SHOW PIG SELECTION

Darrell Rothlisberger
Rich County Agent
The Ideal Show Pig

smooth, clean shoulder

clean turn of top uniform, level top

long, thick level rump

long, muscular deep ham

high tail setting

long, muscular deep ham

muscular stifle

correct set of hocks

cushion to pasterns

deep ribbed

length between forelegs

correct set of pasterns

firm trim jowl deep, wide chest floor heavy boned

head & ear

width between front legs

large framed well balanced

clean turn of top

muscular loin thick upper ham full & deep through center & lower portion of ham

long, muscular ham tying deep into stifle

rugged bone firm at base of ham

legs set wide apart
Parts of the Pig

1. Snout
2. Face
3. Ear
4. Neck
5. Shoulder
6. Back
7. Loin
8. Rump
9. Tail
10. Ham
11. Hock
12. Dew claw
13. Toe
14. Sheath (Barrows & Boars)
15. Teats
16. Belly
17. Side
18. Elbow
19. Knee
20. Cannon bone
21. Pastern
22. Jowl
23. Mouth
24. Rib
25. Flank
26. Stifle
27. Elbow pocket
WHY SHOW JUNIOR LIVESTOCK?

The junior livestock program is a unique opportunity to use live animals to develop youth. Youth learn something about agriculture and livestock production and develop an appreciation for the livestock industry, but the main objectives are to teach life skills and help youth become productive citizens. The experience of youth owning and working with animals, being responsible for their care, health, and growth, and exhibiting them in a competitive environment is a tremendous character building process. Junior livestock projects help develop life skills such as: leadership, communication, decision making and problem-solving. Character building, record keeping and the development of personal responsibility are other skills youths can develop as a result of their involvement in the broad range of programs in junior livestock.

SELECTION

There are basic areas that need to be considered when selecting your show pig. They are muscle, structural correctness, capacity, frame and style and balance.

Muscle

There are several indicators of muscle in pigs. The first place to look for muscle is the ham. The widest portion should be through the center of rump and ham. Select a pig that has a bulging forearm.

Well muscled hogs are wide based and large boned.
When viewed from the top look for an hour glass shape to the top. This will be a trim, heavy-muscled hog. It should be long and full in the rump, with the center of the ham being the widest part of the body. The shoulders should be wider than the loin, but not as thick as the ham. The loin will be uniform in width. When the hog walks there should be no evidence of fat over the top of the shoulders and the shoulders should move. Also, there should be no fat behind the shoulders or elbow pocket.

**Structural Correctness**
structural correctness refers to how a pig’s skeleton is put together, more specifically the bone structure. To be sure your pig is structurally correct, pick a pig that moves with ease and smoothness. Pigs should take long strides. They also should have a proper angle to the pasterns and have flex to the joints like the hock, knee and shoulder. These joints should flex and the pig should take a long, flexible, fluid stride. The pasterns should have an angle of 45 degrees and the hock should be at about a 22 degree angle for the best possible movement off the back end. Strong legs are important in market hogs. The bone should be large and the legs should be clean and solid looking.

Proper hind leg structure Poor hind leg structure

**Capacity**
Pigs need to have adequate capacity to allow their internal organs to function properly and efficiently. They need to have a wide chest floor, a good spring of rib, and be deep sided in both the fore and rear flank. Remember that a deep sided hog can still be trim and neat in appearance.
Frame
A moderate framed hog will grow well and have adequate size. Select a long-bodied, tall hog that stands well on its feet and legs. It should be large boned and show a lot of capacity, being boldly sprung at the ribs.

Style and Balance
A hog that has style and balance is one that holds its head up when it walks, and is smooth in its overall appearance. It will be clean in the shoulder blades, jowl and underline. Hogs that are balanced stand wide and tall on straight legs, are uniform in the arch of their back, and their shoulder blades are close together.
Select a trim hog that is free of excess fat. Fat gives the appearance of smoothness and shortness. A trim hog is clean behind the shoulders and down the top. The base of the hams should be firm, at the base of the hams (cut up or v-shaped) with the tail setting high, and the tailhead prominent.

REFERENCES


“Livestock Judging, Members Guide.” New Mexico State University, 200 R-1, R86.

Utah State University is committed to providing an environment free from harassment and other forms of illegal discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age (40 and older), disability, and veteran's status. USU's policy also prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment and academic related practices and decisions.

Utah State University employees and students cannot, because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or veteran's status, refuse to hire; discharge; promote; demote; terminate; discriminate in compensation; or discriminate regarding terms, privileges, or conditions of employment, against any person otherwise qualified. Employees and students also cannot discriminate in the classroom, residence halls, or in on/off campus, USU-sponsored events and activities.

This publication is issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work. Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Noelle Cockett, Vice President for Extension and Agriculture, Utah State University.