

## Measuring Pork Quality

### Color

Bright reddish pink is sought as an ideal. Very light and very dark colors may indicate decreased freshness, a higher surface bacteria count, or stress disorder. Rated on a six-point scale:

- 1.0 Pale pinkish gray to white
- 2.0 Grayish white
- 3.0 Reddish pink
- 4.0 Dark reddish pink
- 5.0 Purplish red
- 6.0 Dark purplish red

### Intramuscular Fat

Lipid streaks around muscle bundles (marbling) is a predictor of concentration. Target level for combination of nutrition, health, and flavor concerns is 2-4 percent.

### Water-Holding Capacity

Measures the amount of moisture on the cut loin surface and often relates to color. Lower numbers indicate less moisture loss and firmer texture. This also is known as drip loss.

### Ultimate pH

Measured 24 hours after slaughter and is a predictor of the water-holding capacity of the cut. Research results show that higher pH values indicate better water-holding capacity and more desirable eating quality. According to Iowa State University's Center for Designing Foods to Improve Nutrition, a goal is for an ultimate pH level of at least 5.85.

IOWA STATE  
UNIVERSITY  
University Extension



PORKLine (800) 808-7675

IPIC 7 Revised December 1999

File: animal science 11

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/ipic>

. . . and justice for all

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Many materials can be made available in alternative formats for ADA clients. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Stanley R. Johnson, director, Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa State University of Science and Technology, Ames, Iowa.