

Tips for Selecting Show Pigs for the 2009 Asotin County Fair

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The **2009 Asotin County Fair** swine weight limits are 220-280 pounds (as of 10/13/2008). The maximum weight at the mandatory first weigh-in on January 24, 2009 is 125 pounds.

The following information is provided to help youth, leaders and parents select a quality youth market hog project that will meet or exceed the accepted standards of the swine industry.

Asotin County Fair 4-H/FFA Market Hog Data

Here is some data for 2005 through 2008 for hogs weighed in on Thursday (weigh-in day) at the Asotin County Fair. The data includes all 4-H and FFA hogs weighed in; including those projects that were under the 220 pound minimum, and those over the 280 maximum weight limits.

Year	No. of hogs	Average Starting weight (the 4 th Saturday in January)	Average Final weight (Thursday at the Fair)	Average Daily Gain
2005	149	89 lbs.	245 lbs.	1.73 lbs/day
2006	170	90 lbs.	253 lbs.	1.82 lbs/day
2007	158	98 lbs.	256 lbs.	1.72 lbs/day
2008	163	94 lbs.	254 lbs.	1.77 lbs/day

10th Rib Backfat-

From 2003 to 2005 backfat measurements taken on 4-H/FFA swine processed at Heights Meat Market in Clarkston averaged .57, .59 and .53 of an inch. The National Pork Board recommends a minimum of .60 tenths of an inch of fat on market hogs. In general, show pigs have a tendency of being much leaner (too lean) compared to industry standards. Every effort will be made to select an official swine judge that is aware of the .60 tenths of an inch backfat guideline for 4-H and FFA market hogs.

Recommended Age and Weight When Selecting Show Pigs

Selecting show pigs of the correct age and weight is the first step in raising a successful youth swine project. In general, a pig that is 5 ½ to 6 months of age is the ideal age for most 4-H members. With the 2009 Asotin County Fair final weigh-in date on Thursday, April 23 this coming year, pigs ideally would be born the last two weeks in October and the first week in November of 2007. Pigs that are 5 ½ to 6 months of age should easily make a target weight of 250-260 pounds at fair time if healthy and fed properly. Based on the past performance of fair show pigs, market swine should also average 1.70 to 1.80 pounds per day during the last 90-days that they are on feed.

- Ideally pigs should weigh between 80 and 110 pounds at the first weigh-in in January (4th Saturday of the month). Pigs less than 80 pounds may have a difficult time making the minimum 230 pound weight limit. Pigs over 110 pounds at the first weigh-in will likely have to be limited fed and “held back” the last 30 days before the fair.
- On average, a pig will gain between 1.0 and 1.5 pounds per day when they weigh 50-125 pounds. Pigs over 125 pounds will gain between 1.5 and 2.0 pounds per day. Some pigs will gain over 2.0 pounds per day the last 90 days that they are on feed.



Factors Causing Poor Weight Gains in 4-H Swine Projects

There are several factors that can cause poor weight gains in Asotin County Fair 4-H Swine Projects:

- ***Cold temperatures and the effects of wind, rain and snow.*** The optimum temperature in the pig’s pen (approximately 12 inches above the ground/floor) for 50-130 pound pigs is 60 to 75 degrees F. Young show pigs are often raised in ideal conditions the first 2 months of their lives and then brought home to cooler, damper conditions. Young pigs need lots of straw & possibly even heat lamps the first few weeks after purchase in order for their pens to remain warm.
- ***Feed that is not nutritionally balanced for protein and amino acids (particularly Lysine).*** If the protein level is too low, your show pig will not maximize its potential to gain. Talk to your feed dealer if you ever have any questions about the nutrient content of your feed.
- ***Worms and other parasites.*** Show pigs should be wormed at the time that they are purchased, and then again 4-6 weeks before the fair. There are several excellent wormers available, including some that have short or no withdrawal times. Whip worms may be a problem for some youth swine exhibitors, particularly those with dirt pens in the same area each year.
- ***Diseases and illness.*** There are several excellent veterinarians in our area that can help you with your health management program. As a buyer, ask the pig producer if your swine project has received all of its vaccinations before it leaves their place.
- ***Water.*** Clean, unfrozen water should be available at all times.

Final Thoughts...

Ask other 4-H leaders, parents, FFA advisors, County Extension Educators, and others knowledgeable about swine projects when you have questions or need a little guidance. Talk to the breeders that supply your 4-H club with their show pigs and make sure that they are aware of our fair dates and weight limits. Make sure that they are breeding their sows and gilts to farrow at the correct time based on your needs as a swine exhibitor.