

# Niman Ranch Pork Protocols



The standards presented in this document are the minimum requirements to be in compliance with Niman Ranch raising protocols. In order for a farmer to be eligible to sell hogs to Niman Ranch the following items must be in compliance:

- On-Farm Audit conducted in the past 12 months and no unresolved critical non-compliances
- Valid Premise ID
- Current Niman Ranch Farm Plan
- Current Secure Pork Supply Plan
- Current Pork Quality Assurance (PQA) and Transport Quality Assurance (TQA) (if applicable) certification(s)

## **Farm Audits**

Your farm will be audited once each year by your field agent or another Niman Ranch staff member. The purpose is to ensure that our farmers are following all our protocols. Additionally, Niman Ranch has several customers that conduct their own third party on-farm audits. All requested audits are a mandatory requirement for selling to Niman Ranch.

## **Standards of Conduct**

All farmers in our program agree to remain committed to a cooperative and communicative professional relationship with our field agents. Mutual respect, honesty, and integrity are words that exemplify the relationship between you and your Niman Ranch field agent. We are committed to providing an environment for our farmers and field agents that is free of abusive or threatening language and facilitates the required processes of accurate auditing and protocol compliance. Further, Niman Ranch and farmers agree not to use any proprietary information relating to the business of Niman Ranch in competition with or to the detriment of each other.

## How to Read the Standards

There are three levels of non-compliances in the Niman Ranch standards.

1. Standards marked as Critical “C” are core principles that must be adhered to for the pigs to be eligible for Niman Ranch. If during any farm audit or farm visit there is a non-compliance of a Critical standard, the pigs determined to be out of compliance will be disqualified from the program.
2. Standards marked as Major “M” are required to be corrected and documented within seven days of the audit findings. If a producer receives two of the same Major non-conformances in back-to-back annual (12 month) audit cycles, the infraction will be

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elevated to a Critical status resulting in the impacted pigs being ineligible to sell to Niman Ranch.

3. Standards unmarked are considered Minor, and any non-compliances to these standards must be corrected and documented within 30 days of the audit findings. If a producer receives two of the same Minor non-conformances in back-to-back annual (12 month) audit cycles, the infraction will be elevated to Major status.

Any Minor non-compliances observed during sites visits outside the annual audit process, or at the harvest facility, will be documented but not elevated to Major status unless no improvement has been made after two attempts in the same audit cycle. The third infraction on a Minor protocol will be elevated to a Major non-compliance.

## Example #1

Observation: During a feed records review, fish meal is found in the finisher diet.

Non-compliance: 3.1

Category: Critical

Action: Pigs that consumed feed with fish meal are not eligible to sell to Niman Ranch.

## Example #2

Observation: During an annual farm audit, it was discovered that in one finishing pen of pigs averaging 200 pounds, the space allowance per hog was only 12 sq ft.

Non-compliance: 2.10

Category: Major

Action: Changes to space allowances must be made and documented within seven days. If a second non-compliance is issued at the next annual audit for finishing space, the non-compliance would be elevated to a Critical and the impacted pigs would not be eligible to sell to Niman Ranch.

## Example #3

Observation: During a farm visit to grade pigs (not an annual audit), it was observed in one hoop barn that pigs did not have a dry place to lie, and their bellies were soiled with manure.

Action: A site visit report will be completed noting that bedding was not in compliance and that the corrective action and timeline have been agreed upon and documented. If the field agent observes this deficiency three times in an audit cycle (12 months), the non-compliance will be elevated to a Major non-compliance.

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## 1.) Bedding Requirements

**1.1)** Bedding must be clean, dry, safe, and allow pigs to play, forage, explore, root, chew, and lie down on. Straw and corn stover are the preferred choices, but wood chips/shavings, soybean stalks, etc. are also acceptable forms of bedding. Expectation is all pigs have a dry, bedded place to lie that is suitable for the climate of the facility.

**1.1.1)** When the daily average ambient temperature is below 60 °F, the expectation is pigs have a bedded environment that allows them to nest and be able to cover more than just the lying surface of the animal.

**1.2)** For pasture-based systems, adequate bedding must be provided in shelters to keep pigs comfortable in wet conditions and when daily average ambient temperatures fall below 60 °F. When daily average ambient temperature exceeds 60 °F, and there is at least 50% vegetative cover on the pasture, no additional bedding is required.

