

# *So you want to show a champion...*

Gallia County Swine Clinic  
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# Fitting a Champion



- **Select a pig that has the genetic potential to be good.**
- **Siblings/previous litter**
- **Study soundness and structure... Review poster.**



# Fitting a Champion

- Getting started – Choosing the right size pig for your fair.
  - Sale date – April 15<sup>th</sup>
  - Pig weight – 80 pounds
  - Show date – August 3<sup>rd</sup>
  - Desired show wt. – 255 pounds
  - Weight gain --- 175 pounds
  - Days on feed – 109 days
  - Average daily gain – 1.60 pounds per day

# Full Feed All The Way



# Housing Facilities

- Try to support thermal comfort zones.
- Many flooring systems and bedding are acceptable, but avoid total sand lots and wooden slat/deck pens.
- Rough, abrasive floors can cause foot and leg damage and are difficult to clean.
- Keep pens clean. White pigs that are allowed to lay in manure will become stained.
- Refer to your Swine Resource Handbook for pen layout.

# After you choose your project and get your pig home.

- Make sure you have a clean, dry pen for your pigs.
- Unlimited clean, fresh water.
- Hand feed for the first week to get an idea how much they are eating...should eat about 2 – 2.5% of body weight per day the first week.
- Determine health status of pigs.
- Worm your pigs within 2 weeks of getting them home.

# Daily Observations

- Waterers – fresh water with easy access
  - The true test .... Would you drink the water??
- Feeders – fresh feed, no urine or manure
- Pig observations:
  - Injuries, cuts
  - Swollen joints, lameness
  - Hair coat, skin
  - Panting
  - Huddling
  - Feed consumption, fecal stools
  - Stomach fill
  - Coughing, sneezing

# What's wrong with this pig?



Watery eyes  
No gut fill  
Questionable soundness

Is this normal?



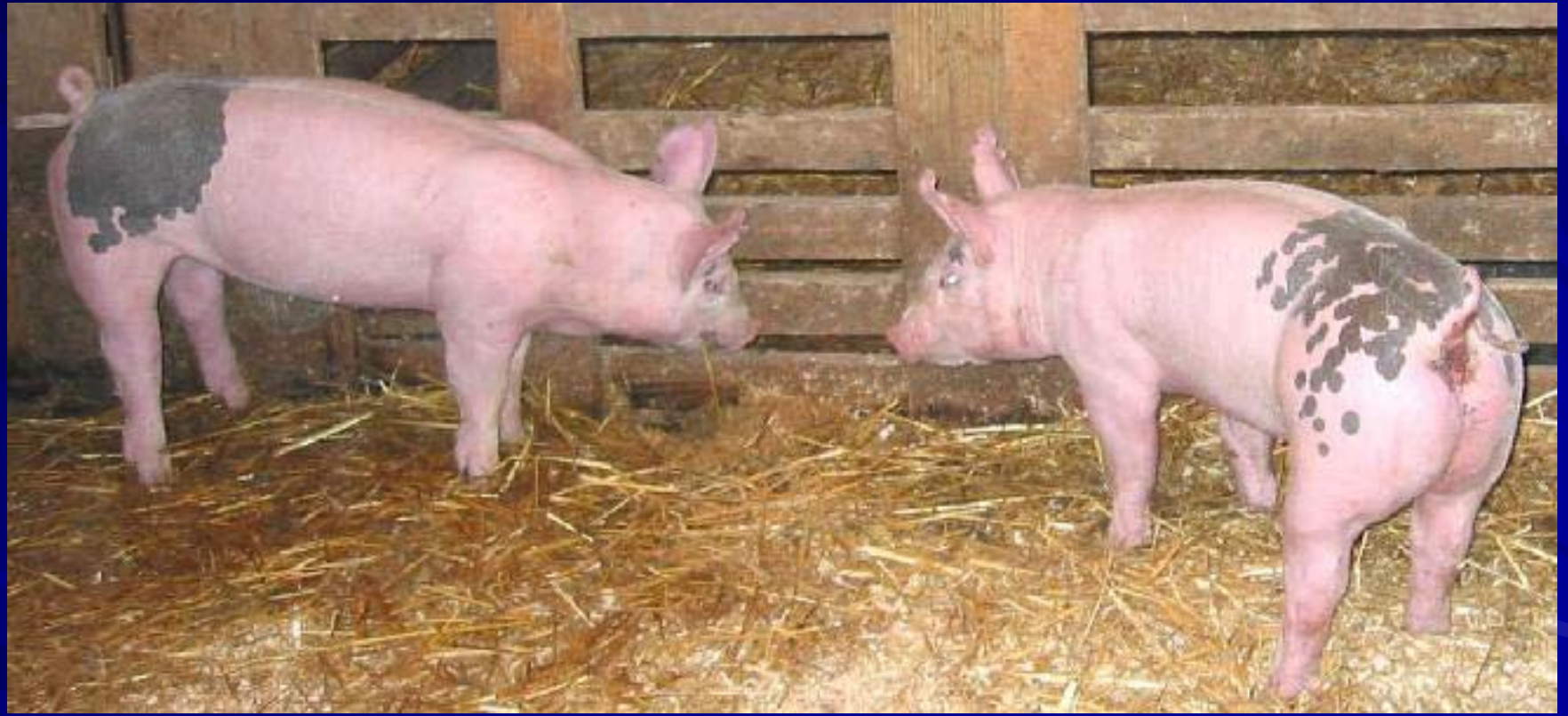
What's wrong with this pig?



