



Niche Pork Production Benchmarking for Success



Pork Study by Jamie Picardy, Tufts University Graduate Student

Overview:

Unlike the commodity pork producers network such as PigCHAMP, the niche market does not collect performance characteristics. Therefore, the purpose of this survey is to gather production information in order to compare performance between niche and commodity pork production.

As a result, you will have benchmarking targets, such as weaning success and days to market, for comparing your farm with other niche producers in the study as well as commodity production averages. Your individual responses will be kept confidential and your participation is voluntary.

This study is part of my dissertation Ph.D. research in Agriculture, Food and Environment at the Friedman School of Nutrition at Tufts University in Boston, Massachusetts. *If you have any questions, please contact me by phone (215-360-5885) or email (jamie.picardy@tufts.edu).*

Directions:

Please complete the following questions about your pork production enterprise. Feel free to expand your answers (on the back of the page or end of document if needed). The survey has 5 short parts, focusing on: feeding, breeding, finishing, housing/bedding, and experience. **The completed survey should be returned to Jamie Picardy by April 30, 2014 using email (jamie.picardy@tufts.edu) or mail (150 Harrison Avenue, Boston, MA 02111).** The survey should take about 15 minutes to complete. To save time, you can also complete the survey online at https://tufts.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_6u6nqQYyJsoOFo1.

Part I: Feeding, Manure and Breeds	Your Answer	Units of Measurement
Do you keep feed records?	YES or NO	circle answer
What percentage of your feed do you grow on your farm?		% farm-grown
Do you buy pre-mix feed or mix your own on your farm?	Pre-mix or Mix our own	circle answer
Do your hogs have access to the outdoors?	YES or NO	circle answer
If yes, is grazed pasture part of your hogs' feed ration?	YES or NO	circle answer
Similarly, how many months of the year is GRAZED forage part of		# of months
List all major feeds and approximate amount as-fed to your finishing pigs		
<i>An example is provided below</i>	<u>Ingredient</u>	<u>Amount (total lb per finished animal)</u>
<i>Example</i>	<i>Corn grain</i>	<i>500 lb corn total / finished hog</i>
	<i>Soybean meal</i>	<i>165 lb SBM total / finished hog</i>
	<i>Alfalfa haylage</i>	<i>130 lb alfalfa haylage total / finished hog</i>
How do you manage your hog manure? <i>Please circle all that apply or write answer</i>	Rotational grazing (<i>left on the land</i>) Digester or Composter Holding ponds/lagoons	Apply it to own cropland Apply it off-site to other's cropland Other: _____
In your opinion, does your hog operation produce more manure than YOUR land can accept without environmental problems?	YES or NO	circle answer
What breeds/cross breeds do you raise? <i>Please list here:</i>		

Do you have breeding pigs? If yes, go to Part II. If not, go to Part III.

Part II: Breeding	Your Answer	Units of Measurement
Do you keep records on the productivity of your breeding sows/gilts?	YES or NO	circle answer
How many times do your sows farrow per year?		times per year <i>example: 2 times per year</i>
What months of the year do your sows farrow?		<i>example: Dec. and June</i>
What is the average litter size, alive at birth?		# of piglets born alive
For the average litter, how many piglets are typically weaned?		# of piglets weaned
What is the average age of weaned piglets?		days
What is the average weight of weaned piglets?		pounds at weaning
How large is your sow breeding herd?		# of breeding sows
What is the age at first breeding of replacement gilts?		months (age at 1st breeding)
When do you cull your breeding sows? (age or parity) <i>Parity is the number of times the sow has given birth over her lifetime</i>		years (age at culling) parity # for culling
For what reason do you cull your breeding herd? <i>Please list</i>		
What is your typical death loss (<i>mortality</i>) of breeding sows? <i>Answer either as % (per year) or written out (# die from breeding herd)</i>		% per year that die <i>write answer: example 1 dies out of 20</i>
Do you use artificial insemination?	YES or NO	circle answer
If no, what is your ratio of breeding boars to breeding sows?		<i>example: 1 boar to 20 sows</i>
At what age do you cull your breeding boars?		age (years)
What is your average mortality of breeding boars? <i>Answer either as % (per year) or written out (# die from breeding herd)</i>		% per year that die <i>write answer: example 1 dies out of 35</i>

