

Provenance – Quality Assurance  
Quality – Welfare – Food Safety  
Sustainability – Provenance – Quality Assurance  
Meat Quality – Welfare – Food Safety  
Sustainability – Provenance – Quality Assurance  
Quality Assurance – Meat Quality – Welfare  
Food Safety – Sustainability – Provenance  
Provenance – Quality Assurance – Meat Quality

**Danish Agriculture & Food Council**

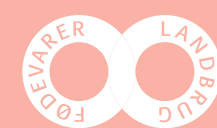
Axelborg, Axeltorv 3 T +45 3339 4000  
DK-1609 Copenhagen V F +45 3339 4141

E [agricultureandfood@lf.dk](mailto:agricultureandfood@lf.dk)  
W [www.agricultureandfood.co.uk](http://www.agricultureandfood.co.uk)

**Agriculture & Food**



**One for all** 



# Six steps to top quality



Denmark is a country with just five million inhabitants but produces enough food for a population of 15 million.

The reputation of the Danish pig industry is built on its ownership of the whole production chain, supported by a wide ranging programme of research and development and close co-operation between the farmers, the meat industry and the authorities.

The knowledge and experience gained has enabled the industry to deliver meat of the highest quality and maintain a strong competitive position in the international marketplace. High standards are meticulously documented across a range of areas, including welfare, food safety and sustainable production systems.

1

## Provenance

All Danish pig farms are registered on a central database, and all pigs delivered to abattoirs are traceable to their farm of origin, thus providing customers with assurance of their provenance, as well as a guarantee of quality.

- ☛ Only pigs born and bred in Denmark are slaughtered in Danish abattoirs.
- ☛ Only pigs that conform to the DANISH Product Standard or a higher level assurance scheme are accepted by the abattoirs.
- ☛ A robust traceability system ensures that the meat is Danish and comes from healthy animals.

2

## Quality Assurance

In Denmark, the pig producers own the entire production chain and this helps ensure that effective action is taken to meet customer requirements. The DANISH quality system for pig meat covers the chain from farm to delivery to customers and incorporates independent controls on the farm, during transport, on arrival at the abattoir and during further processing.

- ☛ All Danish pig herds are certified to the DANISH Product Standard or a higher level assurance scheme.
- ☛ The DANISH quality programme ensures compliance with legislation, as well as industry standards 'over and above' the baseline of legislation, particularly in the areas of welfare and food safety.
- ☛ The slaughterhouses must be certified to the Global Red Meat Standard (GRMS), a comprehensive assurance scheme tailored to the specific production environment of an abattoir.

3

## Meat Quality

Danish pig meat is recognised for its consistent quality. This is achieved through all links in the production chain, from the breeding and rearing of pigs, considerate treatment of the animals before slaughter and observance of strict procedures during the final stages of production.

- ☛ Production disciplines have ensured consistent product quality and uniformity, a fundamental requirement for meat processors.
- ☛ Careful practice during slaughter and processing also ensures good shelf-life.
- ☛ Using the right pig breeds, using an optimum feeding regime and minimising stress before slaughter are also key factors in delivering lean, tender and tasty meat.

4

## Welfare

The Danish farmers can point to continuous improvements in the pig welfare standards within their production. Pig welfare projects have taken an increasing share of the investment in research and development by the Danish Pig Research Centre in recent years. Animal health and welfare projects account for a third of the research activity, within an overall investment of €33m

- ☛ Danish sows are no longer kept in stalls during pregnancy and major research is underway to develop effective 'free farrowing' systems.
- ☛ All Danish pig housing must be equipped with showering systems to enable pigs to cool themselves during warm weather and environmental 'enrichment' must be provided.
- ☛ Although most male piglets are castrated, pain-relieving remedies must be administered prior to the operation and major research is being carried out to identify alternative methods of avoiding 'boar taint'.
- ☛ Fully-slatted flooring will not be allowed for weaners and finishers from January 2015.
- ☛ Short travel distances and modern transportation methods are among the factors which have reduced the level of mortality during transport to minimal levels – just 0.006% in 2012.

5

## Food Safety

Food safety remains an absolute priority throughout the pig meat production chain in Denmark, underpinning the production of safe and wholesome meat.

- ☛ Major initiatives have been undertaken in the last 15 years to eliminate the unnecessary use of antibiotics, addressing concern about the spread of antibiotic resistance.
- ☛ Use of antibiotics by Danish pig farmers has halved since the mid-1990s and currently equates to just 3.5g per pig produced.
- ☛ A major surveillance programme confirms that the presence of medicine and other unwanted residues is virtually non-existent in Danish pig meat. In 2012, a single sample, out of 17,600 tested, recorded residues of medicines above the Maximum Residue Level.
- ☛ A salmonella surveillance and control programme, covering the whole production chain, has been in place since the mid-1990s and has reduced the presence of salmonella to just over 1% of pig meat sampled.

6

## Sustainability

Strict legislation and action taken by producers themselves, have significantly reduced the environmental impact of pig production in Denmark. Extensive research and development, along with the adoption of new technologies, will contribute to the achievement of agreed targets to reduce these impacts still further in the years ahead. It has been shown that action taken during the feeding and rearing of pigs on farm is critical to reducing the environmental impact of modern pig production rather than other factors, such as distance travelled ('food miles').

- ☛ Life Cycle Assessments (LCAs) have shown that the production and consumption of feed is the largest contributing factor to environmental impact and Danish producers have achieved significant improvements in efficient use of feed over the past 20 years.
- ☛ Legislation has ensured that the handling and management of slurry and other farm wastes has been undertaken responsibly by Danish pig farmers and new technology will ensure further progress in the future.
- ☛ Danish abattoirs have reduced emissions of 'greenhouse gases' by around 30% over the last two decades.
- ☛ Today, Danish farmers can produce two pigs with the same environmental impact of rearing just a single pig in 1985.

Action taken during these six steps supports a unique and fully integrated supply chain, meeting the demands of an increasingly discerning customer base in many markets the world over.