

Certificate Feeder Pig Program

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The Iowa Certificate feeder pig program is a cooperative venture established in 1978 by the Iowa Veterinary Medical Association and the Iowa Pork Producers Association. The purposes are to 1) establish a set of health guidelines for feeder pigs; 2) identify feeder pig producers meeting or exceeding the guidelines; 3) encourage increased veterinary participation in the development and maintenance of herd health programs; and 4) supply feeder pig finishers with healthy quality pigs and information about the herd of origin, vaccination history, and products used prior to sale. An additional goal of the Iowa Pork Producers Association is increased recognition of the quality of feeder pigs produced in Iowa.

Estimates of feeder pig movement within Iowa are difficult to make, but 10-15% of the 20 million-plus Iowa market swine are sold by someone other than the person who farrowed them. Approximately 1.5 million feeder pigs are imported into Iowa from surrounding states annually. Therefore, the feeder pig industry is a major segment of the Iowa swine industry. Historically, feeder pig producers have been smaller operations with large labor and small capital resources. Over the last 10 years this has changed with the emergence of large scale feeder pig producers. Even with this increase in size, the individual feeder pig producer has a difficult time supplying the needs of large finishing operations. Because of this, finishers must purchase from several sources or buy larger groups of comingled pigs from a marketing agent. Comingling pigs has created many problems for producers in the disease-control area. With comingled pigs, the disease level sinks to the lowest common denominator of the group. One sick

pig may infect an entire truckload with bloody dysentery or other diseases. Original ownership identity is often lost. The ability to identify the source of the disease-initiating pig(s) in an outbreak is also greatly retarded by comingling. Because of these factors, it became obvious that a program to raise the overall health quality of comingled pigs by removal of the unhealthy animals was needed. The certificate pig program is designed to assist in this effort.

The program can be divided into four areas: 1) presale pig management; 2) health inspection and certification; 3) marketing restrictions and 4) guidance for feeder pig finishers and handling procured pigs. It is designed for the superior producer of healthy feeder pigs. *Not all producers* will, or should, qualify for the program.

Presale management of the pig involves well accepted procedures designed to prepare a healthy, properly immunized feeder pig for intensive finishing operations and to minimize stress of movement. Most progressive feeder pig producers are already doing many of these things. The program will legitimize and standardize their management practices. All pigs are presented with tails docked and healed, and castration wounds healed, weaned for 2-3 weeks, vaccinated for erysipelas, wormed, and sprayed for lice and mange. Vaccination for atrophic rhinitis is encouraged, but not required. The timing and products used are recorded on part I of the certificate. Producers are encouraged to get veterinary assistance in product selection and application timing, but veterinarians are not required to administer the vaccine or parasitic control products. The producer signs this segment indicating that the procedures have been completed and that the pigs are home-raised swine—not trader pigs. He also indicates that the veterinarian who will sign part II has received full notification of his

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heard's health status as best the producer knows it.

Effective health inspections must start at the production premises—not collection point gates. Regular farm visits by a veterinarian enable him to be familiar with the problems on the farm. Under this program, clinical outbreaks of swine dysentery, atrophic rhinitis, or pseudorabies in the last 12 months and TGE in the past 4 months would make herds ineligible. Absence of other disease conditions which would adversely affect feedlot performance is implied. Clinical evaluations of pigs must be made by the veterinarian and producer on a case-by-case basis. If the herd meets requirements and has good growthy pigs which will perform well in a feedlot, the attending veterinarian signs part II of the certificate. Formal inspection must be made within 30 days of sale. When groups are obviously going to be sold separately, separate certificates should be made out. Because economically devastating diseases can easily be missed during the routine collection point examination, pre-movement examinations should greatly increase the ability to identify those herds with above average health status. It also reduces the potential embarrassment of both producer and inspecting veterinarian when obviously diseased pigs are submitted to the collection point and must be returned home. If the program is to reach its potential, veterinarians must be very careful in evaluating herd health. Signing certificates for marginal pigs can cause irreparable damage to a program which relies on reputation.

This program is open-ended in terms of individual diseases which could be controlled. The ultimate goal is a parasite-free pig not infected with, but immune to swine dysentery, atrophic rhinitis, mycoplasmal and Hemophilus pneumonia, salmonellosis, pseudorabies, and TGE. As better diagnostic techniques and immunizing agents become available and *practical* for each disease, these procedures should supplement the visual health determinations. Because of the subjective determination (visual appraisal) used to detect swine dysentery and atrophic rhinitis, the total elimination of these diseases solely by breeding herd observation is impractical. However, a sizable reduction in disease carriers submitted for sale can be

anticipated. This increased health, although not guaranteed, should result in improved feedlot performance.

The marketing requirements of this program include all current inter- and intra-state health regulations. In addition, a distinction is made between "certificate" and "gold star" pigs. "Certificate pigs" are those pigs which have met all the certificate requirements and may be sold in the same sales with non-program swine. This represents phase I of the program. It is recognized that these pigs are at risk at the collection point to exposure to disease from nonprogram swine. However, until sufficient numbers can be generated, it is impractical to attempt complete separation from non-program swine. Phase II, or "gold star pigs", is designed to give complete separation from other swine in a collection point. "Gold star pigs" cannot contact non-program swine or their excrement without loss of certification. It is recommended that general clean-up and five days rest at collection points be practiced between "gold star" and non-program sales to reduce disease transmission potential. "Gold star pigs" *must* also be vaccinated for atrophic rhinitis and have a gold ear tag. This tag will supplant the blue regulatory ear tag now used.

