

Green Thicket Farm IPP FAQ & recommendation sheet for Feeders and Breeders

Thank you for purchasing your piglets from our farm! We want to do all we can to share what we have learned over the years and create as many successful small pastured IPP farmers as we can, this sheet answers most questions we receive, but we can't predict all the questions you might have so please feel free to reach out with any questions!

Breeding great IPPs is what we strive for so there are some things we do to ensure you get the best possible IPPs from us. Whether that's Breeders or Feeders!

-We have sourced our breeding stock from some of the best breeders all across the country, bringing several of them in from as far out as Oregon, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Kansas, and retaining some of the best from our own litters.

-All of our breeders are routinely vaccinated with farrowsure, and dewormed with Ivermectin.

-Our herd is rotated through our pasture for the bulk of the year(when not with active litters on them) so that we can actively select for true grazing pigs, that work on pasture.

-We only sell the best of our piglets retaining any less than perfect gilts, or smaller than average individuals to feed out on our farm, which means we only chose 2-3 piglets as breeders(never more than 25-33% of a litter) and often only 3-4 as feeders out of a litter of 8+.

-We offer a 1 year guarantee on registered Breeders. If as your breeder piglet grows and matures I don't feel it still meets my standards for what a great IPP should look or act like, or if they don't breed at 8-9 months old, I will replace it with a new piglet, at no cost with the exception of delivery fees or CVI if they apply.

-Our entire breeding herd has been tested for PRRS, with negative results.

-We work closely with two different vets, as well as I(Caleb) having 3 associate degrees in agriculture, and having 12+ years of hands on agricultural experience.

-We do our absolute best to be available to answer any questions we can that you may have as our #1 goal when it comes to selling piglets is helping our customers succeed at raising great IPPs, for the entire life of your pigs.

Registered Breeder piglets are \$500 each with a \$100 deposit at 3-4 weeks old, and picked up at 6 weeks with the remaining \$400 due at pick up. All breeders registrations are submitted by us once full payment has been received, and are given ivermectin before pickup unless requested otherwise.

Feeder barrows are \$150 each, picked up at 6 weeks old with a deposit of \$25 each at 2 weeks old, and remaining \$125 each due at pick up. They are given ivermectin before they leave unless requested otherwise. All come out of our registered breeding stock. Discounted to \$135 each if you buy 5 or more.

If you are outside of Missouri then they will need a vet inspection for a health certificate, and that is \$50 each, with larger quantities though we can work with our vet to get a lower rate.

We also offer delivery at \$1.50/mile one way either the whole way or part way to your location.

Fencing:

-Young piglets can fit through way smaller spaces than you might expect and even a 6week old can squeeze through a cattle panel, and is strong enough to crumple chicken wire or 2x4 wire. By 8-10 weeks old a cattle panel should hold them. your new piglets will be stressed from just being weaned and being in a new environment so put them in as tight of an area as you can for the first week or so till they can get used to you and learn that you mean food.

-For adults and piglets past 8 weeks old we have learned that the most effective and cost efficient is woven wire field fence with electric an electric fence offset with 5" extenders and about 8-12" off the ground.

Quarantine: when you first get your new pigs always quarantine them with no possibility of nose to nose or water run off contact for a minimum of three weeks, preferably 4. And keep close watch to ensure they have no hidden issues you might introduce to your whole herd before you have the chance to treat it in just one individual.

Temperatures: piglets really struggle with cold temperatures, though adults are fine with them, and all struggle with heat over 80 since they can sweat to cool off. You will want to make sure they have some level of shade past 80 degrees and always have access to water to drink, as well as the ability to make or be provided with a wallow to cool off in.

Feed:

