(More stuff I got from the internet)

Why Grassfed is Best

A. Eating meat that has been grassfed is more nutritious, more humane and better for the environment.
B. Hogs, which are non-ruminants, are defined as grassfed if grass and green plants are a significant part of their diets. Pigs need grains or other concentrated foods (nuts, roots etc.) in order to be healthy.
C. Meat from grassfed animals is higher in protein and antioxidants such as vitamin E, beta-carotene and vitamin C than conventionally raised animals. Grassfed meat is also lower in overall calories and fat, but more important, the meat is characterized by an ideal balance of fats.
D. Scientists have discovered that the ratio of “bad” Omega-6 fat to “good” Omega 3 fat should not exceed 4:1. Consumption of meats with a higher ratio increases rates of heart disease, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, obesity and other health problems. Grassfed meat typically has ratios of 3:1 or 4:1. In contrast conventionally raised beef has a ratio of more than 20:1. Studies show that the longer the animal is fed grain the greater the imbalance becomes.
E. Grassfed meats are far less likely to be infected with dangerous strains of E. Coli bacteria. Feeding animals, especially ruminates, grain increases the acidity of their stomach unnaturally. This produces E. Coli strains that are resistant to stomach acids including human stomach acids, which would normally kill such bacteria.
F. The vast majority of animals raised for meat are raised in confined animal feeding operations.
G. Most beef cattle do spend the majority of their lives on pasture although that is frequently supplemented with grain and medications to cause them to grow faster. During the last three to six months of their lives they are shipped to feedlots. In feedlots they are crowded into pens deep in mud and manure without access to grass. They are fed a diet of concentrated grain, antibiotics, hormones and sometimes-animal byproducts to fatten them in these crowded and unhealthy conditions.
H. Scientist now know that the practice of feeding antibiotics continuously to animals, a necessity because of the unhealthy nature of feedlots, has produced the rapid rise in antibiotic resistant strains of disease both in animals and humans.
I. Pigs, the most intelligent of farm animals, may turn to cannibalism in their boredom and overcrowded conditions.
J. The cruel and inhumane practices of high volume slaughterhouses has been well documented.
K. Most grassfed animals are killed quickly in local butcher shops or on the farm where they were raised. Many grassfed bison farmers even drop their animals directly in the field eliminating trauma and stress.
L. Factory farming produces large quantities of cheap meat but the cost to the environment, the animals and human health are incalculable.
M. Grassfed animals spend their lives as nature intended: on grass with plenty of fresh air, sun, clean water and room to roam.
N. Feedlot diets are poor for animal health. The digestive system of ruminant animals (beef, bison) are designed for grass and similar roughage. Roughage provided by grass and hay allows animals to maintain a normal bacteria level in their stomachs and causes high levels of saliva that neutralizes acids.
O. When animals are fed high levels of grain their digestive systems do not function as intended causing a condition known as “acidosis” or acid indigestion. Acute cases can kill an animal. Chronic cases are extremely common in feedlots. Acidosis can lead to ulcers; liver abscesses (15-30% of feedlot cattle have liver abscesses) bloat paralysis and even death. The consequences to human health of consuming meat from chronically ill animals are still poorly understood.
P. In addition to being inhumane, factory farms and the system that supports them are environmental disasters. On traditional grassfed farms animal excrement is produced in manageable quantities and composted or spread back into the soil, where it adds nutrients and improves the soil. Factory farms produce massive quantities of excrement that is impossible to dispose of naturally.
Q. The grain fed to confined livestock causes many environmental problems. These crops are grown in monocultures that require heavy application of chemical herbicides, fertilizers and insecticides. These chemicals are well known to kill beneficial plants, insects and animals. Many of these chemicals are known to contaminate air and water where they prove detrimental to human health.
R. Industrial agriculture also uses massive quantities of water. Water tables in some parts of the country are reaching dangerously low levels in large part due to overuse for irrigation to grow grain for livestock.
S. Conventional tilling practices for grain crops contribute to soil loss through erosion. Iowa has lost 50% of its topsoil in the past 100 years. Much of this soil ends up in rivers where it degrades coastal habitats and fisheries.
T. Grass based farming reduces or eliminates erosion. The land is not tilled and exposed to erosion. The natural deposition of animal wastes improves and enriches the soil. Grass farming increase biodiversity.
U. Methane is a greenhouse gas and livestock are believed to be a major factor to anthropogenic greenhouse gases. Well managed pasture is known to be an extremely effective long term carbon sequestration tool while feedlots offer no carbon sequestration benefits whatever.