**1.3)** Long-stemmed bedding must be available to the sow/gilt during the nesting period (three days prior to farrowing) to be able to pick it up in her mouth and manipulate it to build a nest. Recommendation is four pounds of straw per day for three days. Other bedding materials may be used after farrowing and during lactation.

**1.4)** The animals' living quarters shall be cleaned by procedures that ensure satisfactory hygiene. The surfaces of deep litter beds shall be kept dry to minimize soiling of all animals.

## 2.) Space/Outdoor access/Environment

**C2.1)** Close confinement where an animal is not allowed to walk or turn around will only be allowed temporarily (up to two hours) for necessary procedures and must be documented. This includes, but is not limited to vaccinations, veterinary care, artificial insemination, etc. At no time can the total hours of close confinement be more than 24 hours in a 30-day period.

**C2.2)** Facilities with 100% slatted or perforated flooring are prohibited. Each animal's total and bedded square footage requirements must be met on solid flooring. Additionally, perforated flooring can only account for 25% of the total space allowance provided. Bedding requirements still apply regardless of flooring type.

**M2.2.1)** A building that utilizes partially slatted flooring may have a liquid storage pit no deeper than four feet (4') below the floor; however, the stored liquid must be expelled from the barn daily. Gutters that are not underneath the living space of the animals that are used for solid manure holding inside a barn are allowed and are not required to be cleaned daily.

**2.3)** All Niman Ranch animals must be able to experience a diurnal light cycle (periods of light and dark). Furthermore, buildings are encouraged to have features such as openings, windows, translucent sides, skylights, etc.

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## Gestation Space Requirements

**M2.4)** Sows and gilts must all be able to lie down in the bedded area on their sides comfortably with legs extended without being on top of each other and move about freely. For a sow, 16 ft<sup>2</sup> of bedded lying area, with 35 ft<sup>2</sup> total required. Gilts post service require 16 ft<sup>2</sup> of bedded lying area, with 24 ft<sup>2</sup> total required.

**C2.5)** Gestation stalls and tethers are prohibited.

## Boar Space Requirements

**M2.6)** Boars must all be able to lie down in the bedded lying area on their sides comfortably with legs extended without being on top of each other and move about freely with freedom from aggression and competition. Boars weighing less than 350 lbs require 48 ft<sup>2</sup> (24 ft<sup>2</sup> bedded) while boars weighing greater than 350 lbs require 64 ft<sup>2</sup> (32 ft<sup>2</sup> bedded).

## Farrowing Space Requirements

**C2.7)** In all farrowing facilities, the sow must be able to build a nest, turn around and move about easily and freely. Sow and litter must be able to lie down on their sides comfortably with legs extended and without being on top of each other. The use of farrowing crates is not permitted.

**M2.8.1)** A farrowing pen is defined as an enclosure within a building in which the sow and litter are housed alone until weaning. The pen must be a minimum of 64 ft<sup>2</sup> total.

**M2.8.2)** For farrowing pens less than 64 ft<sup>2</sup>, but at least 48 ft<sup>2</sup>, the sow must have access to a larger common area at least two times each day (in approximate equal time increments) for a minimum of one hour during each exercise period. Common area must provide a minimum of 64 ft<sup>2</sup> per sow. If desired, producer can keep the sow and piglets in the 48 ft<sup>2</sup> pen for up to 72 hours post farrowing. Producer must be able to provide documentation for these turn out events.

**M2.8.3)** A free stall is defined as a pen or hut with an opening (commonly in pasture settings), allowing the sow and litter to move about outside or into a communal loafing area at free will. The free stall must be 35 ft<sup>2</sup> or larger. The free stall and communal area must total at least 64 ft<sup>2</sup>.

## Summary

- Farrowing Pen (> 64ft<sup>2</sup> for sow and litter) = sow must be able to turn around freely
- Farrowing Pen (< 64ft<sup>2</sup> but > 48 ft<sup>2</sup> for sow and litter) = sow must be let out twice a day for at least one hour during each exercise period
- Farrowing Hut (> 35ft<sup>2</sup> free stall) = sow must be able to come and go at her will into larger common area that is no less than 64 ft<sup>2</sup>

**2.8.3.1)** Circumstances may arise where it is best for the piglets to be restricted to the free stall or hut. If the free stall or hut is not at least 64 ft<sup>2</sup> in area, it is required that the piglets be able to leave free stall within 10 days of age.

