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 CO₂ 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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