

Factsheet

Human Food Waste and Swine: Protecting the Health of the U.S. Swine Industry

As part of its mission to protect the health of American agriculture, the United States Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), works to prevent foreign animal diseases from entering the U.S. and harming our nation’s livestock and poultry.

One way that APHIS does this is to enforce the Swine Health Protection Act, which provides rules for feeding human food waste to pigs. Feeding human food waste to pigs creates benefits like minimizing nutritional waste, decreasing the amount of garbage that goes into landfills, and providing a cheap or free source of nutrition to pigs.



However, this practice, which is commonly known as garbage feeding, can spread diseases if contaminated meat products are fed to pigs. Garbage feeding causes swine disease outbreaks in many countries around the world, which negatively impacts swine health and are costly to control.

Swine Health Protection Act

Congress passed the Swine Health Protection Act in 1980 in order to better protect the country’s swine herd. The Swine Health Protection Act requires that anyone who feeds their pigs garbage – human food that contains meat or has come in contact with meat during the food preparation process – must have a license to do so. Each state decides whether to make garbage feeding legal or illegal in their state.

Information for Licensed Garbage Feeders

Licensed garbage feeders must properly handle and cook garbage before feeding to swine in order to prevent disease spread. Some disease-causing organisms can survive in meat and can cause disease in pigs if the meat is cooked or handled incorrectly. Even more dangerous, some animal diseases that do not exist in our country could be brought to the

Is Garbage Feeding Legal or Illegal in Your State?

Know the rules before attempting any garbage feeding or providing garbage for pigs. Find out if your state allows garbage feeding. Call 1-866-536-7593 or visit https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/animal_dis_spec/swine/downloads/swine-health-protection-map.pdf

U. S. by contaminated meat, including foot and mouth disease (FMD), African swine fever (ASF) or classical swine fever (CSF). If these diseases were ever found in pigs in the U. S., they could severely harm our nation's pork industry.

How do I Prevent Disease Spread?

If you are a licensed garbage feeder, proper handling and cooking of the garbage play the most important roles for stopping the spread of disease.

- Pigs should never have access to uncooked garbage.
- **Uncooked** garbage should never be collected or stored in containers that are used to store or handle **cooked** garbage.
- Using the same containers to handle both uncooked and cooked garbage could allow for cross-contamination and expose pigs to disease-causing organisms.



Garbage should be cooked to a boil (212° Fahrenheit) for a minimum of **30 minutes** while stirring the garbage to make sure it all gets to the correct temperature, and then allowed to cool before being fed to pigs.

Watch for Signs of Illness

Pig producers should always be on the lookout for FMD, ASF and CSF, even though we don't have them in the U.S.

- FMD is a viral disease where the pigs develop blisters on snouts and feet.
- ASF and CSF are caused by different viruses, but both can cause high death loss, blotchy skin that is red or purple, and vomiting or diarrhea with blood in the manure.

If you are a licensed garbage feeder and you suspect any of these diseases in your pigs, call your inspector immediately.

Information for Food Facilities



Garbage feeders may approach owners or managers of restaurants, groceries, and cafeterias to request food waste. If you are approached, it is essential to know whether garbage feeding is legal or illegal in your state.

States where Garbage Feeding is Illegal

If you are based in a state where garbage feeding is illegal, do **not** allow anyone other than your normal garbage disposal company to pick up your food waste.

States Where Garbage Feeding is Legal

If you are based in a state where garbage feeding is legal, you should confirm that the individual is licensed as a garbage feeder before providing any food waste. Call APHIS at 1-866-536-7593 to verify their license.