**2.9)** Farrowing crates, where a sow cannot turn around, are prohibited.

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## Growing and Finishing Pigs Space Requirements

### 2.10)

Weight	Bedded space required	Total space required
Nursery pigs up to 35 lbs	3.5 ft <sup>2</sup>	4.5 ft <sup>2</sup>
Nursery pigs from 36 lbs to 55 lbs	4.5 ft <sup>2</sup>	6.0 ft <sup>2</sup>
Grower pigs from 56 lbs to 112 lbs	5.25 ft <sup>2</sup>	7.0 ft <sup>2</sup>
Finishing pig over 112 lbs	7.5 ft <sup>2</sup>	14.0 ft <sup>2</sup>

As stated in our August 30, 2018 protocol revision, it is our commitment to not revise any Niman Ranch animal space requirement prior to January 2026.

**2.11)** A functional space must be provided and identified on the farm plan for sick or injured animals to recover without competition. Space, shelter, and bedding requirements apply.

**2.12)** A fire plan must be established for the operation. In indoor housing, escape routes to the outdoors must be available from interior pens. A fire extinguisher or readily available water source must be accessible in case of a fire. As a fire prevention measure, electrical wiring must be protected from pigs.

### 3.) Feed/Water

**C3.1)** All hogs must be fed a 100% vegetarian diet. The feeding of animal products is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, meat and bone meal, blood meal, bakery meal, animal fat (choice white grease), fishmeal, eggs, and egg products. Dairy products are permitted. We encourage producers to communicate all potential feed, diet, or water additive changes to ensure compliance prior to use to reduce risk of feeding unapproved products and risking disqualified animals.

**3.2)** Feed shall be provided daily and in a way that minimizes competition.

**3.3)** Diet formulations that do not align with published recommendations (feed tag printed formulations) must be signed off on by a nutritionist acknowledging that diets have been formulated for the age and stage of pigs being fed.

**3.4)** All hogs shall have continuous access to clean drinking water with minimal competition.

**3.5)** Piglets must have access to feed (either lactation feed or creep feed) by 14 days of age.

**C3.6)** The feeding of human food waste to pigs (also known as garbage feeding) is not allowed.

### 4.) Weather

**4.1)** Provisions must be taken to protect animals from regional climate extremes. Sufficient shelter must be provided so that all hogs can lie down at the same time without being on top of each

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other while being protected from snow, rain, or sun. If necessary, wallows and/or sprinklers must be provided when pigs are exhibiting signs of heat stress.

## 5.) Land Use/Regulatory

**5.1)** Practices must be followed that prevent soil degradation in hog production areas, minimize poor air quality for family, workers, and neighbors, and prevent water quality degradation of surface and groundwater resources.

**5.2)** Farmers must raise animals in a manner that protects or enhances the quality of the environment, animal health, and public health. This includes, but is not limited to, proper manure management practices and appropriate methods for disposal of mortalities, which must meet all county, state, and federal standards.

## 6.) Piglet Practices/Animal Management

**M6.1)** The minimum weaning age of piglets is 28 days. Records are required to document this. Early weaning cannot be a routine practice or for convenience. However, if the welfare of the sow and/or her litter is being compromised, piglets may be weaned earlier than 28 days. All incidences of early weaning must be recorded and include all litter information along with the reason for weaning early.

**M6.2)** Needle teeth clipping, grinding, and filing is prohibited.

**M6.3)** Tail docking and tail tipping are prohibited.

**M6.4)** When piglets are to be castrated, the process must be completed within 10 days of age.

**6.4.1)** Piglets must be castrated with a scalpel or surgical scissors. A side cutter is not allowed for castration. A side cutter blades touch and a scissors blades cross each other.

**6.5)** Ear notching is discouraged, but if deemed necessary, it must be performed within 10 days of age using an ear-notcher, or a tool designed specifically for this purpose. Knife blades are not allowed.

**6.6)** Gilts/sows must be of a body condition score (BCS) of 2.5 to 4.0 prior to farrowing and maintain a BCS of at least 2.0 until piglets are weaned. If < 2.0 at weaning, an action plan must be in place to further support her recovery.

