

Swine Helpful Hints

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Showmanship

There are many different aspects to showmanship. First thing you must do is prepare your animal at home before you ever get to fair. A couple of days after you purchase your animal you need to go out to its pen and try and rub on it, scratch it and just make it friendly. At least forty five days out you need to start walking your swine. Walk it a short distance to begin with and gradually start walking it longer and longer. Walk it every day. At home you want to have washed your pig. Washing your pig will make it friendlier and it will stay cleaner. When it comes to clipping your animal you can either slick sheer it 21 to 30 days out or clip it with a guide to a quarter of an inch a week before fair. When you get to fair you need to keep your hog clean. When you're in the show ring you need to keep yourself clean. Keep eye contact with the judge at all times. You must never get between the judge and your animal. Always move slowly throughout the ring even if your pig decides to be a squirt and run away. Keep fifteen feet away from the judge at all times. Never let your hog touch the judge...that's a major deduction. The judge wants to stay un-slided. Keep your pig out of corners, in front of the judge and out of fights with other pigs. During showmanship it is very important to have prepared and you know a couple simple questions the judge might ask.

Breeding

Before you purchase your breeding stock you should install proper living arrangements. There are many different types of fencing you can use to contain swine. You can use woven wire that is about twenty six to thirty four inches high to where most hogs can not get out, but just to be safe I would put a line of barb wire above the woven wire. Although woven wire and barb wire do work nicely I prefer to use hog panels because of their durability and safety. Yes, barb wire and woven wire will work for your project but hog panels were designed specifically for swine and you should stick with them.

Live Cover Versus Artificial Insemination

In live cover you need to have a boar where as in the process called AI you can choose which blood line, boar and whether he's a stress carrier or not by just paying for the semen. When you have a stress carrying sow it's not a good idea to get a stress carrying boar because there's a greater chance of having a stress carrying baby. When you take a stress carrying baby to fair sometimes they will turn colors in sensitive spots, like behind its ears or in its flanks or forearm, and that's not a good thing. Artificial insemination(AI) in swine is not a new technique. However, use of AI in the United States has skyrocketed in the

past decade. It is important to remember that AI is a tool that will work for your operation only if you are



willing to manage and use it properly. One of the disadvantages of AI is that it may require a higher level of management than a boar. For example, there is a greater chance of human error associated with AI than with natural service. When a boar naturally mates a sow, the semen is not subjected to severe changes in environment and is generally deposited into the female more than once during a period that spans the optimal time for fertilization. In contrast, many environmental changes are possible when semen is collected, diluted, transported and then deposited artificially. The inseminations must be done correctly and at the optimal times. The estrus cycle in the pig averages 21 days but can range from 17 to 25 days. The first day of standing heat, when the female is receptive to the male and will stand to be mounted, is referred to as day 0. The two or three days that the female is receptive is termed estrus.

What to bring

- Bedding
- Feed pans and tube waterer
- Feed (Honor, Sunglow, Ringmaster, Show Master, Bar Ale, Moormans, Associated)
- Clippers with guides
- Scale
- Shampoo & conditioner
- Shovel and wheel barrow
- Hose
- Pig show stick
- Spray bottle
- Scrub brush
- Small brush to put in your pocket
- Nozzle
- Baby oil or some sort of spray oil
- Baby wipes
- Rags

Necessary Equipment

When first bringing a show pig home the most important things are food, water, and shelter to be available after the pig's long hard trip to its new home. A pig licker or a dog nipple are very useful for watering swine when hooking it to a hose. You could also use a bucket but it is definitely not as useful. There are many different types of swine food you can use Honor, Moormans, Sunglow, Ringmaster, Show Master, Associated, and Bar Ale, just to name a few. Moormans and Sunglow are of the highest quality. That does not mean that the others are not good. Honor, Associated, Ringmaster, Show Master, and Bar Ale are in the second bracket when dealing with quality. It is important that you feed a show feed and not commercial feed as the nutrient contents are different.

Health

Before you bring a pig home you should make sure it has been vaccinated and wormed. It's important to know when your breeder vaccinated and wormed your animal so you know how long until you should do it again. You should worm your pigs every 4-6 weeks. There are a few different types of wormers I prefer to use depending on how many days away from fair you are. My favorite two are Atgard and Ivermectin. Atgard wormer is as simple as adding it to the hogs food for removal and control of mature and immature whipworms, nodular worms, large roundworms, and thick stomach worms in swine from the littlest piglet to the largest hog in your herd. Atgard wormer has no withdrawal time therefore you can use it as close to fair as you want and you won't have a problem. Ivermectin has the broadest range of swine parasite control available in feed. You can also use this wormer in swine of all ages, and there's a five day withdrawal in the feed through and an eighteen day withdrawal for the injectable. Don't use that one to close to fair or you will have a problem. It's important to know what normal vital signs are. Normal temperature is 101 degrees Fahrenheit, normal heart rate is 60-80 beats per minute, and normal respiration rate is 30-40 breaths per minute. Knowing your animal and his vital signs will help you recognize more quickly if he is ill.

Selection

When picking out your pig you want to look for a pig that has several characteristics: healthy, correct conformation, depth, width, length, and muscularity. You want the swine to be healthy. Make sure the pig you select does not have any respiratory issues, eyes are clear, is not lethargic, does not have a runny nose, cough or is wheezing. The first thing I look for is make sure that the hogs are sound. You want your hog to be free moving in all its joints. I always have the breeder walk the pig towards and away from me. You want the pig to have a level back and to be flexible at the hock and knee. The second thing I look for is skeletal structure; you want the pig to be skeletally correct and big boned. Next you want to choose a pig that is deep and wide. When I say deep I mean the length from the bottom of its belly to its back. You want your pig to be wide through the shoulders and back and have a wide stance. You want your pig to be long from the point of the tail where the dimple is to the nose. Now you look and see how wide its rib cage is. The purpose for having a wide rib cage is then you know that the animal has a good growing capacity. You also want your hog to have muscle definition. You don't want it to have leaping muscles when you first pick it out because as it grows that could cause unsoundness.

CHARACTERISTICS TO LOOK FOR!!!

- Structurally sound
- No bowed
- Flat along its top line
- Legs bend at the hock
- Level shoulders
- Deep
- Long
- Wide rib cage
- Structurally correct in skeletal design
- Muscle definition
- Dimple
- Clear eyes
- Alert, not lethargic
- No runny nose, no coughing or wheezing
- Wide throughout shoulders and back
- Wide stance