

# The Proof is in the Pedigree

words by **Mallorie Boggs**

The importance of a piece of paper that proves a purebred Berkshire.

Nowadays anyone can be a salesman. With the power to buy and sell right at our fingertips using tools such as social media, online auctions, and millions of farm websites, the exchange of pigs is a fast pace hustle. With people soliciting for and advertising pigs all over the country, how do you know that what you're paying for is what you're getting? Here's how to buy Berkshires with confidence.

## BACKED BY EXPERIENCE

The American Berkshire Association (ABA) is the oldest swine registry. Since 1875, the ABA has records of Berkshire DNA and genetic pairings that trace today's Berkshires to their purebred ancestors.

To maintain breed integrity, Berkshires that must meet these specific characteristics to receive a pedigree:

### 1. DNA

In order to register a litter of Berkshires, breeders must submit DNA to be tested. The DNA submitted on a card goes to a genetic lab to be analyzed for the Stress (HAL-1843) test that must be done before you can register a pig out of any sire. To find more information on this process, visit the video resources tab at [americanberkshire.com](http://americanberkshire.com).

### 2. Ear Notches

All pigs registered with the ABA must be ear notched. This permanent identification tool is used to trace pigs to the breeder's litter of which they belong for genetic records. If a pig is not ear notched, they are not registered purebreds.

### 3. Color and Characteristics

Berkshires has a distinct look. In order to be eligible for the registry, purebred Berkshires must have:

- Black body: A black body that does not have a spotted or mottling pattern. Some white on the body is acceptable. For more information on the acceptable amount of white, view the ABA Constitution and By-Laws.

- Upright ears: Ears are pointed and ear notched.

- White feet: At least 3 of the 4 feet have white on them. A sandy color where the black and white meet is acceptable.

- White tip of the tail: The tip of the tail is white unless docked. There should be no white at the base of the tail or a "swirl" pattern in the hair.

- White on the face: The face must not be solid white or solid black.

- Underline: Breeding animals must have a total of 12 teats, a minimum of 6 per side.

## TASTE THE DIFFERENCE

Berkshires are known for their superior meat quality. To protect the 100% Pure Berkshire Pork® reputation, the ABA has strict standards on this meat program.

The goal of the 100% Pure Berkshire Pork® Program is to assure consumers of a quality dining experience. To accomplish this, the ABA has developed a certification program to ensure that all pork sold under the 100% Pure Berkshire Pork® label has been produced from pedigreed Berkshire pigs. The 100% Certified Berkshire pork program requires that ALL sires be free of both the Napole (RN) and Stress (HAL-1843) genes. There's a difference that you can taste between a 100% purebred Berkshire and any other pork.

Not all Berkshires are better. If you're in the market for a 100% purebred Berkshire, ask for the pedigree. If there is no pedigree, there is no proof that it's a purebred Berkshire. ◦

To find more information about how to register Berkshire pigs, find registered breeders, and learn more about 100% Pure Berkshire Pork®, visit [americanberkshire.com](http://americanberkshire.com)

