



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



The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) works to protect the health of American agriculture. One way that APHIS does this is to enforce the Swine Health Protection Act. This program regulates garbage feeding. Garbage feeding is the practice of 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 feeding practice can spread diseases if contaminated meat products are fed to pigs. Feeding garbage that has not been appropriately handled has caused swine disease outbreaks in many countries around the world, which negatively impacted swine health and was costly to control. In response to these international outbreaks, Congress passed the Swine Health Protection Act in 1980 to better protect the U.S. swine herd.

## Swine Health Protection Act

The Swine Health Protection Act requires anyone who feeds their pigs garbage—human food that contains meat or has come in contact with meat during the food preparation process—to have a license. The licensing process requires the pig producer to demonstrate appropriate cooking and handling of garbage feed for swine.

Each State decides whether to permit or prohibit garbage feeding. APHIS, State, and/or Territory government officials routinely inspect licensed producers to make sure that any garbage fed to swine is properly cooked and handled to prevent possible disease transmission.

## Information for Licensed Garbage Feeders

Licensed garbage feeders must properly handle and cook garbage before feeding to swine to prevent disease spread. Under the Swine Health Protection Act, food waste must be cooked to 212 degrees Fahrenheit for 30 minutes and cooled before feeding it to pigs. The requirement applies to all garbage collected from establishments like restaurants, school cafeterias, prisons, and food processing plants.

### Proper Handling of Garbage

Some disease-causing organisms can survive in meat and cause disease in pigs if the meat is cooked or handled incorrectly.

- 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.

Some animal diseases that do not exist in our country could be brought to the United States through contaminated meat, including foot and mouth disease (FMD), African swine fever (ASF) and classical swine fever (CSF). If these diseases were ever found in pigs in the United States, they could severely harm our nation's pork industry.

### Be Alert!

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

- FMD is a viral disease that causes blisters to form on the pig's snout and feet.
- ASF and CSF are caused by different viruses. 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 Generators of Human Food Waste

Garbage feeders may approach owners or managers of restaurants, groceries, and cafeterias to ask about acquiring their 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 Prohibited

If you are based in a State where garbage feeding is prohibited (Alabama, Delaware, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, New York, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, and Wisconsin), do not allow anyone other than your normal garbage disposal company to pick up your food waste.

### States Where Garbage Feeding is Permitted

If you are based in a State where garbage feeding is permitted, 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.**

Go to [www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/swine](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/swine) to view a map that shows garbage feeding restrictions by State.

### For More Information

To learn more about garbage feeding and the licensing process, contact your State Animal Health Official or APHIS District Office.

#### Scan for APHIS District Offices



#### Scan for State Animal Health Officials