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<b>Score</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Condition</b>	Emaciated	Thin	Ideal	Fat	Obese
<b>Detection of Ribs, Back Bone, "H" Bones, and Pin Bones</b>	Obvious	Easily detected with pressure	Barely felt with firm pressure	None	None
Sourced from "Assessing Sow Body Condition" by R.D. Coffey, G.R. Parker, and K.M. Laurent (ASC-158; 1999)					

**6.7)** Lameness scores of 0 and 1 are acceptable; 5% or less of the herd may be observed with scores of 2 or greater on the day of the audit. If > 5% of the herd is observed with scores of 2 or greater, a lameness intervention plan must be established.

<b>Score</b>	<b>Description</b>
0	Pig moves freely and uses all four limbs and feet evenly.
1	Pig shows weight-shifting activities away from affected limb upon standing but shows little or no lameness or limping when walking.
2	Pig obviously shifts weight away from affected limb when standing and shows limping or adaptive behavior when walking (head bob, arched back, caudal swagger, quickened step on affected limb, or shortened stride).
3	Pig is reluctant to stand and/or walk, shows obvious limp and adaptive behaviors when walking (head bob, arched back, caudal swagger, quickened step on affected limb, or shortened stride).
4	Pig is non-weight bearing on affected limb when either standing or walking.
Lameness Score Scale adapted from Karriker et al., 2013 and Nalon et al., 2014	

**6.8)** Nose-rings may be used on breeding stock but limited to one humane septum ring per sow. Nose rings are not allowed on grow/finish pigs.

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**M6.9)** All farms are required to have a Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR). A VCPR is a working relationship with a veterinarian where they advise the farmer in making herd health decisions and the farmer agrees to follow said instructions. This is established by an on farm examination of the animals and premise and maintained through regular communication and oversight.

**M6.10)** All farms are required to follow PQA guidelines on needle usage (appropriate length and gauge), storage, and disposal; including only using **highly detectable** (D3™) needles across their entire operation. Needles must be inspected between each injection and broken needles must be immediately communicated to the field agent to work through a resolution. Impacted pig(s) will not be allowed to ship to Niman Ranch.

## 7.) Euthanasia/Treatment/Injury

**7.1)** In the event a pig(s) suffers injury, illness, or disease on the farm, the animal(s) must receive immediate individual or group care to maximize the potential for recovery, minimize the risk of mortality, and reduce possible pathogen transmission. This may require veterinary guidance. Antibiotics must be administered to individual animals to treat disease if deemed necessary, even though it will disqualify them from the program.

**M7.2)** If it is necessary to relocate a non-ambulatory animal, the animal may be moved onto a conveyance such as a tarp, sled, or cart and that conveyance may be dragged or moved. The transport of a live animal by a skid loader or tractor bucket is prohibited.

**M7.3)** A decision to treat or euthanize must be made immediately following observed ailment. An animal that is unable use their hind leg(s) within 48 hours after treatment, must be euthanized. If the injury is serious enough for the animal to be euthanized, the animal shall be promptly and humanely euthanized on the farm. Acceptable methods include:

**7.3.1) Nursing piglets: (<20 lbs):** non-penetrating captive bolt or CO<sup>2</sup>

**7.3.2) Nursery (12-70 lbs):** gunshot, penetrating captive bolt, or CO<sup>2</sup>

**7.3.3) Grow/Finish (70-300 lbs):** gunshot or penetrating captive bolt

**7.3.4) Sows, boars:** gunshot, penetrating captive bolt, or anesthetic overdose

**7.4)** All euthanasia devices are to be maintained per manufacturer specifications and a maintenance log kept.

**7.5)** Any animal suffering from a belly rupture larger than a softball (approximately four inches in diameter; 12.5 inches in circumference) must have a written removal plan to be enacted within 14 days of the discovery. Acceptable options include on-farm harvest, sale for off-farm harvest, or euthanasia. It is discouraged for these pigs to be sold for someone else to raise.

**7.6)** Non-ambulatory, sick or injured animals or animals who for any reason could have difficulty withstanding the rigors of transport may not be transported, unless to receive veterinary treatment. Sick, injured, or untreatable animals that cannot be transported must be euthanized as soon as possible (but no more than two hours from observation) by appropriate means.



