



Boar



Gilt



Piglet

SWINE

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Background Information

Swine are also called hogs. They were among the first animals to be domesticated, possibly as early as 7000 B.C. Pork, the meat from swine, was widely consumed throughout the ancient world and the Roman Empire.

Swine were first introduced to North America in 1539 when Hernando de Soto brought 13 to the Florida mainland. Most of the swine in the United States are produced in the Midwestern states, including Nebraska, Iowa, Minnesota and Illinois. Worldwide, China is the country that produces the most hogs.

Growth and Feeding

A female is called a gilt. After she has borne a litter she is called a sow. A neutered male is a barrow and the adult male is a boar. The offspring of a male boar and a female sow are called piglets, or just pigs.

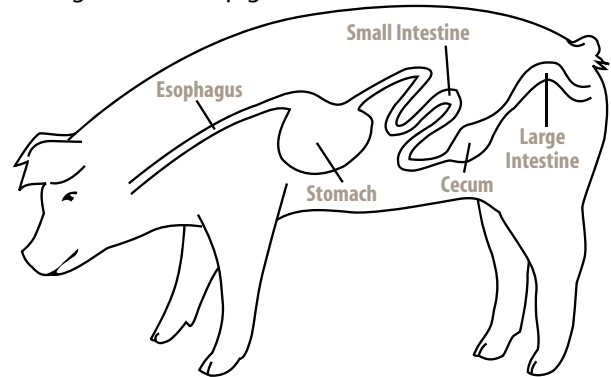
There are eight major swine breeds. These are Berkshire, Chester White, Landrace, Yorkshire, Hampshire, Duroc, Poland China and Spotted. However, many swine are crossbreeds, which incorporate the best traits of two or more breeds.

When sows give birth it is called farrowing. After three months, three weeks and three days, or 114 days, a sow gives birth to eight to 12 piglets called a litter. It isn't unusual for a sow to raise five or more litters in her lifetime. Piglets are born with eight needle-sharp teeth which are sometimes clipped to prevent injury to the sow and other piglets. Their curly tails are often shortened to prevent tail biting. Pigs do not have sweat glands so a mist of water must be provided in the hot summer months to keep them cool.

Piglets weigh about three pounds when born and are 29.4 centimeters in length (approximately 11½ inches). They are weaned from the sow between two and three weeks of age.

Pigs are fed a diet primarily consisting of ground corn, which provides many essential nutrients. Soybean meal is added to the diet to provide protein to build muscle. Vitamins and minerals are also included in their diet. It takes approximately 920 pounds of feed to raise a hog for market. This same hog would drink about one-and-a-half to two gallons of water a day.

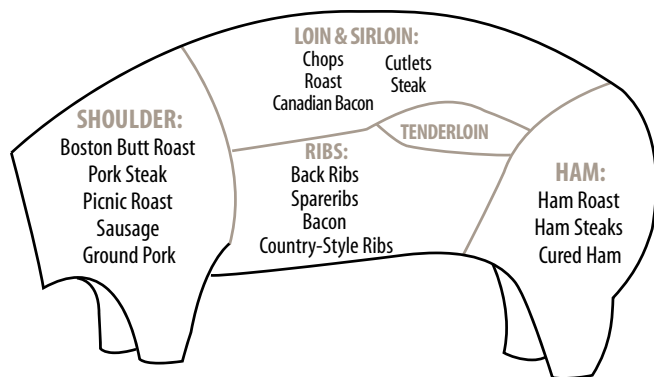
Swine are sold at market when they weigh from 250 to 280 pounds and are about five to six months of age. Some gilts are usually kept in the herd for breeding to produce the next generation of pigs.



Simple Digestive System

Swine have a digestive system similar to humans. This is different from ruminant animals such as cattle that can eat forages or grasses. Pigs can only digest feed such as corn and soybean meal which is ground into small particles.

Products



Cuts of Pork

Pork is the meat that comes from a pig. People eat many different pork products, such as bacon, sausage, pork chops and ham. A 265-pound market hog will yield about 160 pounds of pork for a grocery store's meat case. Pork is the most widely eaten meat in the world.

Other Products

In addition to meat, swine provide other products as well. These include insulin for the regulation of diabetes; valves for human heart surgery; suede for shoes and clothing; and gelatin for many food and non-food uses. Swine products are used in insulation, rubber, antifreeze, certain plastics, floor waxes, crayons, chalk, adhesives and fertilizer.