Internal and external parasites







# Proper Feeder Adjustment





## ■ Quality of Feeder Space (Lou and Gonyou)

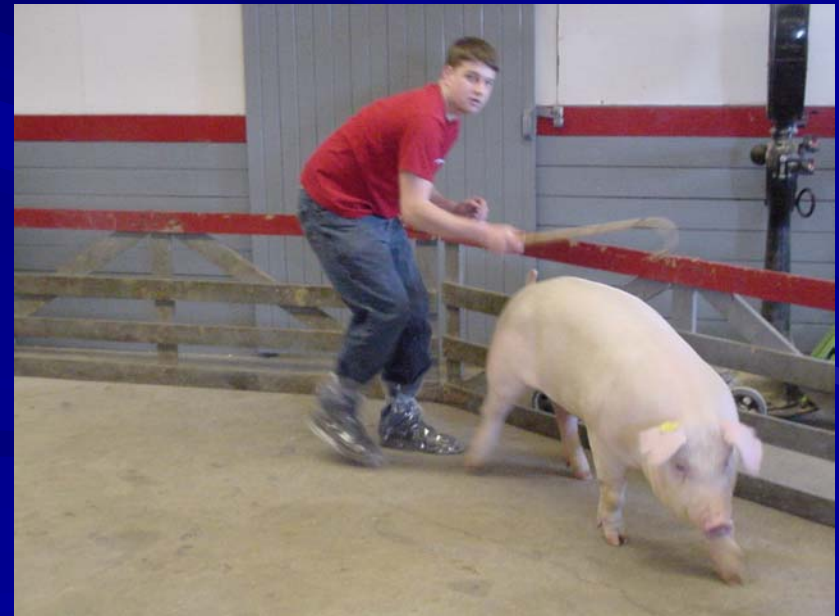
- Depth 8 to 12 in
- Lip Height 4 to 6 in
- Width 12+ in

# Two months before the show:

- Daily brushing
- Handle pigs with care at all times.
- Pigs are generally alert and curious.
- Begin weighing once a week to determine daily gain.
- Begin to exercise pigs outside their pen.
- Pigs may balk and be reluctant to move if they encounter shadows, puddles, a change in flooring type or texture, metal grates, or flapping objects...handle with care.
- Adjust diets as needed by weight of pig.

# Practice, Practice, Practice....

- Get started early.
  - Walk daily, be careful not to overheat.
  - Don't make your pig too much of a pet



# Fitting a Champion

- A friend who has been extremely successful in showmanship says the best way to train your pig to keep his head up is by using a dog shock collar or leash for a month before the fair.
  - Is this legal?



# One month before the show:

- Determine target weight by frame size and lean / fat deposition.
- Continue to weigh weekly, same day of the week and same time of day.
- If needed, adjust diets for proper weight manipulation.

# What if.....

- My pig weighs 260 lbs
- Upper weight limit is 270 lbs
- 14 days until show
- Desired gain about 1 lb/day
- Want to retain muscle and freshness
- Pig's lysine requirement is about 25 grams/day

# Use a Topdress?

- When feed intake is low
  - Lean genetics
  - Immune system activation
  - Environment
- When restricting feed intake
  - Use a combination of a complete feed and a topdress.
  - Pigs should not be fed less than 3 ½ lbs/day.