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**7.7)** Mortalities must be removed from occupied pens immediately upon discovery.

**7.8)** Parasites must be effectively managed. Where prevention alone has not been effective, medicinal regimens must be implemented to effectively control worms, lice, and mange.

**7.9)** Organophosphates are prohibited.

### **8.) Antibiotic Free/ Hormone Free**

**C8.1)** Animals that have been administered antibiotics cannot be marketed to Niman Ranch. Non-therapeutic use of antibiotics or sulfas to control or mask disease or promote growth is prohibited. Additionally, growth-promoting hormones and beta-agonists, ionophores, and carbadox are prohibited.

**C8.2)** Pigs that have been administered antibiotics (feed, water, or injectable) or any other prohibited substance must be ear tagged and/or segregated in a permanent fashion to identify them as ineligible for Niman Ranch. Treated animals must be sold to an alternative market. All treated pigs must be recorded in producer's records (and shared with Niman Ranch upon request) in a manner that allows for their identification on the farm and the verification of their outcome.

**C8.3)** Pigs that have been administered hormones (PG600<sup>®</sup>, Matrix<sup>®</sup>/Swinemate<sup>®</sup>, Lutalyse<sup>®</sup>, etc) are ineligible for Niman Ranch. Usage of these products in gilts must be recorded and animals properly identified.

**8.4)** Routine use of hormones to induce farrowing is prohibited. Routine use is defined as greater than 20% administration to gilts/sows due to farrow. In the case of dystocia, administration of oxytocin is permitted to ease farrowing.

**8.5)** The storage and/or use of expired medication is prohibited.

### **9.) Trucking and Animal Handling**

**9.1)** Anyone transporting Niman Ranch hogs off the farm, regardless of destination, must have a valid TQA certification.

**M9.2)** The use of electric prods is prohibited; except for when animal or handler safety is in jeopardy and is the means of last resort. In the case of such emergency use, a detailed explanation must be documented in the farm records (date, time, location, # of head impacted, reason for usage). Rattle paddles and sort boards are approved tools to use when handling and moving pigs per PQA guidance.

**9.3)** Pregnant sows must not be transported off the operation within four weeks of expected farrowing date.

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**9.4)** Niman Ranch farmers are NOT allowed to send treated or cull animals to Perdue-Sioux Center Harvest Facility on Niman Ranch market hog trucks. Cull animals include, but are not limited to: belly ruptures, scrotal ruptures, open wounds, abscessed, disease associated lesions, prolapsed, sows, boars, pregnant gilts/sows.

**M9.5)** Niman Ranch and Perdue-Sioux Center Harvest Facility have a zero-tolerance policy for broken needles in hogs coming to the plant. We will not purchase pigs from farmers who do not follow our needle policy.

**M9.6)** During cold weather, steps must be taken (trailer openings are suitably boarded up) to protect animals from wind chill, freezing rain, etc.

Air Temperature (°F)	Bedding Requirement	Trailer Boarding
≤ 10	Heavy (6 bags/semi)	90 – 95% closed
11 – 20	Heavy (4-6 bags/ semi)	75 – 90% closed
21 – 30	Heavy (4-6 bags/ semi)	50 – 75% closed
31 – 40	Medium (3-4 bags/ semi)	50 – 75% closed
41 – 50	Medium (3-4 bags/ semi)	25 – 50% closed
51 – 60	Medium (3-4 bags/ semi)	0 – 25% closed
61 – 90	Medium (3-4 bags/ semi)	0% closed
≥ 91	Light (1-2 bags/ semi)	0% closed

Adopted from Transport Quality Assurance V8, 12.08.22

\* “Bag” of bedding is an 8-9 cubic foot expanded bag of wood shavings

**9.7)** During hot weather, hogs are to be loaded and unloaded promptly (no unnecessary stops). Trailers are to be kept well ventilated. If the temperature is above 80° F, hogs are to be sprinkled with water before loading or the truck must have a built-in sprinkler system.

**9.8)** Transport Space Requirements should not exceed the following stocking densities per Transport Quality Assurance guidelines:

Average weight	Square Feet Per	Average weight	Square Feet Per
12	0.65	40	1.30
14	0.69	50	1.53
16	0.74	100	2.32
18	0.78	150	2.95
20	0.83	250	4.26
22	0.88	275	4.57
24	0.93	300	4.79
30	1.07	350	5.48

Adopted from Transport Quality Assurance V8, 12.08.22

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## 10.) Collection Point/Assembly Yard (includes on-farm holding)

**10.1)** Any animal that meets any of the following conditions when delivered to the collection point/assembly yard must not be off-loaded from transport trucks and be euthanized immediately.