Low Risk of E.coli, Mad Cow Grass Fed Beef Advantage: Virtually 0% Risk of Mad Cow Disease or E.coli

It has been determined by many scientific experts that cattle contract mad cow disease (Bovine Spongiform Encephalitis or BSE) from eating rendered products from other cattle infected with the disease. While there is still much debate on the subject, the majority of research points to this rendering procedure as the means by which cattle contract the disease. Cattle that are finished in feedlots may have the opportunity to be fed renderings of infected cattle mixed with grain and other supplements in their feed rations.

In the case of grass-finished beef no such feed is given to the cattle, so it virtually eliminates the potential risk of the disease being passed on to humans through consumption of grass-fed beef. E.coli are abundant in all ruminant animals because these bacteria are essential for their normal digestive process. The E.coli from grain-finished animals present the real problem. Feeding grain to ruminants makes their intestinal tract more acidic. Over time, the E.coli have a chance to adapt to this more acidic environment. While the human stomach destroys 99.99% of E.coli found in grass-finished animals, the more acidic bacteria from grain-finished beef can survive the acid bath from our stomachs, and can potentially cause major health problems.

The Benefits of Pastured Pork

A. The vast majority of park produced in the United States comes from huge confinement operations. Large confinement farms are notoriously inhumane and are among the worst polluters of air and water of any agricultural operation.
B. Raising pigs on pasture is not only humane and natural for the animals; it is environmentally sound and produces meat that is more nutritious and more flavorful.
C. Pastured pork has higher levels of Vitamin E, healthy Omega-3 fatty acids and many other nutrients than conventionally raised pork.
D. Pastured hogs have more than just freedom from close confinement. They have the freedom to behave naturally. They can form natural social groupings and live in low stress ways that suit their nature. They are able to engage in natural rooting behaviors and can enjoy fresh air and sunshine.
E. Pastured pork is less likely to be contaminated with E. Coli. The antibiotics continually fed to hogs in confinement in stressed, overcrowded conditions have far reaching human effects. Antibiotic resistant bacteria are on the rise and are known to result from the continuous feeding of antibiotics in animal confinement operations.

Let pigs be pigs

The key to keeping pigs healthy is to keep their stress levels low, which means accommodating their natural behaviors as much as possible. For pigs, this means rooting, nesting, wallowing and foraging.
Studies show that if left to their own devices, pigs will spend about half their time rooting. If they cannot root, destructive behaviors are likely to appear. Wallowing is important for temperature regulation in the summer and for the elimination of external parasites. Most producers use feeders with flaps or other devices to keep the pigs occupied and to limit the rate at which they can feed.
Pigs are highly social, and good managers will take note of dominance relationships within groups. Try to avoid mixing strange groups of pigs. Visit your animals daily, and never run or shout when moving and handling them.
Pastured pigs are generally healthier, although internal parasites may become a problem. Rotating pastures and feeding diatomaceous earth are the two most common remedies.

Make Your Own Lard

Praise the lard! You heard right. Lard is not the villain it has been made out to be. But there is a catch: It has to be home-rendered. Commercial lard is what has given this flavorful fat its bad name. In order to make the product solid, the molecules have to be filled or saturated—and that is the type of fat we need to avoid for health reasons. Home-rendered lard is 2/3 unsaturated and contains oleic acid, the same ingredient that in olive oil helps break down cholesterol.

Lard was the most popular fat until the 1950s, when scientists discovered that animal fats could lead to heart disease. But they did not know the whole story. The products that replaced lard in the kitchen—like margarines and vegetable shortenings—would have problems of their own, namely artery-clogging trans fats and hydrogenated fats.

Today, lard has made a come-back. Professional chefs like Mario Batali even put it on the table or on his menus as lardo and it is again very trendy.

Best of all, it is very easy to make: Buy unsalted pork fat from your butcher and put in the freezer for a few minutes to harden. Place in a heavy Dutch oven or deep frying pan and either cook it in the oven at 300 until nicely melted or do it on top of the stove where you can watch it.