# Fitting a Champion

- You are using a complete pelleted show feed with paylean at the 18 gram level and decide you can get some extra weight and bloom on your pig by using a topdress product. The topdress product has a 4.5 gram level of Ractopamine.
- Is this OK?

# ***Never Limit Water!!!***

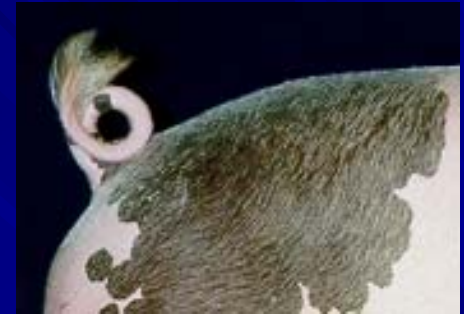
- Only exception might be weigh day.
- Reduced or restricted water intake will slow the growth rate of your animal.
- If there is not enough water available, then muscle mass and muscle definition will be affected.
- Blood is about 70% water.
- Helps regulate body temperature.
- Negative impacts on muscle quality.
- The normal amount of salt in a diet becomes toxic in the absence of water.

# One month before the show:

- Wash pigs with soap, rinse, get them used to the routine.
- Clip pigs? Play by the rules.....
- If you're going to clip, spend time and do a good job.

# Hair Care or Clipping?

- ➔ Older pigs have more hair
- ➔ Follow the rules on clipping!
- ➔ **Do your clipping at home (less stress)**
- ➔ **Proper clipping protocol**
  - Ears – inside and out
  - Tail – leave switch 2 inches long
  - Underline – ½ inch or longer
- ➔ **Body clipping – ½" or longer guide**
- ➔ **The packing industry needs enough hair length to adequately de-hair the carcass at harvest time.**



The Putnam County Fair



# Why Do We Clip Show Pigs?

- Perception of increased muscularity.
- Attempting to create a youthful, fresher appearance.
- Pigs that win are clipped.
- Competition among peers.

# Packer Perspective on Clipping

- Almost all plants use a de-hairing process – food safety issues.
- Packers rely on processing efficiencies, thus any process that slows the line is costly to the packer.
- Short hair is not easily removed in the de-hairing process.
- There has not been a scientific study completed on minimum hair length at packing plants – ½ inch is our best guess at the present time.
- Alternative is to hand trim carcasses.

# Pig's Perspective on Clipping

- Restraint is common when body clipping occurs and results in extra stress on the pig.
- Stress reduces pig performance and may be viewed as inhumane, thus do not clip at the fair.
- Sunburn, insect bites, thermal conditions.

# Implications of Clipping

- Some packers refuse to purchase show pigs.
- Consumers and industry affiliates may view clipping as unfriendly to animals.

# Week of the Fair

- Get the pigs used to how you will feed and water them at the fair.
- Carefully plan loading, transport, and unloading.
  - Avoid mixing strange pigs when you load for the fair.
  - Bed truck or trailer to insure good footing.
- Once you get to the fair, bed your pens, offer the pigs water and then allow the pigs to rest.
- After resting, wash the pigs and give them  $\frac{1}{2}$  their normal feeding. Water...
- Avoid stress on pigs, arrange to have help moving pigs in and out of the wash rack.

# Fitting a Champion

- At the county fair, you observe a club member's parent mixing caffeine free soda and gelatin in the drinking water in an attempt to get the pig to drink and make weight.
- Is this a problem?



# Fitting a Champion

- Your best Yorkshire barrow gets a sunburn on his back in route to the county fair. It is very red and sore and you discover that you have some first aid cream in the show box. The label says pain reliever with Lidocaine.
- Is this OK to use?



# Show Day...

- Get a good nights sleep, then get up early!!
- Wash pigs, keep water out of ears, rinse.
- Clean and re-bed pens.
- Feed and water to accomplish desired gut fill.
- Let pigs rest!!!
- Wash rack before entering ring.
- Water available at ringside.



# Good Luck At The Fair!!!



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Website: <http://putnam.osu.edu/ag/swinenu.htm>