

## Chapter 12 Showing Your 4-H Market Hog

Show day at the county and state fairs is your project's "moment of truth." It is at this point that all you've learned, how you've managed, and how well you control your animal are all tested. After spending all that time, energy and money, you certainly want to have your pig relaxed and well groomed before you enter that show ring.

### Fitting and Showing

Proper fitting and grooming of a pig cannot all be done on show day. You need to start working with your pig far enough in advance so that you and your pig can get to know each other and so that the pig will respond to you.

### Before the Show Training

1. Starting at least a month before the swine show, take the animal out daily for a walk and teach it to respond to guidance by a cane or whip. Such exercise also conditions the muscles, improves feet and leg soundness, and firms the finish. This helps your pig to show better.
2. Endeavor to get the animal tame enough so that you can put your hands on it at will. At the same time, do not make a pet of the animal.
3. When driving, cover 100 yards or so. If a show ring is not in use, take the animal inside to accustom it to the environment.
4. When driving your pigs, do not excite or frighten them.
5. Practice showmanship with your parents or a friend, pretending they are the judge.

### Grooming

1. Start brushing the pig daily. Brush from front to rear and slightly downward.
2. Wash the animal about one week before the show. Use a mild soap or detergent. Be sure all the soap is removed so the skin will not be irritated. Also be extra careful not to get any water into the ear canal of the pig.
3. Two or three days before the show, clip the hair on the ears and tail. Clip hair on both the inside and outside of the ear and all of the hair on the tail except the switch (the last two inches). Trim the underline, starting just above the teat line and working down. Also clip long hairs about eyes, nose, and sides of mouth. Clipping is optional. Many judges do not consider this when evaluating showmanship. Clipping the ears, tail, and underline is acceptable. However, clipping hair on the body of the pig is not acceptable.

## Youth Show Issues—Clipping

The art of presentation has driven exhibitors to clip and shave hogs to emphasize leanness and muscling as well as to mask age. However, shorter hair on a carcass presents a challenge for the packing industry. Short hairs cause problems when de-hairing carcasses after scalding; the paddles in a carcass tumbler that are designed to remove hair are unable to grab and pull the hair effectively. In addition, the singe flame used to remove the hair left after tumbling is not effective in removing hair from clipped hog carcasses. The result for the packer is slow line speed and an increased labor requirement to manually skin carcasses. This causes a significant reduction in carcass value, raises carcass inspection issues, and results in lower income potential at the packer level when dealing with clipped hogs.

In addition to the reduction in carcass value and increased labor requirements for processing clipped hogs, the clipping process can result in unnecessary stress for the hog, making the hog susceptible to sunburn, insect bites and other skin irritations.

On the horizon for show exhibitors is the need to balance the presentation of a winning show pig with the production of a carcass that meets packer expectations and consumer demand, rather than the goal of winning a purple ribbon at any cost.

Adapted from "Youth Show Issues" by Ronald O. Bates and Brian Hines, Michigan State University, Moorman's ShowTec Technical Bulletin.

4. Inspect the feet. If they need trimming, trim at least two weeks prior to the show. If you do it one or two days before the show and you happen to get the hooves too short, the pig may be lame.
5. It is also very important that you have all your show equipment ready prior to the day the fair starts.

## Equipment Needed

1. whip or cane
2. small clippers
3. soap
4. water hose
5. stiff brush
6. hurdle
7. small brush to put in your pocket on show day
8. sprayer
9. grain
10. bedding for the pen
11. feed pans and waterer
12. health papers—contact your local veterinarian at least two weeks before the fair. You may be required to have health papers to enter the fairgrounds with your animal. Some fair regulations require testing for pseudorabies.

In transporting your pigs, make their ride as comfortable as possible by using bedding such as wet sand or shavings. For summer hauling, be sure air can circulate to prevent the animal from getting too warm. Do not feed just before you haul your pigs.

## Fair Waterer

A popular method for providing continuous access to water at the county fair is shown. The PVC pipe is attached to side wall or fence. Water is placed in the PVC pipe container and allowed to gravity flow to the attached nipple waterers.

