

Grass-fed pork in Georgia¹

Answering the call for sustainable production.

This family farm has been raising pork for almost a century in the South of Georgia. With the rise of competition within the State and with some close by states being among the nation's top pork producers, the owners decided to use their acreage capacity to differentiate themselves by adopting "extensive" farming with grass-fed hogs. How did they earn their customers' recognition across the State and the country?

Doing it differently.

From raising the piglets to processing and packaging the meat, this company runs everything their own way using the family ancestral know-how. Extensive farming was a logical choice for this company because the owners wanted to be proactive in the "naturally grown" and "environmentally friendly" trendy areas, i.e. *"no growth hormones or steroids, no antibiotics, no animal by-products in the feed, free range-pasture raised, no chemical herbicides, and no overgrazing"*.

Another choice was to sell their products only at their on-site store or online, ensuring their sales only to dedicated customers.

Focusing on high quality pork.

Hams, pork chops, sausages, bacon, spare ribs, and pork specialties are sold by this grass-fed hog farm. They also sell some sauces and mixes that the family specially formulated to complement their meats as well as some homemade jams and jellies.

But their combos are the biggest sellers, from tailgating specials to sampler packs to breakfast plates. They have successfully reached a number of customers with these "ready to eat" assortments.

Online order and fast delivery.

Another key to the company's success all across the country is in its premium online direct sales and shipping process to customers. The company makes it very clear on its website, orders only ship on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays in order to ensure that the products get to their destination within 48 hours of ordering. Orders are packaged in a cooler with ice packs for optimal freshness. If an order is placed on Wednesday, it will not ship before the next Monday.

¹ Based on A. Lupo, A. Braio, Z. Bullard, N. Whitlock, and D. Heric's project developed for the AAEC3100 Food and Fiber Marketing Course, Fall Semester 2016.



Counting on return customers to promote the products.

Selling the products only on-site or online technically reduces the spectrum of customers. The company's presence on social media is actually rather minimal. Their success comes from the customers themselves. They talk about the products and share their positive experiences, they are engaged (actively or unknowingly) in promoting the company's products.

Lessons learned

They build a relationship with their customers.

Selling only directly to their customers through two distribution channels (on-site and online) ensures a stronger relationship and return customers.

They heavily rely on word-of-mouth marketing.

What better advertising than customer testimonials can a company get? No need for expensive promotional tools so far. The family keeps their customers highly satisfied and... consequently they wait for more orders from their extended community across the country.

Sources

- The hog farm's website.
- Interview between the AAEC students and the owners.

