USDA
United States Department of Agriculture

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

July 2019

Factsheet

What Swine Growers Need to Know about Garbage Feeding

As part of its mission to protect the health of American agriculture, the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) 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. This practice, which is commonly known as garbage feeding, can spread diseases if contaminated meat products are fed to pigs. Garbage feeding has caused swine disease outbreaks in many countries around the world, which negatively impacted swine health and were costly to control. Congress passed the Swine Health Protection Act in 1980 in order to better protect the country's swine herd.

Requirements

Under the Swine Health Protection Act, owners must be licensed in order to feed their pigs human food waste that contains or has had contact with meat, poultry, or fish. The requirement applies to all garbage collected from food production establishments like restaurants, school cafeterias, and food processing plants.

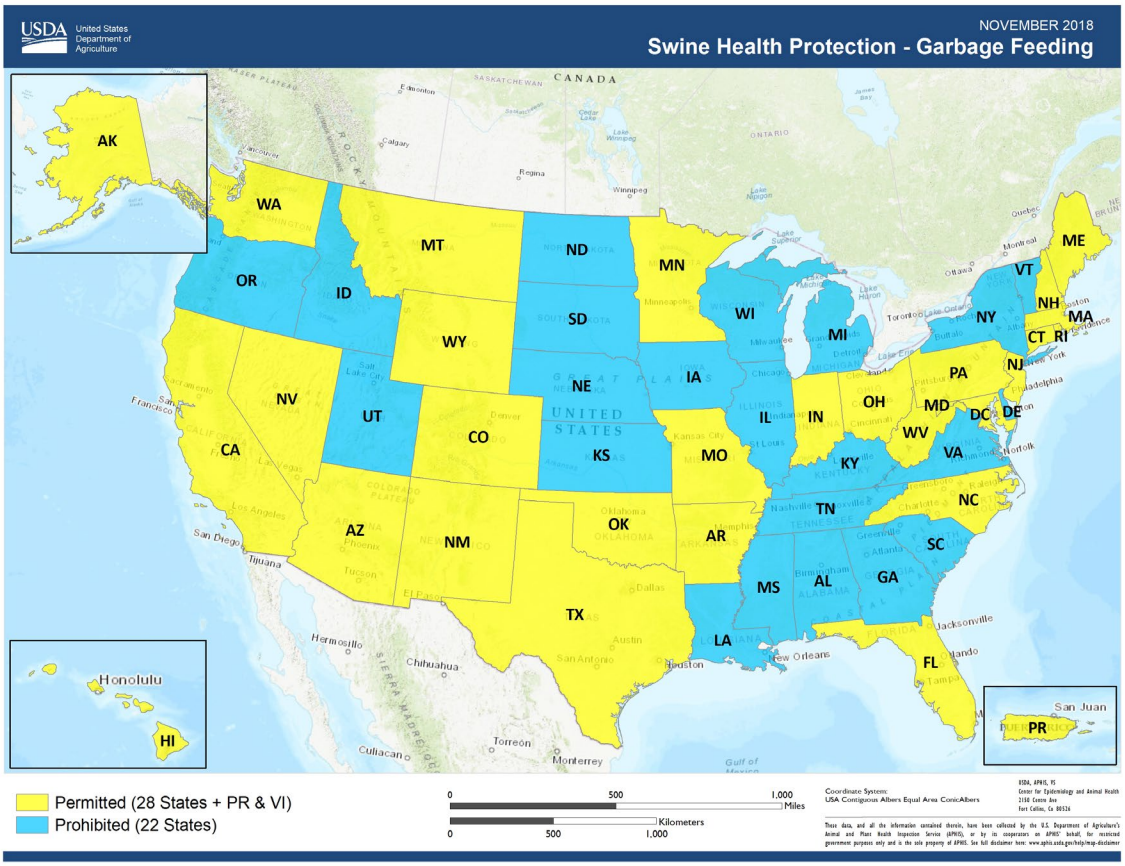
In order to kill any harmful viruses or bacteria, this food waste must be cooked to 212 degrees Fahrenheit for 30 minutes before feeding it to the pigs. Licensed producers receive routine inspections from APHIS or state employees to make sure that garbage fed to swine undergoes proper cooking and handling to prevent possible disease transmission.

Getting a License

The Swine Health Protection Act allows each state to determine whether garbage feeding is allowed within their state. Many states do not allow garbage feeding.

If a state allows garbage feeding, each producer must obtain a license before feeding any human food waste to their pigs. The licensing process requires the pig producer to demonstrate appropriate cooking and handling of garbage feed for swine.

The state also develops the structure for enforcing the Swine Health Protection Act in their state. In some states, this is handled by state employees. In other states, state and APHIS employees work together to cooperatively enforce the Swine Health Protection Act.



For More Information

To learn more about garbage feeding and the licensing process, contact your local state or federal animal health officials. Contact lists are available at the sites below.
APHIS - http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/contacts/field-operations-districts.pdf
State - http://www.usaha.org/menu_item/STATE_ANIMAL_HEALTH_OFFICIALS.pdf