Part III: Growing & Finishing	Your Answer	Units of Measurement
Do you keep records on your finished hogs?	YES or NO	circle answer
How old are your finished hogs?		# of months (age) to market
What is the weight of your average finished hog?		pounds
How many niche market pigs do you finish per year? <i>Niche = alternative hog production and/or marketing</i>		# per year
To whom do you sell your finished hogs? <i>Please circle all that apply</i> Other (<i>write</i>): _____	Direct marketing to consumers Aggregator / Food Hub	Restaurants/Chefs Retail Grocery Stores
What is your typical death loss (<i>mortality</i>) of finishing gilts and barrows?		% growers/finishers that die prematurely
What is your typical cull % of finishing gilts and barrows?		% growers/finishers that are culled
What are your reasons for culling? <i>Write your answer</i> <i>Examples: tail-end (too small), injured, fed antibiotics & can't sell in niche market</i>		
Where do you sell your culled pigs? <i>Write your answer</i> <i>Examples: rendering plant, cull market, non-niche market, direct marketing, euthanized</i>		

Part IV: Housing & Bedding			
	Sow gestation	Sow with litter	Growers & Finishers
List your HOUSING TYPE for each stage: <i>Example: Enclosed hoop barn, Barn with outdoor access, Grazed pasture with shelter, Earthen feedlot (no pasture), Concrete feedlot</i>			
What is your TOTAL SPACE within each stage? <i>Include fallow area used in grazing rotation</i>	_____ [total square feet per breeding herd]	_____ [total square feet per breeding herd]	_____ [total square feet per growing/finishing herd]
Describe your BEDDING MATERIAL for each stage: <i>Examples: Corn stalks, straw, wood shavings, shredded newspapers</i>			
How many TONS of BEDDING did you use for the year?	_____ [tons/year for all sows]	_____ [tons/year for all sows with their litters]	_____ [tons/year for all growing/finishing hogs]

Part V: Your Experiences in Alternative, Niche Production	Your Answer	Units of Measurement
Location: In what state is your farm located?		<i>write your answer</i>
How long have you raised niche (<i>alternative / non-conventional</i>) pigs?		# of years
How far do you travel for slaughter services?		actual miles to slaughterhouse
What is the maximum distance you would travel for slaughter services?		maximum distance in miles to travel for
For pigs raised with outdoor access, what slope is too steep?		% slope of the land
In terms of net income, is niche pork your farm's primary income? What else do you raise/grow?	YES or NO	<i>circle answer</i>
What are your top three reasons for raising niche pigs, as opposed to commodity pork?	1)	
	2)	
	3)	
How do you define success in niche pig operations?		
From your experiences, what are the top three barriers for raising/marketing niche pigs successfully?	1)	
	2)	
	3)	
Unlike USDA Organic, "niche" pork production does not have a defined label. Which of the following production characteristics should be included in a "niche meat" label? <i>Circle all that apply</i>	No added hormones No sub-therapeutic antibiotics No antibiotics (<i>never-ever</i>)	Access to the outdoors Heritage breeds No tight confinement
Other: _____ Other: _____	Locally-grown feed Non-GMO feed Grazed forages part of diet Organic certification	Small herd size Proper manure management Alternative Marketing

You have reached the end of this survey.

THANK YOU for your PARTICIPATION, KNOWLEDGE, and TIME!

Please return completed survey to Jamie Picardy by email (jamie.picardy@tufts.edu) or mail.
If you would like to receive project results and register for the raffle,
please PRINT your email address here: _____

Page 3 of 3

You're finished ~ Thank you