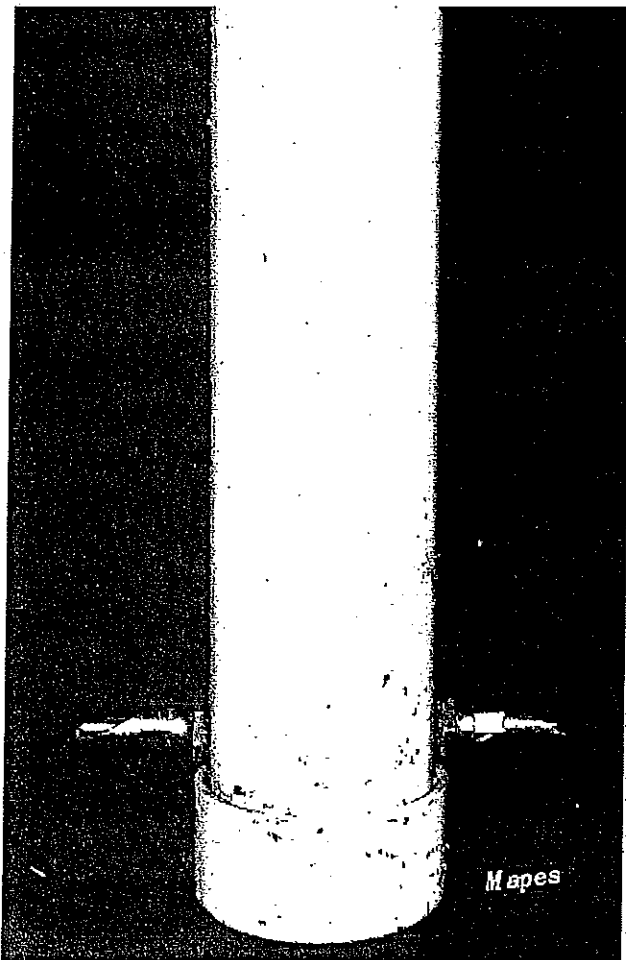


Figure 12.1  
PVC waterer

### Waterer Specifications

- 2 feet tall PVC pipe
- 4–6 inch diameter
- 1/4 inch thick pipe
- Stainless steel nipples (1 or 2)
- PVC cap for bottom

This system allows the market hog more floor space and assures accessible water for the market hogs at all times.

## At the Show

After arrival, water and rest your pig about six hours before feeding.

If the weather is hot, use a fan; if necessary, sprinkle the pigs lightly with water. Bedding used should be either sand or wood shavings. If the weather is cool, or the sun is extremely hot and your barns are open, use a tarp to control ventilation for the pigs' optimal comfort.

## Preparations Immediately before the Show

Feed your pigs lightly (half feed or less) at least two hours before the show. A limited feeding will keep your pig active and alert. Proper "fill", or the right amount of water and feed eaten, is an important part of fitting and showing.

Groom your pigs. If the weather is hot, fill your sprayer with water and heavily mist your pig; then brush it down, giving it a more even appearance.

Do not use oil or powder on your pig. The oil will hold in body heat and stress your pig. Powder will rub off on competitors, their pigs and even yourself.

Your animal should be thoroughly clean. Wash your pig the day before or the morning of the show. This should be done early, as other exhibitors may want to use the wash rack.

When the pig is ready, get yourself ready. Wear clean and neat clothing in the show ring.

Know your pig and the important information about it, including farrowing date, weight, and number of teats on both sides (if a gilt).

Just before going into the show ring, give your pig a small drink of water. If you give it too much water, your pig will be too big in the stomach area and will not show well.

Be ready to leave for the show ring as soon as the class is called.

## Showing

- Have a small brush in your back pocket, so that if your pig lies down or gets dirty in some way you will be prepared to brush him off.
- Drive the pig as calmly as possible to the show ring. Keep calm, avoid rushing, be alert, and try to enter the ring when there is no confusion at the gate.
- Keep your pig clear of other animals in the ring. Take all caution to prevent fighting between animals.
- After entering the ring, drive the pig to the back side of the arena and make every effort to keep the pig from approaching the gate through which he entered. Try to stay away from corners and groups of pigs.
- Alertness in the ring is extremely important. Keep one eye on the judge and one eye on your animal at all times.
- Your posture should be that of slightly crouching over with cane or whip close to animal, but avoid overaggressiveness and overshadowing.
- Always keep the animals between yourself and the judge.

- Do not stroll too far from the judge, but at the same time avoid running your hog over him. The best show is made 15–20 feet from the judge. The showman should attempt to show the best view of the pig whenever possible.
- When the judge approaches for close inspection, assist him by stopping your pig from the front end with your cane or whip.

