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## Pastured Pork Standards ©

January 2018  
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## Introduction

The American Grassfed Association AGA Pastured Pork Standards require livestock production practices that include a forage-based diet derived from pasture, animal health and welfare, no antibiotics, no added growth hormones. AGA Grassfed standards are written by and for producers to support American family farms and provide a fair and sustainable market for their products, products better for the consumer, better for the earth and better for the animal.

These standards apply to all farms and ranches approved by the American Grassfed Association for the production AGA Pastured Pork products destined for certification by AGA. Only licensees certified as following these AGA Pastured Pork Standards may use AGA's American Grassfed Association ® logos, Association trademarks, service marks, and/or design marks hereafter called AGA Design Mark on their food and agriculture product packaging and promotional material.

## Recommended Best Practices for AGA Pastured Pork

*AGA Best Practices are recommendations to ensure the highest level of integrity regarding land, animal and environmental management.*

### §1.1 Best Practices for Pastured Pork

- 1.1.1 AGA Pastured Pork animal breeds must be suited to the climate, geography, soil type and natural environment of the farm/ranch in which they are raised.
- 1.1.2 Stocking rates must be appropriate to the forage species, season, soil, slope, climate and geography of the farm/ranch.
- 1.1.3 Planting of annual forage crops to remove nutrients after pigs are removed from a pasture.
- 1.1.4 Rotating pigs between paddocks and strategically locating feed and water must contribute to better distribution of manure and soil nutrients and help prevent soil compaction and erosion.
- 1.1.5 Frequent movement of feeders and waterers can help reduce trail creation within paddocks/pastures and soil compaction, and allows for a better soil nutrients dispersal
- 1.1.6 Use hard-perforated platforms big enough to host front and back legs, under feeders and drinkers, and if possible under shade structures.
- 1.1.7 When forage cover in pastures is reduced to less than 75% forage cover pigs should be moved/rotated and the paddock/pasture rested or cropped.

## General Standards

### §2.1 Record Keeping

- 2.1.1 All required records must be in sufficient detail as to demonstrate compliance with AGA Standards to the auditing/inspection agency.

## §2.2 Language Used in the Standards

The following words are used to convey requirements for use of specific standards within the AGA Pastured Pork Certification Program:

- **“Must”**: Implementation of the standard is required.
- **“Recommended”** or **“Should”**: A best practice that should be adhered to, but other methods may be accepted if the goal is achieved.
- **“Prohibited”**: The practice is not allowed.

## §2.2 Record Keeping

2.1.1 All required records must be in sufficient detail as to demonstrate compliance with AGA Standards to the auditing/inspection agency.

## Pastured Pork Standards

### §3.1 Forage Protocol

3.1.1 AGA Pastured Pork production must be pasture/grass/forage based.

3.1.2 Grass and forage must be a significant feed source consumed for the lifetime of the animal.

3.1.3 AGA Pastured Pork animals must have continuous access to forage.

### §3.2 Pasture Management, Grazing, Confinement and Stockpiled Forages

3.2.1 AGA Pastured Pork animals must be provided maximum access to pasture, rangeland, crop residue, timber areas or woodlots and must optimize their dry matter intake grazed from pasture during the grazing season except during:

- a) Roundups
- b) Sorting
- c) Weaning
- d) Transportation
- e) Nighttime confinement

3.2.2 AGA Pastured Pork animals must be provided shade at all times.

3.2.3 Pastures must provide forage, in enough quality and quantity, and to maximize grazing for AGA Pastured Pork during the grazing season. See “grazing season” in definitions.

3.2.4 Feeding AGA Pastured Pork in a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) is prohibited.

3.2.5 All farms/ ranches must have in place a written pasture management and grazing plan that supports biological diversity, natural resources and soil fertility.

3.2.6 The use of synthetic herbicide and pesticide is prohibited with these exceptions:

- a.) Weeds and invasive plants or pests have not been effectively controlled using other sustainable/holistic means.
- b.) Prescriptive individual plant treatment (IPT) of herbicide to remove invasive plant species.

- 3.2.7 If the conditions of 3.2.6 above are met and synthetic herbicides and/or pesticides are used these conditions must also be met:
- a) A written prescriptive Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program must be included as part of the required pasture management and grazing plan. Plan must be provided to the inspector/inspection agency at the time of inspection.
  - b) Livestock must be removed from all areas, pastures or rangelands before application of synthetic herbicide and/or pesticide.
  - c) Livestock must not be allowed to graze treated areas, pastures or rangelands for double the manufacturers listed withdrawal period or at least 30 days whichever is longest.
  - d) Livestock must be removed from treated areas, pastures or rangelands for double the manufactures listed withdrawal prior to slaughter or at least of 90 days whichever is longest.
  - e) Avoid application near riparian areas to protect streams and wildlife habitat.
  - f) Herbicides and pesticides must be mixed and applied according to manufacturer recommendations and application rates.
  - g) Records must be kept showing product used, mixture of product, date of use, and application area. Records must be provided to the inspector/inspection agency at the time of inspection.
- 3.2.8 Paddocks/pastures that include drainage areas, ditches, surface water-courses or wallows must to be bordered by vegetated buffer strips.
- 3.2.9 Operation must comply with all local, regional and state regulations about water quality and runoff.
- 3.2.10 Existing wildlife and wildlife habitat must be managed to allow native wildlife on the farm/ ranch to coexist with domestic animals on the farm/ranch.
- 3.2.11 AGA Pastured Pork may be removed from pasture during inclement weather or events that may threaten the health, safety and welfare of the animal, natural resources or when conditions compromise the ability to graze.
- Note: Exclusion from pasture should be based on the animal's ability to graze or the potential damage to soil and not the calendar.*
- 3.2.12 AGA Pastured Pork removed from pasture must have access to the outdoors unless conditions jeopardize the health, safety and welfare of the animals or there is a risk of damaging soil structure due to wet soil conditions.
- 3.2.13 Wallow area should be managed to prevent erosion, nutrient leaching and not allowed to become stagnant.
- 3.2.14 Sacrifice pastures are permissible to protect surrounding pastures from overuse during extended inclement weather conditions or times of slow pasture re-growth (drought). See *definitions*.
- 3.2.15 Intentionally planting GMO seeds for the production of on-farm forage is prohibited.

### **§3.3 Supplemental Feeding and Nutritional Supplements**

- 3.3.1 AGA Pastured Pork animals must receive a balance diet, including protein, energy, minerals and vitamins and be appropriate to the animals age and stage of production.
- 3.3.2 Forage/pasture/browse should provide 60% of the animal's dry matter intake averaged throughout the year.
- 3.3.3 Feed and water space must sufficient to eliminate crowding and competition.
- 3.3.4 Mineral and vitamin supplements may be provided free choice, or may be mixed into supplemental forage feed to adjust the animal's nutrient intake and to correct deficiencies in its total diet.
- 3.3.5 Forage produced in a sprouted fodder system is allowed.
- 3.3.6 Receipts, ingredient lists and /or tear tags must be provided to the auditing/inspection agency for all supplements and for all seeds planted for on farm forage production.
- 3.3.7 Intentional feeding of any banned feedstuffs listed in Appendix A to AGA Pastured Pork is prohibited.
- 3.3.8 The intentional feeding of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO's) to AGA Pastured Pork is prohibited.

### **§3.4 Animal Health and Welfare**

- 3.4.1 All livestock production methods and management must promote animal health, safety and welfare, including piglet and shoat management, handling, transport and slaughter.
- 3.4.2 Producers must have a written herd health plan, preferably in consultation with a veterinarian updated every two years; or, participate in an ongoing third-party animal welfare program that includes on-farm visits.
- 3.4.3 Living conditions must accommodate the health and natural behaviors of the animals. Shade, shelter, fresh air and clean drinking water must be provided on a daily basis for animals. Pastures, paddocks and shelter must be large enough to allow all animals to graze/feed without crowding or competition for food.
- 3.4.4 Farrowing and gestation crates are prohibited.
- 3.4.5 Appropriate shelter shall be provided to ensure sows have enough options to nest and farrow with protection from the elements and exhibit natural behaviors of motherhood. A combination of both natural and manmade structures are acceptable.
- 3.4.6 Sows must be allowed sufficient time to adjust to their farrowing environment.
- 3.4.7 Electric prod use is prohibited except in instances to prevent risk of injury to the animal or handler.
- 3.4.8 AGA Pastured Pork must not be fed or treated with antibiotics except as provided in 3.4.9.

3.4.9 Sick or injured animals must be treated to relieve symptoms. Animals treated with prohibited medications must also comply with 3.5.10 and 3.5.11 below.

3.4.10 If prohibited medications are required for treatment, the animal must be permanently identified at time of treatment with an ear tag, leg band or other clear and visual form of identification to designate that they no longer qualify for AGA Pastured Pork program.

*Note: Provided the identification and tracking comply with 3.4.11 below the animal may still be kept with other animals that qualify for AGA Pastured Pork certification.*

3.4.11 Producer must develop and maintain a written record of all vaccines, medications, or other substances used in his/her animal health care program. Records must be provided to the auditing/inspection agency.

3.4.12 Producer must keep receipts for all antibiotics administered. Antibiotic receipts and records of use must be available on demand to the auditing/inspection agency.

3.4.13 If pasture management or sustainable/holistic alternatives to control worms, lice or other parasites is ineffective a synthetic endectocide may be used.

*Note: The need for parasite control should be confirmed by routine monitoring of fecal samples.*

3.4.14 Administering hormones to AGA Pastured Pork is prohibited.

3.4.15 The feeding of animal by-products to AGA Pastured Pork is prohibited.

*Note: Whey and dairy products including eggs without antibiotic residue are permitted under this standard.*

3.4.16 Genetically modified or cloned animals are prohibited.

3.4.17 The use of organophosphates, beta agonists or ionophores, or any product containing these, where an animal might ingest or absorb them, is prohibited and will cause loss of animal's Certified status.

### **§3.5 Animal Identification, Sourcing and Trace-Back**

3.5.1 AGA Pastured Pork must be traceable by written record throughout their entire lives, from birth to harvest. Complete and up-to-date records must be maintained to identify all animals raised, purchased, sold, harvested as part of the AGA Pastured Pork program.

3.5.2 Each producer must develop and maintain an animal identification system to identify each animal or batch of animals.

3.5.3 All sourced market animals brought in from other farms/ ranches must come from AGA certified producers. AGA Pastured Pork Supplier Affidavit (Appendix A) must be used for all purchased animals.

3.5.4 All records must to be maintained for at least 12 months after the animal is sold or harvested.

## AGA Pastured Pork Standards Definitions

**Browse:** 1) Leaf and twig growth of shrubs, woody vines, trees, cacti, and other non-herbaceous vegetation available for animal consumption. 2) To browse: the consumption of browse in situ by animals.

**Buffer Strip:** an area of land maintained in permanent vegetation to help control air, soil and water quality.

**Diet:** The feed regularly offered to or consumed by an animal, see ration.

**Dormancy:** In a state of being dormant when no active growth is occurring.

**Feedstuff:** any of the constituent forages, feeds or supplements of an animal ration.

**Forage:** any herbaceous plant material that can be grazed or harvested for feeding, except for grain.

**Forb:** Any herbaceous broadleaf plant that is not a grass and is not grass-like.

**Genetically modified organism (GMO):** many methods used to influence the growth or development of organisms by means that are not possible under natural conditions or processes. Such methods include cell fusion, microencapsulation and macroencapsulation, recombinant DNA technology (including gene editing, gene deletion, gene doubling, introducing a foreign gene and changing the position of genes when achieved by recombinant DNA technology). Such methods do not include the use of traditional breeding, conjugation, fermentation, hybridization, in vitro fertilization, or tissue culture.

**Grain:** Seed from cereal plants, caryopsis. Corn, wheat, rye, oats, rice, millet, sorghum, barley, triticale.

**Grass:** Member of the plant family *Poaceae*. (6)

**Graze:** **1)** the consumption of standing or residual forage by livestock; **2)** to put livestock to feed on standing residual forage

**Grazing Season:** The period when pasture is available for grazing, due to natural precipitation or irrigation.

**Growing Season:** The number of days between the last spring freeze date and the first fall freeze date.

**Hay:** The aerial parts of forage crops stored in the dry form for animal feeding.

**Haylage:** Haylage is the feed produced by storing a forage crop, dried to a moisture level of about 45-55% in an airtight silo.

**Hydrolysis:** The splitting of a substance into the smaller units by its chemical reaction with water.

**Inclement Weather:** Weather that is violent, or characterized by temperatures (high or low), or characterized by excessive precipitation that can cause physical harm to a species of livestock. Production yields or growth rates of livestock lower than the maximum achievable do not qualify as physical harm.

**Legumes:** Members of the *Fabaceae* plant family (formerly known as the *Leguminosae* family). Legumes are dicots (produce two seed leaves), produce seed in a pod, have netted leaf venation, and usually have a taproot type of root system. Most legumes can interact with bacteria of the genus *Rhizobium* to fix nitrogen in nodules on their roots. Legumes may have one of four types of seedheads. These seedhead types are the raceme, the spike, the head or umbel.

