

The Pork Lifecycle



Gilts (female pigs) are bred and give birth to a litter in 3 months, 3 weeks and 3 days. After delivery of their first litter, gilts are called sows. The litter of 12-13 pigs are raised in a farrowing barn. **Typically, pigs are raised completely in climate-controlled facilities.**



Piglets weigh 2-3 pounds at birth. They nurse with their mother for 3 weeks before being weaned.



At weaning, piglets weigh 13-15 pounds. They are moved to a nursery with other litters. Piglets are fed a corn/soybean meal diet, eating up to 4 pounds of food per day. They will grow to 50-60 pounds during this 8-week period.



Pigs are moved from the nursery to a finishing barn for the next 16-17 weeks. In the grow/finish phase, pigs consume 6-10 pounds of feed daily. At about 6 months of age, the pigs weigh about 280 pounds and are market ready.



Pork - including bacon - is an excellent source of protein and provides several important vitamins and minerals. Each year, the average American consumes nearly 18 pounds of bacon.



After being processed, retailers and foodservice operators sell pork in supermarkets and restaurants for purchase by consumers.