

COMMODITY

PORK

Description

The British Columbia pork industry operates as a non-supply managed commodity and produces pork products for customers in domestic and export markets. The majority of the industry's hog farms are family owned and operated, and are concentrated in the Fraser Valley between Chilliwack and Aldergrove.

Market pricing for B.C. pork reflects global market demand and supply trends for all meat sectors. The B.C. industry produces about 10% of the pork consumed in B.C., while the remaining 90% is sourced from suppliers located in the Prairies and the United States. A current thrust of the B.C. pork industry is in transitioning itself from being a producer of commodity pork to one of supplying value-added specialty pork. The branding of B.C. pork products as such is a key ongoing initiative.

The B.C. pork industry is represented by two organizations: the British Columbia Pork Producers Association (BCPPA) and the British Columbia Hog Marketing Commission (BCHMC). The BCPPA, incorporated in 1929, is recognized under the *Society Act of B.C.* The BCPPA represents the industry in such areas as animal care, food quality and traceability, environment, research and development, and consumer education. The BCHMC, which is regulated under the *Natural Products Marketing (BC) Act*, has a mandate to work for the industry in a marketing function, and collects a levy on each hog sold to fund the daily operations of both the BCHMC and the BCPPA.

Although a very limited number of hogs may be raised outdoors on pasture or on bedded earthen floors under shelters, the vast majority of hogs produced in B.C. are raised in modern confinement units engineered and designed to provide strict environmental controls. Producers are encouraged to follow Canada's *Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals – Pigs* and its companion document entitled *Addendum Early Weaned Pigs*. It is also mandatory that all pork producers adhere to practices of the federally approved on-farm food safety program for swine known as Canadian Quality Assurance (CQA).

There are two stages involved in hog production: farrowing (raising piglets from birth to weaning) and growing-finishing (growing weaners through to market weight). Many producers raise hogs from farrow-to-finish. In other cases, a producer will manage a farrowing operation where pigs are raised from birth to weaning on solid or liquid feed, subsequent to which another producer will grow and finish them to market weight. Typically, it takes from five to six months to raise a hog from farrow-to-finish.

During the growing-finishing stage, hogs are fed specially formulated high-energy rations. Hog rations may be prepared and supplied by local feed companies, or they may be prepared on-farm using integrated feed milling and delivery systems. Manure is collected and stored in concrete-lined pits, in concrete-lined or earthen lagoons, or composted and stored as a solid by-product until it can be applied to cropland later as a fertilizer.

Hogs in B.C. are delivered daily by individual producers to one of two meat packing plants in the Fraser Valley. Each packer has specific weight requirements for hogs delivered to them, but they generally fall into two live weight categories as either round hogs (for the barbecue market) or market hogs. Live weights for round hogs run from 40 to 45 kilograms while market hog weights typically range from 90 to 95 kilograms.

The B.C. hog industry has been well served for over 30 years by Britco Packers of Langley and Johnston's of Chilliwack. Britco is a federally-inspected Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP)-approved plant with a kill capacity of about 7,000 head per week, with about 1,450 head coming from the province's producers. Johnston's is a provincially-inspected plant and kills about 1,550 head per week, with all of their hogs sourced from B.C. farms.

Farm Practices of Particular Interest

Practices for specific farm activities can be found in the Farm Practices section of this reference guide. Farm practices that are of particular interest to pork production include the following.

Hog Handling and Transportation

Producers are responsible for ensuring that the behaviour, health and welfare needs of their hogs are met. Prompt medical treatment, good housing, biosecurity and cleanliness all play a role in meeting these goals.

Recommended animal husbandry practices for hogs are detailed in the *Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals – Pigs* and its companion document *Addendum Early Weaned Pigs*. These codes provide guidelines on the humane care, feeding and management of pigs of all ages.

The Canadian Pork Council (CPC) is initiating a review of the current codes of care according to the National Farm Animal Care Council's (NFACC) revision process. Producers are encouraged to refer to the codes for best management practices (BMPs) in such areas as housing and handling facilities, feed and water, health and welfare, transportation, husbandry practices, and euthanasia.

All hog handlers – including producers, livestock transporters and hog-receiving staff at meat packing plants – should seek training and certification in best management practices for animal handling and movement. This is currently available through Certified Livestock Transport (CLT), a comprehensive training course focusing on Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) regulations, transport laws, livestock handling, animal and handler safety, and accident prevention. CLT certification has become mandatory for employment with some trucking companies, and for those delivering market hogs to some meat packing plants. It is expected to become a national standard in time. Information on CLT can be found on the B.C. Farm Animal Care Council's (BCFACC) website at www.bcfacc.ca.

Producers must supply adequate space on the farm property to accommodate the volume, movement and parking of vehicles related to farm activities.

See also Farm Practice: [Animal Care and Handling Transportation](#)

Biosecurity

The BC Swine Biosecurity Program is the first provincially adopted program of its type in Canada. This Program was initiated by the B.C. pork industry in 2009 as a risk-mitigation strategy to address ongoing challenges associated with introducing and spreading diseases of significance to pork production.

Farm Buildings

Pork producers require structures to house animals; to store feeds, fertilizers and pesticides; to hold manure and other wastes; and to protect and maintain machinery and equipment. Some odours are to be expected from hog facilities. More concentrated odours can originate from manure storage facilities during times of manure storage agitation and while spreading manure onto land. Employing best management practices helps to control fly populations, to minimize concentrations of odours, and to maximize utilization of manure's nutrient value. Regular management and cleanup of the farm site – particularly around buildings and feed storage areas – is important in the control of pests and rodents.

