

Judges Expectations

Lisa Baser, 2023 Asotin County Fair Swine Judge

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 present 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 to the best of your ability. 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. Brushing with a rice root brush often builds skin toughness and improves direction of hair growth.
- Bodies of hog should be clipped to clean up any long hairs. No hog should be clipped to less than ½ inch (my preference and Asotin County Fair requirement). Head and neck should be clipped shorter, blending from the shoulder forward. Ears and tails should be cleaned up so that hairs are of equal length.
- 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.

Success in the show ring begins at home. By doing the work there, you'll have a much better experience at the fair. Each judge will have different priorities in the showing, the ones that are most important to me are:

- 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. If additional help is needed, I prefer a tap of the brush versus using your hand or knee to maneuver your animal.
- Work to keep your animal on the move and its head up at a comfortable, natural level. This will make your animal look their best and provide you with the most control. Your driving implement should be used to turn your animal by tapping the jowl/cheek area and to drive your animal forward by tapping the rear flank. Avoid hitting in the hock area.
- Keep your hog in front of the judge. As I move around the ring I like to see a showman make adjustments so I get all views of their animal and that the animal is always in between the judge and the exhibitor.
- Eye contact is essential. Showmen 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