



PORK STANDARDS

Firsthand Foods sells local, fresh, pasture-raised pork produced by a network of small-scale producers all of whom reside in North Carolina and abide by these standards:

LOCAL

Our pork producers live and farm in North Carolina.

PASTURE-RAISED

Our pork producers raise their animals exclusively outdoors on pasture. At no time do they live in confinement or in confinement-like conditions. Instead, they live in their natural habitat of fields and woodlots, where they root in the soil, create wallows to cool-off and build nests to birth their young. All hogs are provided with shelter for farrowing (giving birth) and for managing temperature extremes and inclement weather.

NO ANTIBIOTICS

Our producers do not use growth-promoting antibiotics. This prophylactic use of antibiotics is unnecessary when hogs are raised outdoors in a low-stress environment and get plenty of exercise. If a hog does get sick, it is segregated and treated with an antibiotic to prevent suffering and ultimately sold into a different market channel.

NO HORMONAL IMPLANTS

Our producers do not use any type of growth promoting hormones.

NO ANIMAL BY-PRODUCTS

Our producers raise their own grains for feed and do not add animal by-products.

HUMANE PRODUCTION & SLAUGHTER

With one exception, all of the hogs we purchase are from pork producers certified to meet the rigorous animal welfare approved (AWA) standards of the third-party certifier, [A Greener World](#). The exception is our smaller BBQ-size hogs, which we source from one farm that is challenged to find a supply of AWA-approved feeder pigs. This is a pervasive supply chain challenge in our region and one that we continue to advocate for

solutions. That said, all of the hogs we purchase are slaughtered in AWA approved facilities.

BREED SELECTION

All of our producers raise old-English style heritage breed hogs that are adapted to thriving outdoors, including Berkshire, Duroc, and Hampshire. Our farmers typically raise a hybrid mix of breeds, including boars (male hogs) that have the best meat quality and sows and gilts (females) that have the best mothering characteristics. These heritage breeds have a sufficient fat layer to provide insulation during winter months and hair color to help prevent sunburn during summer months. Their pork is known for its rich red color, intramuscular marbling and porky flavor.

TRACEABILITY

Each cut of meat and batch of sausage can be traced back to the farm (or farms) where it was sourced. This level of traceability is rarely seen in the meat industry.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

We frequently visit with our farmers and provide carcass quality feedback. In particular, we evaluate each batch of hogs for carcass characteristics such as back fat thickness, loin eye size, color and marbling. This information is shared with each producer so that they can make informed decisions about breed selection, pasture management and nutrition programs to optimize meat quality.