

# Tips for a Show Pig **CHAMP**



- C** Check the Details
- H** How to Select Your Pig
- A** Assess/Manage Your Pig
- M** Make Adjustments
- P** Perfect Show Day

## **C** Check the Details

### **Know the Rules**

Rules vary from show to show, so it's important to know and understand the published rules, which often change from year to year. Important things to know:

- Starting weight limit
- Show weight limits
- Date of ownership
- Pig age requirements
- If showing by breeds, are registration papers required?

### **Get Informed**

The Internet, along with show and breed publications, offers information on the latest techniques as well as dates and times for shows, sales, and clinics. Well-respected breeders are usually eager to help. Find out what's new to maximize the look and performance of your pig.

### **Prepare the "Home"**

Before getting your pig:

- Clean and disinfect pen, feeders, and watering equipment.
- Put together a budget. Make sure you have planned for all your expenses, such as: pig, bedding, feed, entry fees, travel, and vet supplies.
- Purchase feed and bedding --- Before getting your pig, not on the way home!
- Be ready to work hard
- Have Fun

## **Merlin Technology for Winning Results**

**Suidae Technology, Inc.**

**131 W. CR 975 N Batesville, IN 47006**

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## H How To Select Your Pig

### Select the Right Size Pig

Whether selecting from your own herd or purchasing from a show pig breeder, your goal is to find the perfect pig. Buy from someone you can trust. Use all available resources such as 4-H leaders, FFA advisors, county agents, and breeders.

What makes the perfect pig? Although it is difficult to predict at 40 to 80 pounds what an animal will be at 260 pounds, there are several key factors to keep in mind:

### Ground Up

Check feet (evenly sized toes) and legs (sound and square on the corners of the body), along with structural correctness. Any problems will only get worse as the pig matures and carries more weight. Select a wide-chested pig with a wide base and plenty of center body.

### Muscle

Check for a grooved top with a crisp loin edge free of fat. The ham should be thick from side to side, long from front to back, and carry down the leg to the hock. Be sure shoulder blades move under the skin when the pig walks. Make sure movement is not restricted because of too much muscling.

### Leanness

Look for a lean pig without signs of fat cover early in its growth period. First signs of fat appear in the jaw/neck area, shoulder area, loin edge, and lower one third of the body.

### Body Condition

Consider showing a softer looking pig by incorporating feeding strategies containing fat. The genetically selected for extremely lean and heavily muscled pig is not winning the shows today. Fat supplements have become very popular with several new products introduced. Products range from 5% to 99% fat content and come in liquid, pellet, and meal forms. Palatability, ease of feeding, and amount of time for a desired response need to be considered when choosing a fat supplement. 99% crude fat supplements produce the desired results

quickly. Lower (<20%) crude fat products do a great job putting on the desired cover, if you have enough time. Palatability may be a problem when using liquid fat.

### **Pig Selection**

Select a pig that is well balanced in all desirable traits without any glaring negative traits. Improve your selection skills by practicing as often as possible. Remember how top-performing pigs looked as babies. Stay current on the latest trends that judges will be selecting for in the future.

**Use the following formula to help determine the size animal needed for your project.**

Example	
Project Start Date	April 24
Show Weigh In Date	August 16
Days To Show	113 days
Desired Show Weight	260#
Estimated Average Daily Gain	1.8# / day
____Days To Show x ____Estimated ADG	113 days x 1.8 = 203.4#
Desired Show Weight –Estimated Weight Gain	260# - 203.4#
Start Weight Of Pig	57#

Keep in mind certain show rules regarding age, weight, and minimum average daily gain requirements.  
It is best to use your own average daily gain number.

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### A Assess/Manage Your Pig

After your show pig arrives at your facility, it is important to give the proper care so it will grow to its full genetic potential. The extra attention and added effort in the daily care of your show pig will be worth it at show time.

It is critical to monitor your pig closely for the first three weeks at their new home. The stress of hauling, a new environment, and new pen mates from multiple farms create one of the most stressful periods in your show pig's life. Check your pigs at least twice a day. Pay attention to stool condition, listen for coughs, and look for runny noses or labored breathing. Consult with a veterinarian or swine professional if needed.

The following are all important factors when caring for your pig:

#### Facility

Keep the facility clean, dry, and draft free. This will help reduce disease, increase pig performance, and keep hair coat in good condition. Provide adequate bedding such as wood shavings or straw to keep the pen dry. Keep the pen draft free, especially early in the pig's life, to help prevent chilling and respiratory problems.

#### Water

Provide ample cool, clean water at all times. Access, temperature, and water pressure can affect the pig's water and feed consumption as well as health,

#### Feed

Provide fresh high quality feed that is matched to your pig's age, weight, muscle, and body condition. Feed must be fresh, free of molds, and easy to access. Monitor feed intake often to be sure your pig is healthy and growing at proper levels.

## **Temperature**

Protect the health of your young pig by keeping it warm and comfortable. A young pig can chill easily, leading to several health problems. Later in the growing period high temperatures can stress the pig and slow the growth rate. In cold weather provide adequate bedding, heat lamps, and a draft-free enclosure. In hot weather provide cool water, fans, misters, and shade.

## **Parasite Control**

Deworm your show pig soon after it is brought home and again one month later. Failure to deworm may lead to slower average daily gains and cause the pig to look rough. Watch out for lice and mange.

## **Vaccinations**

Consult your veterinarian to determine what vaccinations should be given for your area. Get and keep the breeder's vaccination records. The breeder can also inform you of any specific health problems he has on his farm.

## **Transportation**

Transport your pig with care because some genetics stress easily due to the presence of the stress gene (Porcine Stress Syndrome). If your pig becomes stressed, you may see a change in skin color, and increased respiration and heart rate. Your pig may act unruly and excitable. To minimize the risk, make the process as calm and easy as possible. Handle and transport early in the morning or late in the evening to avoid high temperatures. Be gentle!

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### **M** Make Adjustments

Get your pig on the scales regularly to monitor weight gain. The show ring is moving away from extremely hard, empty looking pigs. It's all about weight management and the desired appearance you wish to achieve.

#### **Too Big**

Maintain muscle volume with adequate protein intake. Freshness, bloom, and body capacity are important, so we cannot simply hold pigs on a small quantity of feed. High fiber ingredients such as beet pulp and rolled oats help give a full appearance without weight gain. Please note that Paylean will enhance weight gain.

#### **Too Small**

Achieve maximum growth rate by keeping pigs comfortable, increasing the energy level of your ration, and providing smaller meals multiple times a day. The biggest factor helping growth rate is intake. Try different ingredients and flavors to stimulate intake. Paylean at the proper level can also increase growth rate.

#### **Too Fat**

Help burn off fat cover using high protein feeds with lower energy levels. If the pig is sound, consider feeding Paylean at a higher rate. Walking 15 to 20 minutes a day can help firm up a pig as well.

#### **Too Thin**

Soften the look of those hard, flat ribbed no gutted hogs by feeding higher levels of fat to achieve the desired look. Skip Paylean for these pigs.

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