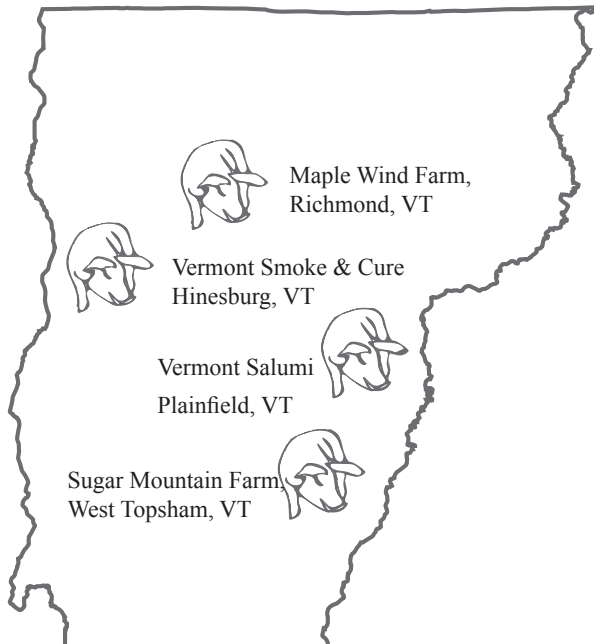


our Local Pig Farms



Why is Local pork more expensive?

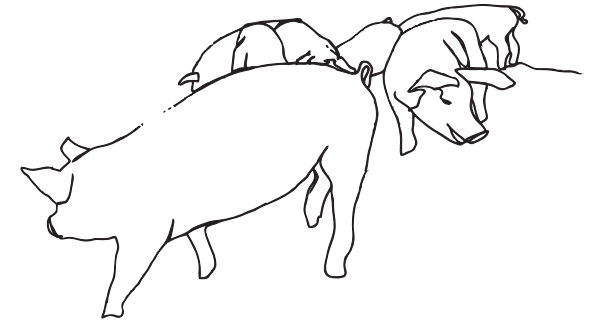
Our local pig farmers are small-scale producers, especially when compared with the large “factory farms” that raise the majority of the pork sold in the United States. Our local farmers can’t achieve the economies of scale for labor and infrastructure that allows conventional meat to be so inexpensive. Also, while factory farms maximize profits by keeping their production costs low, our local producers often use farming methods that are more costly but are also more environmentally responsible, provide more humane conditions for the pigs, and provide workers with both a fairer wage and safer working conditions.

About City Market, Onion River Co-op

City Market, Onion River Co-op is a consumer cooperative, with over 11,300 Members, selling wholesome food and other products while building a vibrant, empowered community and a healthier world, all in a sustainable manner. Located in downtown Burlington, Vermont, City Market provides a large selection of organic and conventional foods, and thousands of local and Vermont-made products.

Visit City Market, Onion River Co-op online at www.CityMarket.coop or call 802-861-9700.

City Market's Pork



We know that choosing meat can be challenging when you consider animal welfare, the environment, and food safety. Learning where the pigs lived and what they were fed are two of the essential components in finding meat you can feel good about eating.

This brochure and accompanying shelf signs will help guide you through some of the important considerations when choosing pork. As always, our Meat & Seafood staff is happy to answer any questions you have.



Your Community-Owned Grocery Store
82 South Winooski Avenue
Downtown Burlington, VT 05401
(802) 861-9700 • www.CityMarket.coop

There are two basic methods of raising pigs in the US – the Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) that raise animals in confinement as quickly and cheaply as possible, and pasture-based operations that rely on producing high-quality pork by allowing the pigs to forage outside.

Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs)

Living Conditions

CAFOs raise pigs indoors in environment-controlled buildings without sunlight or fresh air. Animals live in close quarters with as many as 40 pigs in a 20 by 20 square-foot pen with concrete slatted floors and no bedding materials. Breeding sows (female pigs) are individually confined to “gestation” crates 2 feet wide by 7 feet long – sows can stand up and lie down, but cannot turn around in these crates. Gestation crates have been criticized by the Humane Society of the United States and other animal welfare groups as inhumane, leading a few states to ban their use.

Feed

The operation of a CAFO is designed around getting the pigs up to slaughter weight as quickly and cheaply as possible. The animals are fed a special diet to maximize weight gain – corn, soybeans and other grains make up the bulk of their diet. All CAFOs feed their pigs conventional grains, the vast majority of which are now genetically modified (80% of the corn and 90% of the soybeans grown in the United States are now GMO).

Antibiotics

To keep pigs healthy in their cramped living quarters, as well as to make them grow faster, the animals are fed antibiotics on a daily basis. The Union of Concerned Scientists now estimates that 70% of all the antibiotics used in the United States are fed to pigs, chicken, and cattle. These antibiotics are the same ones we humans rely on when we get sick, leading to concerns that antibiotics are losing effectiveness due to their overuse. In addition, studies are increasingly finding antibiotic-resistant bacteria contaminating meat in grocery stores (<http://s.coop/antimicrobialsinmeat>).

Hormones

Luckily, artificial growth hormones are never a concern when selecting pork. Federal regulations prohibit the use of artificial hormones when raising pigs.

Pasture-Based Farms

Living Conditions

Our local pork farmers raise their pigs out on grassy pastures. Maple Wind Farm and Sugar Mountain Farm move their pigs every few days to new pasture to avoid causing erosion and allow the pasture grasses to regenerate between grazings. Maple Wind Farm uses high-density rotational grazing to build soil, reduce erosion and increase pasture diversity. They also allow different animals to graze the same ground to encourage a more diverse ecosystem. Sugar Mountain Farm offers winter shelter to their animals in winter pig dens, 3-sided shelters built into the hillside that shelter the animals from the elements and wind.

Feed

In addition to the pasture grasses and hay eaten by pastured pigs, farmers need to supplement the animals’ diet. At Maple Wind Farm, Beth and Bruce feed their pigs a farm ground feed made from local grains. Sugar Mountain Farm avoids feeding their pigs genetically modified grains and instead feeds their pigs whey products produced by the cheese-making process at Vermont Creamery, supplemented with seasonal vegetables, a little bit of boiled barley from a local brew pub, and occasional treats of bread from a local bakery.

Antibiotics

None of our local pork farmers use antibiotics on a day-to-day basis in their operations. Sugar Mountain Farm and Maple Wind Farm will use antibiotics in cases of animal illness but will not sell that animal for meat.

Hormones

Luckily, artificial growth hormones are never a concern when selecting pork. Federal regulations prohibit the use of artificial hormones when raising pigs.

FARMS	Certified Organic?	Number of pigs raised?	Pastured?	GMO-free feed?	Antibiotics?	Hormones?
Sugar Mountain Farm, West Topsham	no	300	yes	yes	no	no
Maple Wind Farm, Richmond	no	200	yes	yes	no	no
Conventional feedlot pork*, Location Unknown	no	unknown	no	no	yes	no
VALUE-ADDED PRODUCERS	Certified Organic?	Pork source	Pastured?	GMO-free feed?	Antibiotics?	Hormones?
Vermont Salumi, Plainfield	no	Numerous regional farms	yes	yes	no	no
Vermont Smoke & Cure, Hinesburg	no	Numerous Quebec farms	no	no	no	no
VT Why Fed Pigs, Numerous VT Farms	no	Numerous VT farms	yes	no	no	no

* While we can ask all the local farms about their management practices, there is no traceability or transparency in the conventional feedlot pork industry. This line contains our best guess at where this meat is coming from, based on typical management practices.