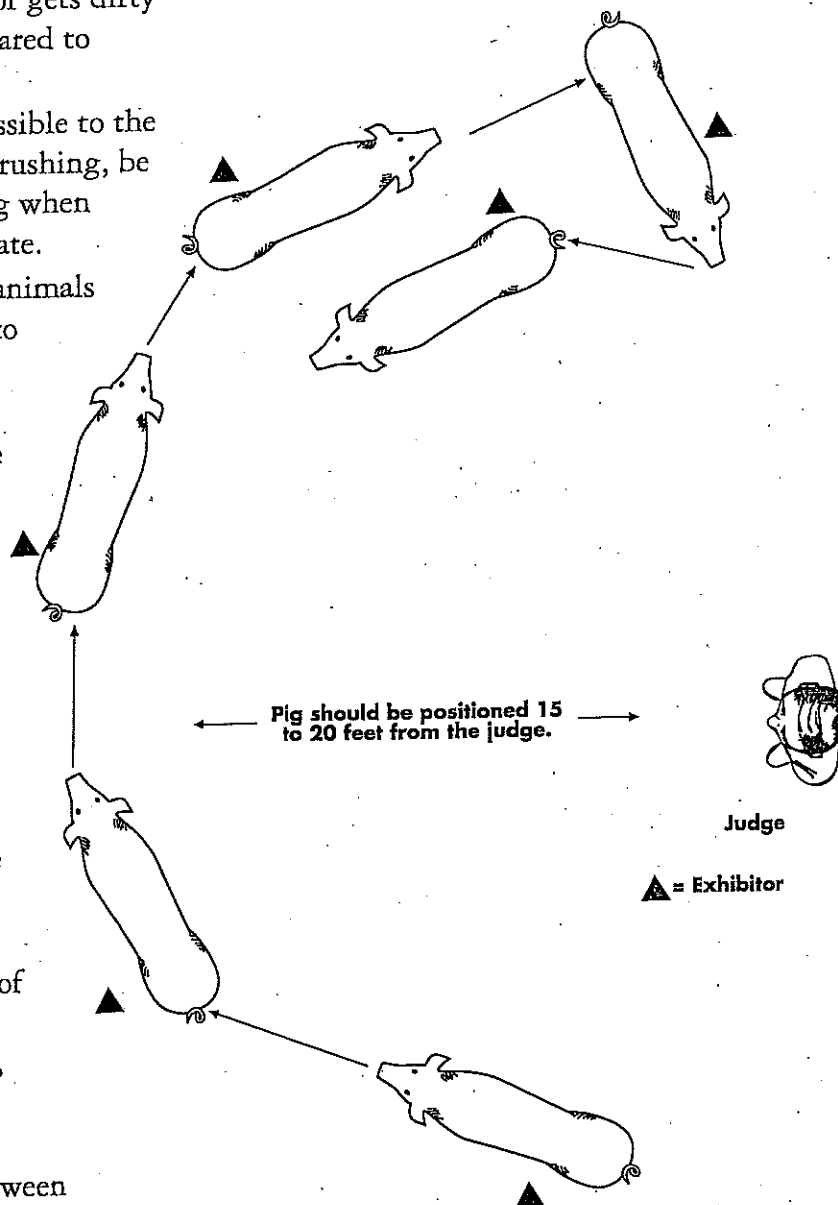
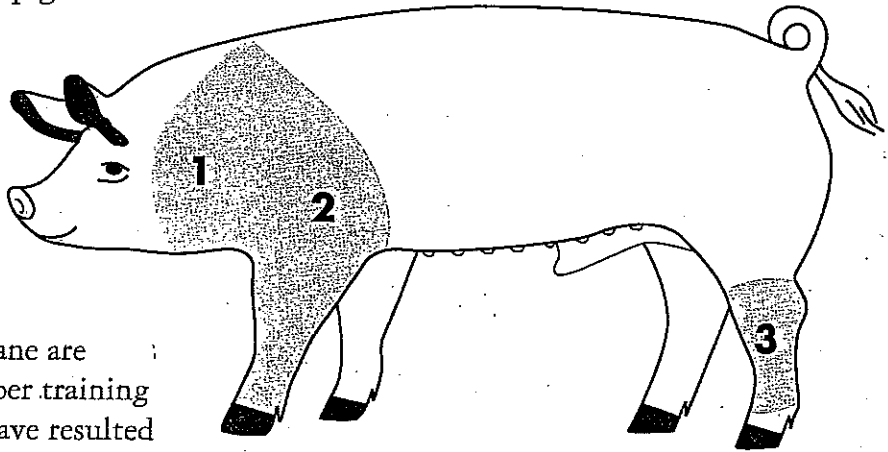


Figure 12.2  
Show ring

- Stay close to and drive the pig from the neck and shoulder area by tapping lightly with the cane or whip. Never tap on the back or rump, as this may cause the tail to droop, and may also bruise muscle tissue.