See also Farm Practice: [Storage of Hazardous Material](#)
[Storage of Farm Supplies and Products](#)
[Structures](#)
[Ventilation](#)
[Pest Management](#)

Equipment and Machinery Operation

The operation of equipment for feed storage, preparation and delivery is common practice on hog farms. This usually includes electrically-powered augers for grain bin unloading and mechanical feed delivery systems for individual and group feeding stations. During times of electrical power outage, standby power generators may also be operational for extended periods of time.

See also Farm Practice: [Mobile Equipment](#)
[Stationary Equipment](#)
[Feed and Watering](#)

Feeding

Hog rations may be prepared and supplied by local feed companies, or they may be prepared on the farm premises by using integrated feed milling and delivery systems. On-farm feeding systems require regular maintenance and monitoring to ensure that feed is stored properly and to ensure that the most efficient utilization of feed nutrients is realized.

See also Farm Practice: [Feeding and Watering](#)
[Storage of Farm Supplies and Products](#)

Cultivation

Hog producers normally cultivate part of their land area for annual crop production.

See also Farm Practice: [Cultivation](#)
[Mobile Equipment](#)

Fertilizer Use

Nutrient management planning (NMP) has become a common, regular practice on many hog farms. NMP involves the collection and submission of soil samples to an accredited lab for nutrient analysis. With this information, an NMP advisor works with the producer to determine the types and amounts of inorganic fertilizers that should be applied to supplement the nutrients provided in organic fertilizers such as manure and compost. This results in a more economical and efficient use of fertilizers, and ensures that plant nutritional requirements are met. As well, it provides for a more sustainable system of managing soil fertility, soil structure, and water quality.

Inorganic fertilizers are often stored temporarily until cropping and weather conditions permit spreading.

See also Farm Practice: [Storage of Hazardous Material](#)

Manure Handling and Mortalities

Manure is collected and stored or composted until it can be applied to cropland as a fertilizer. Some odours will be generated when mixing solid materials that may be naturally composting while in storage, or when agitating liquid manure in lagoons or storage pits prior to loading into equipment for transport and application to the field. Depending on the method employed and on weather conditions, land application of manure may also generate odours.

Employing beneficial management practices in the handling, storage and disposal of mortalities is important for controlling odours and pests, for protecting water quality, and for managing and controlling diseases as part of a broader on-farm biosecurity program.

See also Farm Practice: [Composting](#)
[Farmstead Refuse](#)
[Fertilizers and Soil Conditioners](#)
[Manure Storage and Use](#)
[Mortality Disposal](#)

Legislation

Agricultural producers are expected to follow all legislation that pertains to their farming operations. The *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act* stipulates that the farm operation must meet the *Public Health Act*, *Integrated Pest Management Act*, *Environmental Management Act* and the regulations under those Acts. Information on federal and provincial legislation can be found in Appendices B and C.

Acts that pertain to specific farm activities are listed in the Farm Practices section of this reference guide. Local government bylaws may also apply to some farm practices. Acts that are not referenced elsewhere and which are of special interest to pork producers include the following.

Federal Legislation

The *Agricultural Products Marketing Act (R.S., 1985, c. A-6)* provides for the marketing of agricultural products in interprovincial and export trade.

The *Canadian Agricultural Products Act (1985, c. 20, 4th Supplement)* regulates the marketing of agricultural products as imports and exports in international and interprovincial trade. It provides for national standards and grades of agricultural products, for product inspection and grading, for the registration of establishments, and for standards governing establishments.

The *Fisheries Act (R.S., 1985, c. F-14)* prohibits the discharge of deleterious substances such as fertilizers and manure into watercourses.

The *Health of Animals Act (1990, c. 21)* protects human and animal health through the control or elimination of diseases and toxic substances, and includes requirements for the humane treatment of animals under the *Health of Animals Regulations*. Conditions for the humane transportation of farm animals are defined in the *Health of Animal Regulations, Part XII*.

Provincial Legislation

The *Natural Products Marketing (BC) Act (RSBC 1996)* provides the regulatory structure under which the B.C. Hog Marketing Commission (BCHMC) fulfills its mandate of working for the pork industry in a marketing function and in its role in collecting a levy on each hog sold to fund the daily operations of both the Commission and the B.C. Pork Producers Association.

The *Society Act of BC (RSBC 1996)* provides the regulatory framework by which the B.C. Pork Producers Association conducts its business on behalf of the B.C. pork industry.

The *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act* protects all animals (other than wild animals not in captivity) from distress during handling or any activities not considered to fall under generally-accepted animal management practices.

Local Government Legislation

Applicable local government legislation may include animal control bylaws and meat inspection bylaws.

Publications and Websites

Publications

Publications and websites that provide information on pork production include, but are not limited to, the following. Refer to Appendix D for details.

British Columbia Agricultural Composting Handbook

British Columbia Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) Reference Guide

British Columbia Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Guide

British Columbia On-Farm Biosecurity Plan

Fly Control Around Buildings

Large Animal Disposal – On-Farm Composting Option, South Coastal Region of BC

Large Animal Disposal – On-Farm Burial Option, South Coastal Region of BC

On-Farm Food Safety

Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals – Pigs

Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals – Pigs, Addendum Early Weaned Pigs

Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals – Transportation

Riparian Management

Websites

British Columbia Farm Animal Care Council (BCFACC)

British Columbia Pork (BC Pork)

Canadian Pork Council (CPC)

CQA for Canadian Hog Producers

National Farm Animal Care Council – Code of Practice for Pigs

Canadian Agri-Food Research Council (CARC)- Code of Practice for Transportation of Animals

Canadian Federation of Humane Societies