



show Pig Stress!

Celina Johnson
Colorado State University

Summary of
National
Market Hog
Symposium

Held in Stillwater, OK
December 2002

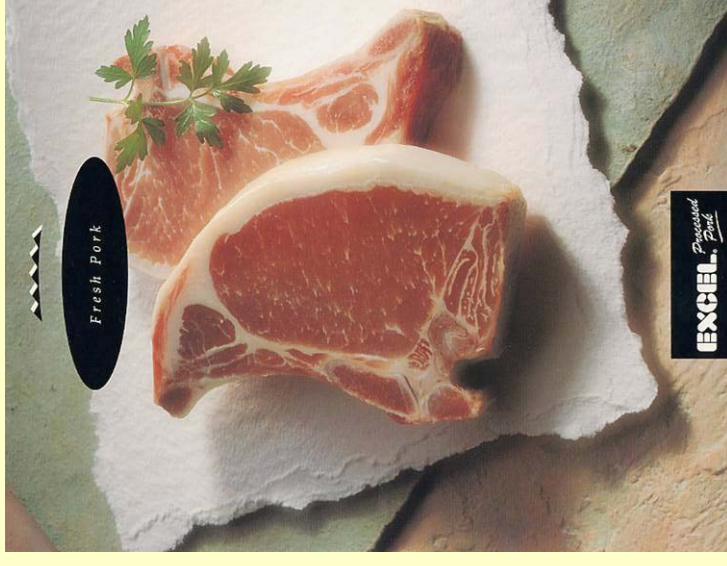
What are some problems that show managers face?

- **PQA**
- **Feel the need to teach exhibitors and advisors**
- **Shows must maintain product quality**
- **Lead by example!**
- **Protestors – PETA, etc.**



What are some problems that show managers face?

- Limited number of packers to bid on show pigs
- Clipping pigs
- High % mortality
- High PSE in top end of live placing



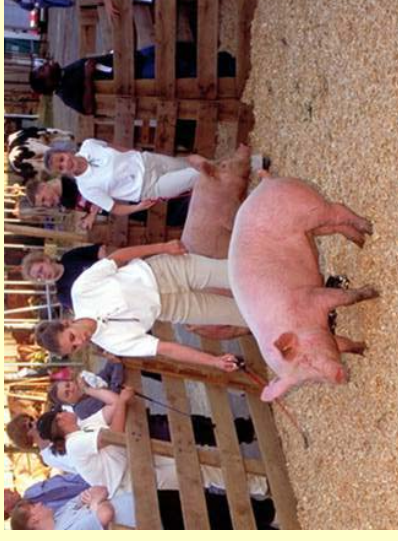
What are some problems that show managers face?

- Show pigs too lean? Leads to stress?
- Need to have product fit the consumer needs
- Potentially stress gene testing



What are some problems that show managers face?

- **Mandatory PQA**
- **No clipping (being considered)**
- **Mandatory water in pens (being considered)**
- **Disposal fee for getting rid of pigs???**
- **Non terminal shows – eliminate carcass contests???**



What causes stress in show pigs?

- **Genetics**
- **Extreme muscling/leaness**
- **Feed additives used improperly**
- **Management practices (like water removal)**
- **Loading and transportation**
- **Handling prior to harvest**



How common is the stress gene?

- Commercial production: < 10%
- Increased number in show pigs
- 296 barrows tested for stress gene from San Antonio and Houston (over 3 years)
- 49% normal, 45% carriers, 6% stress

Factors affecting stress

- **Extreme muscling/leaness**
 - Packers may be discounting ultra lean (want no less than 0.6” backfat)



- **Feed additives**
 - Alter how the animal uses nutrients
 - May change how pigs handle stress



Factors affecting stress

- **Management**
 - Restricted intake of food and/or water
 - Pigs are pampered at home, then come to the show and are treated differently
 - Comingling with other animals



What can YOU do to reduce your pigs stress?

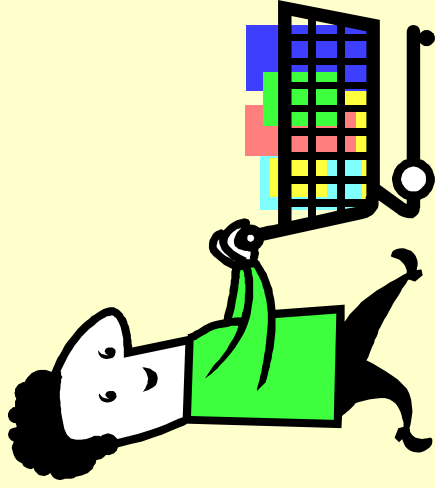
- **Expose animal to a variety of situations before the show**
 - **Even practice loading/unloading**
- **Manage your pigs weight early, avoid holding an animal by planning early!**

What can YOU do to reduce your pigs stress?

- **Handle calmly in the cool part of the day**
- **NEVER RESTRICT WATER**
- **Care for your animal until it leaves the grounds**

Who is your customer?

- The **PACKER** who buys your animal at the show!
- Don't forget the packer's customer as well – the **CONSUMER**!



What does your customer want?

- **The packers ideal market hog:**
 - **No growth hormone**
 - **No Paylean**
 - **270 to 280 lbs**
 - **All white or no clipping (anything to make dehairing easier)**
 - **No downers (stressed animals that can't make it to the harvest facility)**

What does your customer want?

- **The packers ideal market hog:**
 - **No less than 0.6” backfat**
 - **Minimum of 54% lean**
 - **7-8 inch loin eye area**
 - **Stress free**
 - **NOT DEHYDRATED!**

Take Home Message...

If we want to keep youth pig shows around, may need to consider changing some of the currently accepted practices

Questions?