



# Pork Harvest Process

International Center for Food Industry Excellence (ICFIE)  
*One goal...one vision. Serving through innovation, research and technology.*  
Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas, USA.



## 1. Antemortem inspection

- Evaluation of live animal to be sure it is healthy and fit for slaughter.
- Requirement under FSIS-USDA regulations.

## 2. Stunning

- Animals must be rendered unconscious before bleeding, typically by CO<sub>2</sub> gas or electrical methods

## 3. Exsanguination

- Ideally the animal will be shackled and hung upside down to allow a better bleed.
- The knife should sever the jugular and carotid arteries.
- A short stun to stick time is important to avoid meat quality issues.
- Eye reflexes should be checked before continuing.



## 4. Scalding, Dehairing and Head Removal

- The hog is put into a scalding vat with an alkaline solution at 60-62 degrees C for approximately 3 minutes or until dew claws are loose to remove most hair and help ensure sanitary conditions.
- The remainder of hair can be removed by scraping with a knife or singeing with a torch.
- The head is removed at the atlas joint.



## 5. Bunging

- The bung needs to be freed from the surrounding tissues, typically tied and dropped into the body cavity.
- The pizzle or penis and sheath should be cut free.

## 6. Evisceration

- Goal is to remove the viscera without contaminating the carcass.
- The carcass is opened by cutting along the ventral midline.
- The viscera (intestines, spleen, liver and stomach) as well as the pluck (heart, lungs and trachea) are removed at this time. Leaf fat can also be pulled.



## 7. Splitting

- The carcass is should be split with a saw down the vertebral column.

## 8. Trimming

- Any visible feces, milk or ingesta need to be trimmed from the carcass.

## 9. Inspection

- Any carcass inspection by a qualified individual (USDA) happens at this point.

## 10. Hot carcass weight

- A weight of the final carcass is recorded to know the yield and the weight for sales.

## 11. Rinsing of carcass/intervention application

- At this point any carcass microbial interventions can be applied.
- Typically this includes a hot water carcass wash and/or organic acid application (ex: acetic acid, lactic acid, etc.).



## 12. Chilling

- The carcass needs to be cooled to < 40°F within 24 hours.
- The carcass needs to be kept cold while stored.



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