



Pasture-Raised Pork Production Protocols

1. Locally-Raised

- 1.1 All hogs must be born, raised and finished in North Carolina or the surrounding region, which includes bordering counties in the four contiguous states of VA, TN, GA and SC and/or areas within a reasonable distance (150 miles or less) of participating processors. All hogs must be born on the farm where they are raised
- 1.2 Firsthand Foods currently sources all of its hogs from the North Carolina Natural Hog Growers Association. For more information email ncnhga@gmail.com.

2.0 Delivery of Finished Animals

- 2.1 Producers must deliver hogs in good condition to an Animal Welfare Approved processor approved by Firsthand Foods.

3.0 Carcass Size

- 3.1 The target carcass size for Firsthand Foods is 225- 250 pounds, translating to a live weight of no more than 300 lbs.

4.0 Payment

- 4.1 Payment rates are determined prior to the animal leaving the farm. Payment is based upon the animal's hanging weight as determined at the processor.
- 4.2 Producers must verify the hanging weight of each animal and invoice Firsthand Foods (hanging weight x payment rate).
- 4.3 Payment rates vary and are determined and set annually.
- 4.4 Producers are required to sign a credit agreement per the Packer & Stockyard Act.

5.0 Communication, Engagement & Ongoing Education

- 5.1 All producers are required to communicate regularly with Firsthand Foods and are encouraged to utilize email unless other arrangements are made. Firsthand Foods will visit each farm a minimum of once per year.
- 5.2 Producers are required to attend at least one Firsthand Foods' producer network meeting per year to discuss production protocols, meat quality & company policies.
- 5.3 Producers are asked to participate in the development of marketing materials and consumer outreach events on an as needed basis.

- 5.4 Producers are required to allow Firsthand Foods to photograph their farms, animals and families at least once annually for the development of marketing materials. Producers may approve of all photography used by Firsthand Foods.
- 5.5 Producer affidavits must be updated annually with signatures stating that farmers follow Firsthand Foods' protocols.

6. Animal Welfare Approved

- 6.1 Firsthand Foods sources hogs only from farms that are certified by Animal Welfare Approved (AWA). See <https://animalwelfareapproved.us/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/AWA-Sheep-Standards-2017-v3.pdf>.
- 6.2 All Firsthand Foods' hog producers must feed non-GMO feeds as certified by A Greener World.
- 6.3 Animals must be harvested at an AWA approved facility designated by Firsthand Foods.

The following requirements are excerpted from Animal Welfare Approved to highlight key management issues identified by Firsthand Foods.

7.0 Breeds

- 7.1 Hog breeds must be selected that thrive outdoors in North Carolina's climatic conditions, including susceptibility to heat stress.
- 7.2 Hog breeds must be selected for their good maternal qualities, hardiness and ability to meet the needs of their piglets.

8.0 Health Management

- 8.1 Animal management must be focused on promoting health rather than treating disease.
- 8.2 If there is disease or known risk of disease on farm vaccines must be used.
- 8.3 Any sick or injured animals on the farm must be treated immediately to minimize pain and distress.
- 8.4 The sub-therapeutic and/or non-therapeutic use of antibiotics, or any other medicines, to control or prevent disease or promote growth, is prohibited.
- 8.5 Growth hormones or the use of any other substances promoting weight gain are prohibited.
- 8.6 The use of ractopamine (Paylean) is prohibited.
- 8.7 The primary methods of preventing parasite infestations must be ranging and foraging area management or rotation and bedding management and removal.

9.0 Animal Management

- 9.1 Farrowing systems must be designed and maintained in such a manner as to minimize mortality.
- 9.2 Sows about to farrow must be provided with an individual arc, hut or pen for farrowing and nursing.

- 9.3 Prior to farrowing arcs, huts or pens must be amply bedded with fresh, dry bedding that the sow can manipulate. It is prohibited to castrate piglets that are more than seven days old.
- 9.4 Piglets must be at least six weeks of age at weaning.
- 9.5 It is prohibited to castrate piglets that are more than seven days old.
- 9.6 Tail docking is prohibited.
- 9.7 Clipping, grinding or filing of the needle teeth of piglets is prohibited.
- 9.8 Nose ringing of pigs is prohibited.
- 9.9 When pigs are at risk of heat stress, wallows or sprinklers, in combination with natural or artificial shade, must be provided.

10. Feeding & Nutrition

- 10.1 Only non-GMO feed rations are allowed.
- 10.2 Animals must have free access to clean, fresh water at all times.
- 10.3 Feeding meat or animal by-products is prohibited.
- 10.4 All pigs must have continuous access to forage to meet behavioral needs and to satisfy hunger. *Note: Forage may consist of grass, clean hay, straw, soybean hulls or similar fiber sources and crop stubble.*

11. Ranging & Foraging

- 11.1 Animals must be able to explore the ground and their natural environment at all times.
- 11.2 Pigs must have access to growing green vegetation on the range whenever conditions allow.
- 11.3 Animals must not be grazed or kept on land within 21 days of direct application of herbicides or pesticides.
- 11.4 Land must be managed to avoid erosion.
- 11.5 Ranging and foraging areas on which animals have been out-wintered or that are otherwise worn out or denuded must be restored.
- 11.6 Where vegetative cover cannot be maintained throughout the year manipulable material must be provided.
- 11.7 Confinement systems, in-house or field-based pens or cages that restrict the pigs' natural behaviors, are prohibited.
- 11.8 Any ranging and foraging enclosure area provided for pigs must offer separate dunging, feeding, wallowing and foraging areas.
- 11.9 The minimum pen size for pigs must be 1400 sq. ft.

- 11.10 Each adult pig must have at least 700 sq. ft. of space.
- 11.11 Each market pig must have at least 56 sq. ft. of space.

12.0 Housing & Shelter

- 12.1 The thermal comfort of pigs must be protected by provision of housing or shelter with natural or mechanical temperature and humidity control as required.
- 12.2 The needs of all ages and stages of production and local climatic extremes must be taken into account when planning housing or shelter.
- 12.3 In extreme weather there must be a means to feed and water animals in a sheltered environment.
- 12.4 Shelters and housing must be positioned away from areas of run off or potential run off.
- 12.5 Shelters and housing must be well ventilated and allow fresh air to enter.