- pigs that are sick, injured, weak, disabled, or fatigued beyond recovery.
- pigs that are lame and unable to bear weight on one or more legs.
- pigs in poor body condition (BCS < 2).

**10.2)** All pigs must be provided protection from the elements of weather while at the collection point/assembly yard. This will include the provision of shade, misters, sprinklers, wallows, fans, bedding, and/or windbreaks depending on the season and temperatures.

**10.3)** Pigs held at collection point/ assembly yard must be provided access to water at all times.

**10.4)** If pigs are to be kept for more than eight hours at the collection point, the farmer must provide the pigs an adequate amount of feed to maintain satiety.

**10.5)** Minimum stocking density at a collection point is eight ft<sup>2</sup> per pig.

**10.6)** Loading chutes must be in good condition. Ramps must have cleats, treads, or some kind of non-slip surface to reduce the incidence of slips and falls during loading and unloading. Farmers are expected to work with the owners of the collection points to ensure gating, ramps, and general facilities are in safe repair.

**10.7)** The collection point/assembly yard must have a means of identifying the number of pigs, holding area (pen), and owner of said pigs. Additionally, the Niman Ranch Bill of Lading must follow every group of pigs.

## 11.) Farm Records

**M11.1)** All Niman Ranch farmers are required to keep farm records pertaining to their particular farm type (farrow to finish, wean to finish, farrow to wean). Records, at a minimum, are to provide evidence of protocol compliance. Minimum records to ensure compliance that must be kept by the farmer, consists of:

- **Farrowing/Lactation**

- induction date (if applicable)
- farrow date
- number born live
- date castrated
- date ear notched (if applicable)
- treatment records
- death loss, with reason
- date weaned and number weaned
- number and reason for culling and or euthanizing

\*sow/gilt “move in date” to the farrowing pen will be required if the farrowing pen is not considered to allow the sow to turn around freely per Proposition 12 standards

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- **Breeding Herd**
    - running inventory by pen
    - treatment records
  - **Wean to Finish**
    - running inventory by pen
    - treatments
    - separation and lameness
    - transportation
  - **Operational**
    - visitor log
- culling and euthanasia, with reason
  - death loss, with reason
  - death loss, with reason
  - culls and euthanasia
  - tail biting or vice behaviors
  - animal movement records

**11.2)** Niman Ranch pre-weaning mortality goals for each farmer is less than 15%. In a wean to finish situation the mortality goal is less than 4%, and breeding herd goal is less than 3%. If the targets are not met, a written intervention/improvement plan must be written and added to the record book.

**11.3)** All farms must keep air quality records for indoor production. Hoop barns are considered indoor production. A daily sniff test record must be conducted and recorded. A bi-weekly ammonia strip test must be conducted and recorded. Any level above 25 ppm must be dealt with immediately in order to reduce the ammonia level, and corrective action documented.

**11.4)** Transport records must be kept for animals moving from farrowing operation to a finishing operation, and/or moving from a finishing operation to a harvest facility directly or via a collection point. Trip duration, loading and unloading times along with farmer and trucker names with number of head are all items that must be on, but not limited to, the transport records.

### **12.) Other Non-Niman Ranch Pork Enterprises**

**12.1)** Any farmer that is engaged in another hog enterprise simultaneously with Niman Ranch is required to submit and follow a separation protocol that must contain the following: overview of the operations, feed records and how they will be stored and distributed to assure no cross contamination, animal housing, movement, records and how they are kept, and an aerial photo. Photo must depict each site, if more than one. Photo(s) must have outlined areas of each enterprise's livestock housing and feed storage.

Hog enterprises other than Niman Ranch may be defined as, but not limited to confinement farrowing, nursery, or finishing; contract finishing, 4-H pigs, FFA pigs, and any pigs raised in a way other than what is defined as Niman Ranch protocols.

**12.2)** Niman Ranch will not purchase animals raised from another enterprise unless the enterprise has been audited and in compliance with Niman Ranch standards.