We Feed 3.5lbs(one #10 can) of Evolution 2 Grower Finisher(purchased from MFA) per head per day, both as a feeder ration up till about 7 months old then we raise to about 5lbs for the last 1-2 months. Feeders piglets should be gradually built up over a couple weeks to the 3.5 lbs of grain per day, as their little 6 week old stomachs won't be able to hold quite that much, but will by 8-12 weeks easily. They should also have access to plenty of diverse pasture forages, or at the least hay or soaked alfalfa pellets. We have the best luck with soft grass hay and less stemmy alfalfa though if its nice soft stemmed alfalfa they will love it. Add ins such as produce scraps, apples, pumpkins, Brewers grains, acorns, walnuts, hickories, chestnuts ect. are all great and we love making use of them in our pigs diets but be careful when adding them to watch their diets. For the most part feed these in addition to their normal grain and pasture with no cuts to the other two. Should you have massive amounts of these items you can cut back on the grain but do it gradually so as to not upset their stomachs and so as to not short them on essential parts of their diets. Some examples here being That pumpkins have good carbohydrate levels but not enough protein, brewers grains have high protein and almost no carbohydrates left, apples are high sugar, low protein, acorns and hickories are high in some fats and proteins but not the best carbohydrate source, Chestnuts are high carbohydrate but low protein. And all are short on various minerals, so when these types of items are used to supplement feed be sure to up your added mineral content.

Mineral:

IPPs consume lower amounts of preformulated grain rations than most breeds of pigs(3.5lbs vs the 6-8 that most breeds need) due to their increased grazing ability. But feed rations are created assuming 6-8lbs of feed/head/day meaning that by cutting the feed ration in half you have also cut their mineral intake in half also, thereby needing to supplement it. We use Super 10 mineral(also available from MFA),

We add about 1/8 cup/ head/day for feeders pretty well their whole grow out period, as they grow you may be able to cut back on this amount. Base it off how much mineral you see left at the bottom of their feed pans and if any signs of soil disturbance or a preference for deep rooted plants like chicory shows indicating they are searching for minerals in the soil. When we started we always fed mineral, now our soil seems to have balanced out, and we aren't having to supplement as much to get the same results.

Rooting: IPPS don't typically root, though the occasional horribly conformed feeder may, more often than not if they cause any disturbance its just turning over the top soil layer to eat grubs(like Japanese beetle grubs), dandelion roots, or thistles, digging a wallow, deficient in some minerals, or frankly bored. If you have dandelions or thistles expect a bit of soil turning till they eradicate them(no shovel work for you), and then just ensure they have the proper amount of minerals, and are rotated routinely to fresh pasture, with that you should have no problems.

Dewormer:

We use Ivermectin injectable 1% for swine and cattle(sold at most feed stores under the label Noromectin) given orally(pull into syringe, remove needle, dip syringe in peanut butter and when they try and eat it shoot the ivermectin in their mouths) at a dosage of 1cc/50lbs of live weight as figured by tape weighing. We worm with this at weaning and it is all your feeders should need with proper pasture rotation. Weaning is also a great time to worm your sows and boars. This will also work to remove pig lice should you be unfortunate enough to get them on your stock at any point, give it at the same dosage to all that show eggs or adults once every 11-13 days for 3 rounds and change all bedding. On top of this your parasite control should involve good pasture rotation(leaving areas fallow for at least 23 days), a diverse diet that includes natural wormers such as pumpkins, walnuts in the hull, and acorns when available, clean water, and maximizing the amount you feed in troughs vs on the ground.

Processing

We process at 8-10 months old, depending on size of the pigs and processor availability, aiming for around 250lbs live weight. You want to achieve this weight while still maintaining a fit looking pig. It is very easy to over feed an IPP on grain and make them fatty, although that extra fat can be used to make excellent lard, soap, suet cakes, ect.

Raising breeders: Feed and raise them exactly the same as your feeders except you will need to separate your boar from your gilts at about 4 months old as they can occasionally breed that young and any thing under 6 months can often be fatal for gilts at farrowing time.

Breeding: Aim for breeding gilts at 8 months old, they should be about 225-250 lbs. Boars can breed at 5+ months old to most gilts. But 7-8+ months old is a good time frame to aim for them as well. Gilts should be bred as close to 8-11 months old as possible, any thing past 12 months can begin to cause fertility issues and create sterility. You also want to ensure that both your gilts/sows and boars are in peak physical condition and not over weight as this will make it hard for them to actually conceive, and an obese sow often has a very hard time farrowing and can easily loose litters.

timing your breeding: We aim to breed in Late May for September litters, which are weaned around the beginning of November, then bred late November for March litters which are weaned early May, and so on. This gives us two litters a year per sow while skipping the hottest and coldest parts of the year, piglets really struggle with cold temperatures, though adults are fine with them, and all struggle with heat over 80 since they can sweat to cool off.

