

Swine Judges Expectations

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Market Classes

To me, when evaluating market hogs, the end meat product needs to be prioritized. I believe that when you look at my winners you'll see these consistent traits:

- Wide based and carry this width up
- Big topped, with a lot of rib shape carrying width and expression from blade to hip
- Carry .7-.9" of backfat, enough to ensure a quality meat product without getting wasty
- Have a lot of volume, being deepest through the center portion of their body
- Level in their make and design, they should have a straight topline and be level in the hip
- Sound moving, being free off both ends
- Stout made and big footed with a lot of dimension of bone

Showmanship

For swine showmanship it is important that the showman realize this is still about their animal and presenting their market hog in a way that makes their animal look the best it possibly can. This starts at home.

Keys for preparing before the show:

- Keep your market hog and its pen clean at home. Hogs do not need to be bathed daily but a few times before the show will save a lot of extra work for you at the show.
- I prefer hogs to be clipped, no less than a 1/2 inch on the body (or to the minimum length set by the fair or show you are attending) and to be clipped to the skin on ears and tails (leaving a small switch on undocked tails). Note: The Asotin County Fair requires Market Swine to have at least 1/2 inch of hair when clipped.
- Work with your hog before you get to the show, with the driving tool you will be using at the show (whip, pipe, etc.). Daily is ideal but not always possible. However, the more they are worked with prior the show, the better your animal will perform at the show
- Although I believe any driving tool is acceptable, make sure whatever you choose is easy for you to handle. I usually prefer whips for younger exhibitors as pipes and canes can be cumbersome for small showmen.

If you do the work at home, your job in the ring on show day will be much easier. Although I could probably write a small book on every possible scenario in the show ring, I will touch on the basics that sort classes for me.

- You should have control of your animal, you should be driving your animal around the ring, not the other way around
- Your animal should be clean on show day. Washed well before entering the ring. Have a rag and brush to take care of any messes that may occur while you are in the ring
- Your driving tool should be your primary means of moving your hogs but should not be over used. If your hog is doing what it should be, then whip use is minimal. Overuse is distracting and takes attention away from your hog.
- Keep your hog in front of the judge. As I move around the ring I like to see a showman make adjustments so their
- Eye contact is essential. Showman should be aware of what their animal is doing but still know where the judge is in the ring.
- Hogs should be kept moving and off the edge of the ring. Make sure to turn your hog before it gets to the rail.
- I may ask questions, especially in a tough class where all the basics are being done right. My questions will deal with topics such as feeding and nutrition, meat processing, and basic terminology. Questions will be age appropriate and give me a good understanding of exhibitors knowledge of the swine industry as a whole