

Lincoln/East Adams County Weekly 4-H Article



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Article V

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Swine Showmanship (Part II)

Preparation **prior** to the show is critical for your expected success **at** the show. The following are guidelines to follow: 1) One week prior to the show, 2) Leaving for the show, 3) At the fairgrounds, 4) Show morning, and 5) In the show ring.

One week before the show

- If your pig is on a self-feeder, monitor its appearance closely. Some pigs may look more attractive if you begin to hand feed instead of remaining on the full feed.
- Make sure your pig is bedded with wood shavings or clean bedding. This will promote good condition of the skin and hair. Avoid keeping the pig in a muddy pen prior to the show.
- Be sure that your pig is used to eating and drinking out of the feed pan that you will use at the show.
- Wash your pig two to three times during this week with a mild soap. Rinse your pig and brush dry. Apply a light coat of baby or mineral oil to the hair coat. This will soften the hair, shine the skin, and will help develop a fresher appearance. Only apply oil in the evening when it is cool.
- Know all of the policies, requirements, and rules at your show.
- Start packing the show box for the show.

You should pack the following supplies before you leave:

- Bedding
 - Soap and scrub brush
 - Health paper
 - Towels
 - Spray bottle for water
 - Driving tool and small pocket brush
 - Short hose
 - Water pan, feed pan and plenty of feed
 - Hand cleaner
 - Hammer, nails, wire, and pliers
 - Electrolytes
 - Safety pins for exhibitor back number
- If you want to clip your pig, now is your last chance and this should generally be done 1 or 2 days prior to leaving for the show.

Leaving for the show

- Feed your pig only $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of the normal daily ration. This will help your pig travel more comfortably. To help keep your pig hydrated, you may want to begin using electrolytes in the water. You can use electrolytes in the water for the remainder of the time at the show as well.
- When loading your pigs for the show, do not overcrowd and keep them comfortable. It is recommended you practice loading your pigs a couple times prior to loading for the show. This will allow the pigs to know the routine and reduce stress for the pigs and you!



At the fairgrounds

- Calmly move your pig to the correct pen after you unload.
- Be sure that there is plenty of clean dry bedding for your pig at all times.
- Give your pig a drink of fresh water. Also, give your pig about ¼ of a regular feeding. This can help calm and relax them.
- Weigh your pig in at its natural weight.
- After weighing in, be careful not to full feed your pig immediately. This can cause digestive upset due to the changes in feeding amounts. Giving many smaller amounts can help lower the chance of them going off feed.
- Feed your pig to give them a natural look.
- Always provide all the water they want to drink. If you restrict water consumption, you may cause your pig to go stale in a matter of a few hours.
- That evening when the weather cools, exercise your pig to help its joints stay loose and flexible. However, avoid going in and out of the same gate in the show ring, as your pig will learn more quickly the location to leave the show ring and go back to the pen, which may create problems on show day.

Show morning

- Feed and water your pig the first thing in the morning when you arrive at the fairgrounds. Your pig will be hungry, so get it fed!
- Give enough feed and water to get a proper fill to make your pig look its best. Never overfeed first thing in the morning, as your pig will get a big belly.

Time to show!

When you enter the show ring, stay calm. Once your animal is let out of the gate, drive your animal slowly across the ring so that the judge gets a good view of the side of your animal. If your pig takes off running do not run but rather walk fast to catch up with them. Keep your animal off of the fence and/or rail at all times and wait for the rest of the hogs and exhibitors to get into the ring before you cross the path of the entrance gate and the judge. This prevents your pig from running out of the show ring and allows other exhibitors to bring their pigs into the show ring without your pig interfering.

Once all animals and exhibitors are in the ring, now is the proper time to slowly walk your animal toward the judge for a proper view (front, rear and side view).

It is important to keep eye contact with the judge and know where they are in the ring at all times. Do not crowd the judge; instead, leave approximately 10 to 15 feet in between your animal and the judge. Try to keep your animal in the center of the ring and off the fence and out of corners. Never hit your animal hard with your driving tool, this is unprofessional and discouraged in showmanship.

Penning Your Animal

If the judge asks you to pen your animal, direct and drive your hog toward the pens. Do not open a pen until your animal is near the gate. If your animal moves away from the pen close the gate so that other exhibitor's animals do not accidentally go into the pen. Once you get your animal in the pen, do not stop showing. Often, judges watch the exhibitors in the penning area. It is good practice to brush your animal once in the pen to get off any excess dirt that may have gotten on the animal while walking in the ring. Do not let your animal lay down in the pen if at all possible. Once the judge asks you to come out of the pen make sure to close the gate behind you.



Questions

A large portion of showmanship to some judges is how much the exhibitor knows about their project. During showmanship a judge may choose to ask each exhibitor a question. It is important to know about the daily care of your project as well as talk to your parents and/or extension agents about possible questions. Some of these may include:

- What is the breed of your animal? Do you know where that breed originated?
- What are positive and negative traits of your animal?
- What is the weight of your animal?
- How much do you feed your animal?
- What ingredients are in a pig feed?
- How much does the feed cost?
- What is the current market price for a market pig?
- What is the gestation length of a breeding gilt?

Above all, showmanship is enjoying your youth swine project and having pride for all your hard work showcased while in the ring. While it is important to be serious and competitive when showing your pig, do not forget to have a good time. Most swine judges can tell whether you have a competitive spirit and are doing a professional job of presenting your hog.

Reference cited: Swine Showmanship Guide-The Judging Connection.com

http://www.thejudgingconnection.com/pdfs/Basic_Swine_Showmanship.pdf

Additional resources related to 4-H Swine Projects:

<https://pubs.wsu.edu/ListItems.aspx?Keyword=Swine>

<http://www.4-hmall.org/Category/swine.aspx>

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