Vaccinating: We recommend vaccinating with farrowsure, this protects you from Lepto and Porcine Parvo which are very common in pastured hogs and can cause you to lose entire litters. Follow the instructions on the bottle. It'll be used before each breeding for best results.

Farrowing: The boar and sows can all be kept together from breeding till about 1 week before your earliest possible farrowing date. From that point the sow should be given her own pen or paddock to farrow in. we like farrowing in our typical Aframe shelters as it helps to protect the piglets from being squished on accident. Watch for signs of impending labor such as nest building, very full milk line, and a swollen vulva, if you can squeeze out milk you are usually 12 or less hours away. Be sure that their nest area is nice and dry and she should take care of it from there. I like to be there to help clean them off to help everyone imprint and to take notes of sex, color, wattles, and amount as that gets a bit harder to do once they are a day old(they are up and really booking it within 24-48 hrs).

Boar: your boar will need kept separate from your sows while they are farrowing and have piglets on them to avoid any accidents. This means he'll be by himself about 4 months out of the year, its pretty common to keep a barrow to keep him company, but you certainly don't have to.

Selecting breeders:

Piglets change a lot while they are in this rapid growth stage so I do my first round of evals at around 2-3 weeks old to knock out the obvious feeders. Then evaluate again around 4-5 weeks old. Do not be afraid to look at one at 6-8 weeks old before they go home and decide you really don't like it anymore and work with your customer to get them a different one or offer pick of the litter on an upcoming litter(pick of the ones you selected to be breeders in that litter that is).

When I select I work through these criteria in this order of importance. Potential Breeders need to hit at least 4 of them. With serious solid emphasis on the top 3. Preferably all 5, but the perfect animal doesn't exist, even if they hit all 5 I'll bet you there is something with it that could be better to breed standard, or breeder preference.

1. Snout short with upturn?
2. Good Build(large hams and shoulders, good solid frame?)
3. General size upper average?(often noted as "Beefy" for serious cases on my notes)
4. Even placement of teats?
5. Teats 12+?(do not count pin, blind or inverted teats in this as they are non functional)

So typically I'll catch the whole litter and look at them in a dog crate, that close up and next to each other you can see who is smaller than the rest really well, if they aren't in the average or better of size group then automatically stuck in a different crate as feeders, then I pull them out and judge faces one at a time, that typically knocks out a few more, usually at this point I'm picky enough to have 50% or so removed based on how nice the litter is. Now there is usually few enough in the crate I can compare builds and not just size, I don't want a tall pig with no hams so any that don't look pretty dang solid there are also kicked over to the feeders, same with a nice solid stance (how well stacked are those legs and hocks? Good and straight or slightly off?). Next is teats right before pictures are taken since I've had a heck of a time with even placement that is first, if they have a good solid 10 even teats that is more preferred to me than a wonky 14(again not counting Pin, blinds and inverted teats). Breed standard is 10 evenly spaced teats, but even the registry owner will favor more teats over even spacing. Also some solid "No"s not mentioned would include things like: cryptorchidism, pigeon or hock toed, any foot

issues, any thing that I think may be genetic vs environmental, ect. Boars have a larger influence on the breed than sows so I am especially picky with boar piglets that leave here, and I'd recommend the same practice.

Pricing: I recommend staying within the breed average which is \$400-500 for registered breeders and \$125-150 for feeders so as to ensure you are actually making a profit on your labor, and so as to not under cut other breeders.

Selling: You can use the 3 FB IPP groups (Idaho Pasture Pigs (IPPs), Idaho Pasture Pig Breed Association, and Idaho Pasture Pig Breed Enthusiasts) as long as you are careful to word it in such a way that it doesn't look like a sale add because facebook prohibits selling of animals on their platform. The IPPBA is currently working on a classifieds section on their website which should be live by October 2021. Never sell unregistered gilts or intact boars, this floods the market with IPPs of questionable decent, even if people say they plan to only breed for their families, things happen and it eventually comes back to bite you in the rear or cause a nuisance for other breeders.

Castrating: use a nice new scalpel available at all livestock stores for \$1-2. And use Iodine to clean their testicles, then castrate (watch plenty of youtube videos if you haven't done this before) castrate, and then iodine to clean up. If they are bleeding a decent bit you can use vet dust which is commonly used for cuts on horses. Aim to have them castrated 2 weeks before customers pick them up so they can be fully healed.