

Pig Improver

What Do Consumers Want?

An Inside Look at Present and Future Attitudes Towards Pork



In recent PIC Pig Improvers, we have shared exciting news related to **PIC's ongoing commitment to help deliver excellent pork quality.**

These include:

- PIC's newest genetic innovations
- Services offered by the PIC global pork quality audit team
- Factors affecting pork tenderness
- The future of heavy weights in pork production
- New pork tenderness measures

Now, please read **the latest insights on what consumers want in their pork** now – and what they will likely want in the future.

PIC keeps a close eye on market factors **as they continuously affect producers, and PIC is driven to help make our customers the most successful pork producers in the world.**

The four pork market factor questions to consider:

1. What are pork’s biggest sources of competition?
2. What do millennials want in their pork?
3. What role do pork producers play in making sure the pork industry remains strong?
4. How can PIC help?

Read on for answers to these questions in this new edition of the PIC Pig Improver.

Demand for chicken and plant-based protein sources is growing across the U.S. and the rest of the developed world. **How does the pork sector grow its market share?**

“Some say it’s about determining whether the pork industry should focus on providing higher-priced, higher-quality products or producing larger volumes of pork at lower prices,” explains food industry consultant Collette Kaster. **“Many say we can and should pursue both avenues.”**

Kaster notes that some pork companies already offer their own grading systems on private label products, mostly involving quality attributes like color, pH, marbling scores and tenderness values, or programs detailing how the animals are raised.

Progressive industry

In addition to providing a variety of quality products with various price points, Kaster says the pork industry can grow its market share by **emphasizing sustainability and animal welfare advancements.**

“Large companies are doing assessments of farm inputs and carbon footprints, and the feed efficiency of pigs is an excellent point to emphasize,” Kaster notes. “Consumers want information and transparency in food production. They want to be sure that companies producing their food have the right culture and ethics in terms of environmental sustainability and progressive animal welfare.”

Kaster continues, “Producers should strive to be leaders in creating an appropriate environment for the well being and welfare of animals. Be sure employees understand how important it is and provide them the training and resources they need.”

Deliver on purchasing factors

While animal welfare and the environmental impacts of pork production are important to many consumers, including millennials and older adult consumers, **quality (visual appearance such as color or fat content, taste and freshness), price and convenience are placed ahead of all other purchasing factors.**

With PIC’s genetic advancements and support for producers, PIC customers produce **pork of excellent quality at attractive prices.** Regarding **convenience**, Kaster notes that pork companies are striving to make pork relevant with foodservice and other convenience sectors such as retail delis, service cases and meal kits.

“Partial to total preparation of meals is increasingly popular among consumers,” she explains. “Some large urban grocery stores dedicate significant space to prepared foods including on-site restaurants compared to the more conventional lay-out and space for displaying traditional groceries.”

“Automation and other types of technology will help companies create the consistent and uniform pork products needed for development of these consumer-friendly items.”

Fill niche markets

Pork is already well-established, if requested (and preferably compensated), says Kaster, to meet **niche consumer demands for these value-added programs:**

Some value-added pork market categories:

- specific genetic programs such as Duroc or Berkshire
- humane certification programs including housing or other requirements
- organic
- raised without, or with limited antibiotic use
- never administered ractopamine
- vegetarian fed
- not genetically-engineered (non-GMO) fed

PIC will continue to help its customers meet consumer demand for today and tomorrow in a variety of important ways.

Through superior genetics and production assistance, PIC will continue to ensure its customers experience less mortality, higher lifetime productivity, better disease resistance and feed efficiency, and more.



Starting in June 2018, PIC added direct selection for tenderness in its genetic improvement program. Tenderness is clearly related to eating satisfaction and perceived pork quality in the minds of consumers. In fact, multiple studies have confirmed tenderness as the primary driver of eating satisfaction and intention of repeat purchase.

Although ultimate pH is the best predictor of tenderness and a very good predictor of raw product quality in relation to other processing characteristics, it does not describe all the variation in tenderness. So, while consumers want attractive, well-priced pork products that are nutritious and healthy, research has shown that consumers correlate tenderness with their overall enjoyment in eating pork more than they do with other sensory properties such as juiciness or flavor.

PIC will continue to watch market trends and innovate to keep pace, so that producers see the best profits in the industry.

Our future – and yours – has never looked so bright, as PIC continues to deliver on our promise to Never Stop Improving.

In the next Pig Improver: Brushing Up on Early Pig Care