- Acceptable areas to “Tap” a pig with show whip or cane are shown in figure 12-3. Proper training prior to the show should have resulted in the pig learning to move and turn by merely seeing the cane or whip. Pigs are one of the most intelligent domesticated animals and learn very quickly to respond to visual placement of the cane or whip. However, if your pig does need to be tapped in order to respond, these are a few areas on the pig that are acceptable.
- Switching hands is preferred if you use them at the same ability.

Figure 12.3

Acceptable areas for “tapping pig”

1. Jowl and neck region
2. Shoulder and front leg region
3. Rear hock region (be sure it is a light tap in this region).

### “Bad” Places to Tap Pig

Area on pig

Ham

Why undesirable

- Is a “high-priced” cut area. Could have a potential bruise area that would need to be cut out of the carcass.
- Is not good to get in the habit of hitting an animal in a “high-priced” cut area.
- If you hit a pig in the ham, the pig will usually tuck-in his ham and arch his top. This makes the pig look undesirable or not at its best). In the show ring the animal will not look its best if you tap the ham.

Loin

- Is a “high-priced” cut area. Could have a potential bruise area that would need to be cut out of the carcass.
- Is not good to get in the habit of hitting an animal in a “high-priced” cut area.

- When you want the pig to move to the left, you should be on the right side of the pig. The pig will then turn away from you and the cane or whip.
- Do not be rough with your animal at any time—do not, for instance, strike it sharply with a whip or hit it on the end of the nose with a cane.
- There is much satisfaction in exhibiting winners, of course, but one should always be a good sportsman. Above all, learn from your experiences, whether you win or not.

## Show Ring Ethics

One of the most visible components of 4-H is livestock shows. Much of the public's contact with 4-H is at the county fair where show ring events draw large crowds. What the audience sees reflects on the total 4-H program and the entire livestock industry. How are you contributing to that image?

The desire to win at "any cost" has tarnished the record of 4-H members personally and livestock shows in general. Why have YOU chosen to show an animal? What motivates some to act dishonestly in the show ring?

Competition can be a positive tool to help develop important skills in your life if you keep it in perspective. Many 4-H alumni who showed animals during their 4-H years attribute part of their success in their careers to the diverse skills gained as a 4-H member. Decision making skills and critical thinking techniques are used to select your animal and choose a feeding program. Answering the judge's questions in a confident manner helps you gain poise which is beneficial in many other situations. Good sportsmanship is a characteristic we all need. Certainly

self-esteem is affected in the show ring by lots of people watching and applauding your performance!

Is your only goal to win or do you want to get more out of it than that? Your ability to think while paying attention to the judge, your animal and other exhibitors is an important skill. Keeping a level head and staying composed will be good practice for other challenges in your life. Many long lasting friendships are developed from showing animals.

Proper training of your animal for the show ring should only include techniques that offer no risk of injury or pain to the animal. Aggressive use of the cane or whip may cause bruises to the muscle tissue which could result in unwanted carcass trim. If a TV camera were present when you are working with your animal, would you do anything differently than you normally do? Putting in many long hours of practice with your animal is the only way to achieve that polished, confident look, with the animal giving complete response to your commands.

The effect on animals from unethical practices can be harmful or even fatal. If your animal goes to slaughter and residues are found in the tissue, the animal will be rejected. How does this reflect on you and the animal industry?

Newspaper articles turn yellow, trophies will break and people forget who won. Your moment in the spotlight with a champion is short lived. Think about what will stay with you after the thrill of "winning" has worn off. What do you hope people will remember you for?

The bottom line is that using unethical techniques to train, feed, or show your animal is wrong. If you see it happening, don't turn your back. Tell a committee member or show official.

