

# Planting the Seeds for a Successful Swine Project 2020

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# Agenda

- Swine Project – Why?
- Stages of Project
- Project Expectations
- Fair Expectations
- What I wish I had known!
- Clinics and Workshops

# Why do a swine project?

- They're cute!
- They're easy!
- They're fun!
- Learn about swine industry – Livestock is a \$1B industry in Montana
- Learn the process of hog production – from birth to the freezer
- Learn to care for an animal
- Learn discipline

# Stages of Swine Project

- **Preparation**
- **Selection**
- **Care and Feeding**
- **Training**
- **Fair**
  - **Showing**
  - **Sale**
- **Carcass Evaluation**
  - **Swine of Excellence**

# Preparation

- Pens
  - Rule of thumb - 10' x 10' (100 sq ft) per pig
  - Shelter
    - Shade available majority of the day
    - Consider how long sun is out during summer – light pigs will get sunburn
    - Pigs will always choose cool and dry over wet and muddy
- Water
  - Best to use some sort of tube or covered water with nipple
    - Water stays clean – can't be tipped over
    - Pigs are ready to use nipple waterer at fair
- Feeding – Trough, Self Feeder, Covered
  - Minimize waste
- Transportation access
  - Tagging
  - Fair

# Selection

- Finding a breeder
  - Ask others in your club – Ask Superintendents
- Cost
  - Remember desired outcome
- Weight
  - Fair weight – minimum 210 lbs – over 300 lbs is “heavyweight”
    - Under weight pigs are ‘Feeder class’
  - Some breeds grow faster than others
- Born AFTER January 1<sup>st</sup> - Must have possession by April 15<sup>th</sup>
- Most pigs will gain 1 to 1 ½ lbs per day
  - Proper nutritional feed
- Consider buddy pig –
  - Can tag multiple pigs for fair and choose at weigh-in

# Care and Feeding

- Cleanliness
  - Pigs like to be clean
    - They pick specific place to pee and poop
  - Use mud to stay cool – Don't like it
- Keep healthy
  - Worm early – before fair
    - Make sure to worm early enough to be ready for fair sale
  - Identify a vet BEFORE you have issues
    - Look for signs of sickness
- Feed
  - Consider best for your breed – protein is very important for young pigs
  - 3 to 4 lbs of feed for each pound gained – minimize waste - \$\$!

# Training

- Start Early!
  - Get pigs used to human interaction
    - Sit with pigs – be gentle
    - Pet them – get them used to touching ears
    - Don't hurry the process
- Walk them
  - