



What you should know about out-of-state pigs in Washington State

Closures and other disruptions related to COVID-19 have slowed production at many Midwestern pork processing plants and led to an uptick in Washington State pig importation.

Due to the decrease in processing capacity, individuals motivated by financial gain, concern about waste, or animal welfare have been trucking loads of young “weaner” pigs as well as finished hogs into Northwest states.

Problems with this situation:

1. These pigs are coming from areas where serious swine diseases such as Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea (PEDV) and Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS) are common. These diseases are not common in Washington and we do not want them to become established here.
2. Inadequate record keeping and the unknown final destination of individual pigs complicates traceback in the event of a disease outbreak.
3. Pigs are not ruminants. In particular, these imported pigs are poor candidates for pasture raising or finishing; they are a composite breed developed for rapid weight gain in controlled indoor environments on finely tuned diets. They cannot survive on a fiber-based diet.
4. Many of these pigs are destined for novice “backyard” owners (via craigslist, etc.) with little knowledge of pig husbandry and lack of adequate fencing. In a worst-case scenario, this could result in a feral pig population establishing a stronghold in our state.
5. WSDA has received reports some of these imported pigs are sick on arrival and some have died.
6. All pigs coming into Washington must have a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection covering every animal being transported; a permit number; and individual identification for each pig. More information is available on the [WSDA web site](#).
7. Washington State has little or no surplus slaughter capacity for an influx of pigs. This could lead to finished animals being held well beyond slaughter weight and cause animal welfare and carcass-quality concerns.
8. Pigs must be processed and slaughtered at a USDA inspected facility if the pork is being sold and distributed to the public. Pigs used for personal use only can be harvested by an experienced custom slaughter facility in accordance with food safety rules.
9. In the absence of appropriate slaughter and processing options, novice owners could turn to killing and processing their animals at home. This scenario carries serious animal welfare and food safety risks.
10. More information is available at the [WSDA news release site](#).



Detailed information on pork production is available at the [Pork Information Gateway](#). If you have questions or concerns about importing swine into WA, please contact WSDA at ahealth@agr.wa.gov or (360) 902-1878 or (800) 942-1035 after hours.