The collection points are requested to fill in part III of the certificate and mail to the Iowa Pork Producers Association. Efforts will be made to follow groups of certificate pigs through finishing to determine the added value to the feeder pig finisher.

On the reverse of the buyer's copy of the certificate are 10 steps to start feeder pigs successfully. These steps are minimum management practices needed to get feeder pigs off to a good start. This information is designed to assist the buyer in caring for his new charges.

This program was kicked off on July 1, 1978. Since that time over 3,000 feeder pigs have been sold as certificate pigs. Recorded marketings have been made at Creston, Waukon, Sioux City, and Kalona sale barns. Other collection points have expressed interest, but no certificate pigs have been presented at their market. We believe other certificate pigs may have been marketed, but we have no records of their sales.

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MARKETING CERTIFICATE FOR FEEDER PIGS

—Sponsored by—
THE IOWA VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
&
THE IOWA PORK PRODUCERS

Consignee _____ Address _____

Number of pigs submitted _____ Est. Farrowing Dates _____

Eartag numbers _____

	Date	Product Used	Vaccine Serial No.
Erysipelas vacc.	_____	_____	_____
Atrophic Rhinitis vacc. (optional)	_____	_____	_____
Castration	_____	_____	_____
Weaning	_____	_____	_____
Worming	_____	_____	_____
External Parasite Control	_____	_____	_____
Feed medication (currently used)	_____	_____	_____



FEEDER PIG COMMITTEE

I certify that the consigned pigs were farrowed and raised on my farm. The tails are docked and healed, pigs are at least 35 pound average weight and have received the above listed procedures before leaving my farm. The undersigned veterinarian has been made aware of the health status of my herd to the best of my ability.

Owner's signature _____ Date _____

I certify that I have seen the above consigned pigs and they originate from a herd which has not had clinical signs of the following, and are apparently in a healthy condition:

- Pseudorabies (1 year)
- Swine Dysentery (1 year)
- TGE (4 months)
- Atrophic Rhinitis (1 year)



Veterinarian's signature _____ Date Examined _____

VALID ONLY FOR 30 DAYS AFTER VETERINARY EXAMINATION

Sale location _____ Date _____

Name of Buyer _____ Address _____

THIS IS NOT A REGULATORY HEALTH CERTIFICATE

THIS COPY FOR BUYER

10 Steps For Starting Feeder Pigs

MANAGEMENT

- 1) Provide dry, draft-free quarters. The optimum temperature at floor level is about 75 degrees F. Where a separate sleeping area is provided it must be of sufficient size that all animals have space to lie down without piling.
- 2) Observe animals at least 2 times per day for signs of illness. Feed and water consumption should be monitored as reduced consumption may precede a disease outbreak.
- 3) At least 4 sq. ft. of floor space per pig up to 100 pounds are required with partial or total slatted floor buildings. Add 30 percent more space for total solid floored buildings.
- 4) Provide at least one feeder space for each 4 pigs. It may be necessary to tie feeder lids open for the first several days or until the pigs are conditioned to raise the lids.
- 5) One waterer is required per 20 pigs and it should be located close to the pigs. A tank or barrel waterer is needed to measure daily water consumption and for water medication procedures. Automatic waterers are not recommended for starting feeder pigs.
- 6) Hospital pens are advisable for treating sick animals. This makes individual treatment easier and allows for quicker recovery. Care must be exercised, however, in reintroducing the recovered animals into the growing-finishing lots.
- 7) New animals should be grouped with 25-50 pigs per pen. This minimizes stress and makes observation easier. Isolation in separate facilities is recommended for the first 30 days following arrival to prevent the introduction of infective agents to swine already present on the farm. If this is not possible, new pigs can be partially isolated for 30 days by leaving 1 or 2 empty pens between them and the other pigs or providing solid walls between groups.
- 8) Consult your veterinarian in selecting the proper feed additive. Feed additives are included in the ration at preventive levels only and are not sufficient for treatment of sick animals. Incorporation of fibrous ingredients may have benefit in reducing stress associated with feeder pig movement.
- 9) Water consumption on a 40 pound pig is approximately ½ gallon/head/day. Water medication is a must for many operations. A palatable sulfa or water soluble antibiotic with or without electrolytes should be supplied according to label instructions. Additional individual treatment may be needed.
- 10) Consult your veterinarian whenever a question about health of the pigs occurs. Obtain a diagnosis and specific treatment program.

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The Creston Producers barn has had a sale every other week since July 1, with about 200-400 pigs per sale. The same producers and finishers can be seen at the auction, and the finishers continue to purchase and pay a premium for these pigs. To date feedlot performance has not been formally measured, but the continued interest by finishers experienced with these pigs indicates satisfaction. The current problem is lack of producer understanding and lack of numbers of certificate pigs in a sale. As veterinarians and producers become more knowledgeable

about the value of certificate pigs, we are optimistic that program participation will grow. The certificate pig can make both producers and veterinarians additional dollars/pig marketed, and perform a valuable service for the feeder pig finisher. Do you have clients who can benefit from this program?

Certificates and gold eartags are available from the IVMA office, 826 Fleming Building, Des Moines, Iowa, 50309. Questions about the program can be directed to the author, 2270 Vet Medicine, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa, 50011.