## Tips for Exhibiting at the County Fair

1. Hogs that have not been penned together at home should not be penned together at the county or state fair.
2. A county or state fair offers several activities that can distract the exhibitor from caring for their swine project. Keep your project an important focal point.
3. Keep pens and aiseways clean. The county fair may be the first or only impression many people have of 4-H and FFA projects or agriculture. Be sure that:
  - pens are clean
  - animals are clean
  - animals are fed regularly
  - animals are watered frequently
  - old or uneaten feed is cleaned out before new feed is added. Usually animals eat less away from home.
  - someone is watching for signs of heat stress in animals (i.e., heavy breathing, panting, etc.)
4. Temperature control is a great concern! If hogs are really hot, do the following:
  - a) Sprinkle cool water on their shoulders, neck, head and nose.
  - b) Take hog to wash rack (if wash pens are fairly close), rinse in cool water and return to clean, dry pen. (Wet pens can add to the heat stress of most hogs). CAUTION: Cold water put on the entire body of an extremely hot pig could cause shock. Be sure to "cool off" the head, neck, and shoulders before putting cold water on the hog's back.
  - c) Water hogs at least 4-5 times a day on extremely hot days. Do not leave water in pens because hogs will spill the water, and make a mess of their pen.
5. Be a good neighbor. Be careful not to spill water in pen next to your own.



6. Start early enough to prepare animals for the show so that you will not be in a hurry and cause your animal to become excited. An excited exhibitor with an excited animal has a greater chance of injuring themselves, their animal, or a fair visitor.

7. Represent agriculture. You and your project will represent to people who are not well acquainted with agriculture where their food originates. When visitors are traveling through your barn be helpful in answering their questions about pork production.



## How to Deal with Questions at the Fair

### From Interested, Concerned Citizens

- Take them seriously.
- Answer their questions honestly and sincerely.
- Avoid industry jargon and buzz words.
- Be a good listener.

### From Activists, Protestors

- Ignore them.
- Do not confront or debate them.
- If they persist, report them to your superiors.

### From the Media

- Contact a superior to determine if you should do the interview.
- Confirm your facts.
- Plan your talking points.
- Avoid industry jargon and buzz words.
- If you don't know, say so.

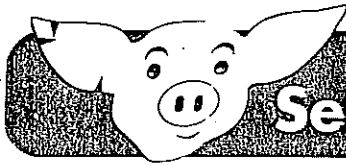
### Basic Messages to Communicate to Everyone

- I believe in the humane and responsible care of all animals.
- Meat and dairy products are part of an overall healthy diet as recommended by leading health authorities.
- Americans enjoy the safest food supply in the world.

### Ten Tips to Help in Dealing with the Media

1. Confirm your facts before you talk to the media.
2. Plan your talking points. Make them early and often.
3. Anticipate opposing points of view.
4. Be brief in your response.
5. Be honest. Always tell the truth.
6. Speak in a language everyone understands. Avoid jargon and buzz words.
7. Smile. Smile. Smile.
8. If an untrue statement is made, refute it immediately and politely.
9. Beware of hypothetical, either/or, and ranked questions.
10. Nothing is "off the record."





## Chapter 13

# Selling the Project Animal

A Junior Market Livestock Sale is held in conjunction with most county fairs so that 4-H members can sell their finished market animals. (This, of course, is another "moment of truth" for all your project work.) The sale management may be under the Cooperative Extension Service, FFA organization or Senior Fair Board.

Become acquainted with the rules and procedures and cooperate with those in charge of the auction. There will be weighing and preliminary requirements to meet, ear-tagging, sale order placement, and so on. Pay attention to announcements that come from the show manager and be prepared to enter the sale ring at your appointed time. Be prompt and have the pig clean and groomed as you did for the show.

When you enter the sale ring, circle your pig so all may see it. Do this so that you are in the center and the pig is to the outside. Your time in the ring may be as short as a minute or as long as 10–15 minutes. Whatever the time, always be alert and cheerful.

Also, there is usually considerable promotion, and many adults and representatives of the business community offer premium prices as a means of rewarding the 4-H member for his/her extra effort. It is important that 4-H members make contact with these buyers prior to the sale so that they know their support is appreciated. This small amount of effort before the sale is a matter of courtesy, and by it, you may in turn be rewarded by being offered a greater amount at the sale. After the sale, regardless of the amount you received, write to the buyers and thank them for their patronage.

## Writing a Thank You Note

August 31, 20XX

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Jones,

Hello, my name is Andrea Smith and I was writing to thank you for buying my pig at the 20XX Clinton County Jr. Fair. This was my first year to show at the fair, and you have helped make it a wonderful experience.

I have put all of my money into a savings account, which I plan to use towards my future.

I am looking forward to taking another market hog project next year. I have learned a lot while taking this project. Mostly I learned responsibility and how to take care of my pig every day.

Thank you for supporting the 20XX Clinton County Jr. Fair. You have helped make it a successful year and I hope you will continue your support.

Sincerely,

Andrea Smith