imported, as there is not enough grown here to meet the demand. A lot of scientific research has helped farmers know the exact amounts and types of food a pig needs

as it grows.

How are pigs used?

Today's pigs have been bred for lean cuts of meats. Pork can be eaten fresh as pork chops, roasts or spareribs. Ham, bacon and wieners are cured pork and have a special flavour developed from the curing process. Many sausages have pork as the main ingredient. Pork is the most popular choice for animal protein around the world. It is often referred to as "the other white meat" because today's lean pork is similar in nutritional value to chicken.

The main product from pigs is pork, but many other parts of the pig are used in other products. Pharmaceutical products like insulin, hog enzymes for heart attack patients and heart valves from pigs will be used to replace weak valves in people. By-products from pigs are used in a variety of consumer and industrial products including: pigskin for leather, pig hair for brushes, insecticides, lipstick, and ply wood adhesives just to name a few.

Trimnings and bones are used for many things, some examples include: chalk, antifreeze, crayons, floor waxes, rubber and weed killers. Gelatin, which is extracted from the skin of hogs, is used for thickening foods, including cottage cheese, marshmallows, ice-cream and yogurt.

What happens after pigs leave the farm?

When pigs weigh about 110kg, they are sent to market. The primary purpose for raising pigs is to provide food, or pork to be specific. Ham, bacon, sausage, pepperoni and pork chops all come from pigs. Farmers are paid for the quality of

the pork they produce. Canadian farmers produce some of the highest quality pork in the world.

What challenges do pig producers face?

Consumers are demanding food products that are nutritious, safe to eat and are raised in an environmentally responsible manner. Farmers must follow programs and regulations to ensure they are producing safe food in an environmentally sound manner. The Canadian Pork Council has developed a food safety program which is a core part of pork production in Canada. This program, the Canadian Quality Assurance program helps producers demonstrate their commitment to the production of safe pork.

