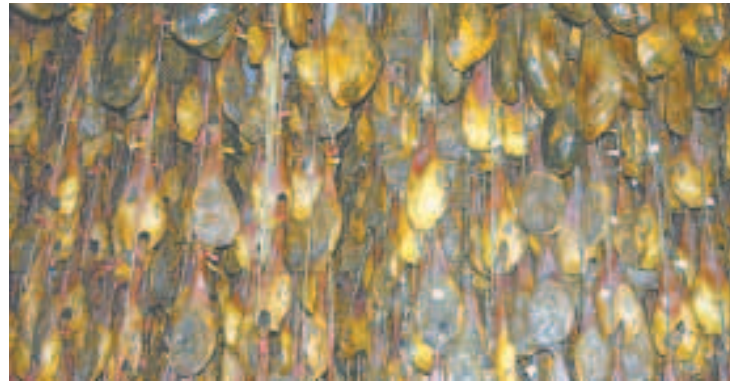




Rare Black-hoofed Iberico hogs are found only in Spain and Portugal, where they're pasture-raised and finished on acorns from oak trees.



Natural unsaturated fats turn the ham creamy with a nutty flavor. The centuries-old curing process that is used can last 4 years or more.

## High-Priced Spanish Hogs Raised On Acorns

Black-hoofed Iberico hogs make some of the highest priced ham in the world. The rare breed, found only in Spain and Portugal, is pasture-raised and finished on acorns from oak trees.

A medium to small-sized pig with dark hair and almost black hooves, the Iberico hog is known for its intramuscular fat, which

makes the meat juicy and flavorful. Finishing on acorns with natural unsaturated fats turns the ham creamy with a nutty flavor. Long curing reportedly takes it to another level.

The ham is available in 4 grades. The highest grade cured ham, Jamon Iberico de

Bellota, sells in specialty food stores in the U.S. for as much as \$72.95 for 3 oz. of paper thin slices hand cut by a master meat carver. Whole hams can range from \$750 to \$1,200 for a 14 to 15-lb. ham. That price may seem less out of line when you consider the work involved, not only in pasture production, but also in a centuries-old curing process that can last 4 years or more.

One company describes their process as having 5 stages: salting, washing, settling, drying and ripening, aging and tasting.

During the curing process, the hams lose almost half their weight. The traditional process allows natural outside air into the curing room, giving ham from different areas a local flavor. Over the years, the variation in warm and cool weather breaks down muscle fibers, tissue and fat, releasing monounsaturated fats high in oleic acid. Iberico ham has been shown to contain about 55 percent oleic acid. The only natural fat higher in heart healthy oleic acid is olive oil.

Although the Iberico is one of the oldest breeds and can be seen in pre-Neolithic cave paintings, it is extremely rare today and not found in North America. The Ossabaw hog from Ossabaw Island, Ga., are sometimes thought to be descended from Iberian hogs. However, DNA sampling has revealed that the Ossabaw are related to Asian pigs, not European.

If you search the internet you'll find a wide variety of sources for the hogs, including Iberian Pork Products, a Spanish producer. To try them out, check out La Tienda, a specialty food store in Virginia.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Iberian Pork Products, C/ Ciudad Real, 83; 28600 Navalcarnero, Madrid, Spain (ph 34 91 8132779; [www.iberianporkproducts.com](http://www.iberianporkproducts.com)); or La Tienda, 1325 Jamestown Rd., Williamsburg, Va. 23185 (ph 757 253-1925; catalog request ph 888 331-4362; [www.tienda.com](http://www.tienda.com)).

## Build Your Own Air Compressor

Buy an air compressor complete or build your own with parts from Power Systems & Supply. The Indiana company offers multiple options.

"We can add a battery charger with a larger engine as well as an electric start," says John Beiler, Power Systems & Supply. "We also sell the components of a compressor pump, base frame and belt guard if you have a 10 to 11 hp engine."

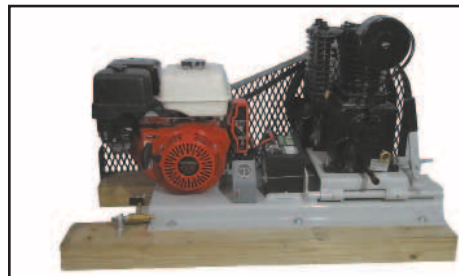
Beiler points out that an air tank is also needed. He explains that many of his customers in the Amish community use 500 to 1,000-gal. propane tanks.

"They like the large tanks so they don't have to start their compressor all the time," he says. "The tanks need to be equipped with safety valves to prevent over-pressurizing. They can also be set up with an automatic stop."

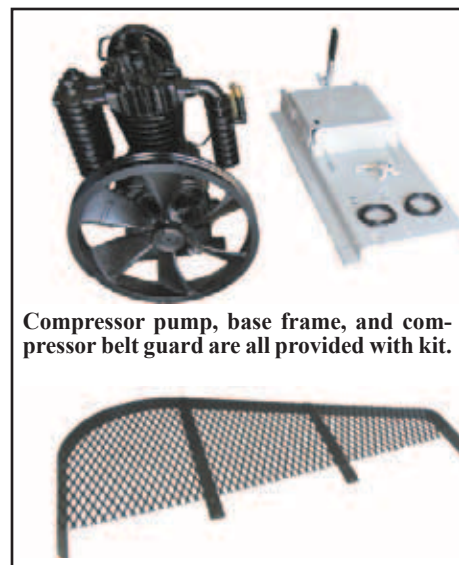
Beiler prices the complete compressor at \$1,695 with an 11 hp motor and rope start. He notes that it also can be set up to run on propane. Those who have a motor can order the frame for \$395, the belt guard for \$125 and the air compressor for \$595.

Beiler says the compressor is imported from China. However, the exporter owns the factory. "He makes a quality product as he is responsible for quality control," says Beiler. "We also can supply an American-made compressor."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Power Systems & Supply, 10381 South



Beiler air compressor comes complete or you can build your own.



Compressor pump, base frame, and compressor belt guard are all provided with kit.

800 West, Waveland, Ind. 47989 (ph 765 435-3731).