**Mineral:** 1) n. a solid homogeneous crystalline chemical element or compound that results from the inorganic processes of nature. 2) n. Any of the various naturally occurring homogeneous substances obtained usually from the ground. 3) n. a synthetic substance having the chemical composition and crystalline form and properties of a naturally occurring mineral.

**Native Pasture:** Native vegetation (predominantly herbaceous) used for grazing in untilled areas. The term tame or introduced is used instead of native for pastures that include mainly nonnative species. (6)

**Natural Resources of the Operation:** The physical, hydrological, and biological features of a production operation, including soil, water, wetlands, woodlands, and wildlife.

**Omnivore:** An animal that eats food of both plant and animal origin.

**Paddock:** A grazing area that is a subdivision of a grazing management unit and is enclosed and separated from other areas by a fence or barrier.

**Pasture:** 1) n. Forages harvested by grazing animals. 2) n. An area of land with 75% forage cover or unbroken land on which livestock may graze at will.

**Pastureland:** Land devoted to the production of indigenous or introduced forage for harvest primarily by grazing. Pastureland must be managed to arrest succession processes.

**Range:** Land supporting indigenous vegetation grazed or that has the potential to be grazed and is managed as a natural ecosystem. Includes graze able forestland and rangeland.

**Rangeland:** land on which the indigenous vegetation (climax or natural potential) is predominantly grasses, grass-like plants, forbs, or shrubs suitable for grazing or browsing use and is managed as a natural ecosystem. If plants are introduced, they are managed as indigenous species. Rangelands include natural grasslands, savannas, shrub lands, most deserts, tundra, alpine communities, coastal marshland, and wetland meadows.

**Ration:** the total feedstuffs (diet) allotted to one animal for a 24-hour period.

**Sacrifice pasture:** A pasture where animals may move about and express their natural behaviors and where forage can be grown during the grazing season. Sacrifice pasture must be located so they do not create environmental damage from runoff and erosion.

**Seed:** 1) n. Ripened mature ovule comprising an embryo, a seedcoat, and a supply of food that, in some species is stored in the endosperm. 2) v. To sow, broadcast or drill small-seeded grasses, legumes, or other crops.

**Separated Grain:** Grain detached from cereal crop plants.

**Silage:** Silage as defined by AGA is forage harvested before, or when in, the milk stage (pre-dough) of grain formation.

**Soil and Water Quality:** Observable indicators of the physical, chemical, or biological condition of soil and water, including the presence of environmental contaminants.

**Starch:** A polysaccharide having the formula (C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>10</sub>O<sub>5</sub>). Many plants store energy in starch. Starch is a major component of most livestock rations (especially fattening rations) and is highly digestible. Yields glucose upon complete hydrolysis.

**Stockpiled Forage:** Forage allowed to accumulate on a pasture or paddock for grazing at a later period. Forage is often stockpiled for autumn and winter grazing after or during dormancy or semi-dormancy, but stockpiling may occur during the year as a part of a forage management plan. Stockpiling can be described as forage accumulation.

**Supplement:** A nutritional additive (salt, protein, phosphorus, etc.) intended to improve the nutritional balance and remedy deficiencies of the diet.

**Supplemental Feeding:** The practice of supplying feedstuffs to correct nutritional deficiencies in an animal's "natural" diet.

**Timber Area & Woodlot:** A forested area with not less than 50% canopy, not less than 75% found cover and not more than 25% bare ground.

**Vegetative:** Non-reproductive plant parts, (leaf and stem) in contrast to reproductive plant parts (flower and seed) in developmental stages of plant growth. The non-reproductive stage in plant development.

**Vegetative State:** Stage prior to the appearance of fruiting structures.

**Vitamin:** 1) n. Any of various organic substances essential in minute quantities to the nutrition of most animals and some plants that act especially as coenzymes and precursors of coenzymes in regulating metabolic processes.

## Appendix A- Banned AGA Pastured Pork Feedstuffs

This list of banned feedstuffs is not an exclusive list. The AGA Certification Committee may review and amend this list periodically.

Antibiotics

Growth promoters

Feather Meal

Animal by-products

Milk replacer containing antibiotics, growth promoters and/or any animal by-products aside from whey and other dairy products