



# American Berkshire

*American Berkshire Offers Clear Path To Superior Pork*

Discriminating consumers have recognized the special qualities of Berkshire pork for many years. Today, thanks to the efforts of industrious Berkshire breeders in the United States, the tenderness, juiciness, texture and overall flavor of pork from these special "black pigs" – or *kurobuta* – is available to diners anywhere around the world.

Berkshire Meat Products, LLC, (BMP) is the marketing arm of the American Berkshire Association (ABA). BMP's role is to help commercial partners in Japan and the United States connect their valued customers with a steady supply of safe, flavorful, pedigree-certified, 100% Berkshire pork produced by American Berkshire breeders. We invite you to review this information and hope it will kindle your ideas for expansion of 100% Berkshire pork sales.

## **Unequaled Dining Pleasure**

The Berkshire breed originated in England nearly four centuries ago, and since that time there has been one reason for its popularity: Berkshire pigs produce wonderfully flavorful pork.

Today, the popularity of this pork means Berkshire genetics are shared around the world. Breeders in England, the United States, Japan and Canada exchange stock frequently. Japanese farmers, for example, have imported breeding animals from U.S. herds since the 1960s. That means improvements in important traits are possible without sacrificing meat quality.

A focus on meat quality remains the foundation of the Berkshire breed. The effort has paid off. Compared with commodity pork, Berkshire pigs yield cuts that are well marbled and consistently sweet, tender, juicy and highly palatable. Those points are underscored by a decade-long study of National Barrow Show meat quality results, summarized in the accompanying table. Without a doubt, the findings confirm the premium position of 100% Berkshire pork. Your taste buds will agree.



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## Berkshire Pork Rankings for Sensory Quality

ATTRIBUTE	BENEFIT	BERKSHIRE RANK
High Ultimate pH Score	Relates to low cooking loss, better water-holding capacity, high degree of tenderness	First in 6 of 7 measures
Loin Firmness/Drip Loss	Improved processing quality, tenderness	First in 4 of 4 measures
Meat Color	Consumers consistently prefer darker pork	First in 5 of 7 measures
Cooked Loin Quality	High scores for intramuscular fat percent, tenderness and juiciness all predict better consumer satisfaction	First in 4 of 5 measures

This information is excerpted from meat-quality tests conducted from 1990-99 as part of the National Barrow Show, at Austin, Minnesota. The tests differentiate pork quality among the eight major pure swine breeds that provide the foundation genetics for most pork produced in the United States.



## Pedigree Assures Quality

The ABA is the oldest worldwide swine registry. Since it was created in 1875, the registry has continually upgraded and modernized its pedigree system. Today a computerized database affords quick, easy access to accurate genetic histories of every registered animal.

One of the ABA's most rigorous rules is that only Berkshire pigs whose ancestry can be traced directly to the original English animals are accepted for registration. This genetic traceability requirement may seem overly stringent, but there are two excellent reasons for this strict stance:

1. A rigorous pedigree program allows the Association to fulfill its mission as guardian of the Berkshire breed's purity.
2. Most important, the pedigree system enables the American Berkshire Association to certify - with complete confidence - that pigs labeled as Berkshire are truly Berkshire pigs.

This is no small issue. Berkshire pork is highly valued. Some individuals may attempt to capitalize on the positive Berkshire reputation, substituting inferior product to reap unwarranted profits. When the mislabeling becomes apparent consumers feel cheated and become mistruful of their suppliers.

In Japan, for example, a series of mislabeling issues caused the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) to mandate that only Berkshire pork, backed by pedigrees, can be labeled as being sourced from "black pigs," or kurobuta.

The ABA offers a simple solution to this problem with its Certified 100% Berkshire Pork program. Administered by BMP, this program requires that all market animals be linked to current pedigrees on file with the registry and inspected by internal auditors and buyers. The program has been expanded patiently since it began in 1995. It is successful and available today.

Also, the Association is developing an enhanced program, featuring verification by a trusted third-party, which will be implemented during 2003. Pure Berkshire genetics, source farm traceability and uniform production practices all will be highlighted. More information about this new program will be available as progress warrants.

## Berkshire Pork Now

Five years ago Berkshires were among the smallest of the major pure breeds in the United States, which meant that it took long lead times to arrange supplies.

That has changed dramatically since 1999, the year MAFF outlined its kurobuta labeling rule. U.S. food critics have begun to recognize the positive flavor-and-value combination delivered by Berkshire pork. Satisfied consumers, too, are adding to the list of success stories.

The Berkshire breed now is America's fastest growing. Litter registrations have doubled during the past three years, bringing Berkshires near the top among all pure breeds in total current pedigrees. Market animal production has increased even more quickly.

Now, orders for top-quality Berkshire pork can be filled without delay. Programs are available through all U.S. packers and processors licensed through Berkshire Meat Products.

If you have questions about the Certified 100% Berkshire Pork program, please contact your U.S. supplier. Alternatively, we invite you to get in touch with Berkshire Meat Products, LLC, by any means listed in this brochure.

Also note that the Berkshire web site - [www.americanberkshire.com](http://www.americanberkshire.com) - is under reconstruction and will be on line in early 2003. The site will carry a great deal of information about Berkshire production, pigs, people and programs.

We look forward to helping you as we expand the wonderful world of Berkshire pork.



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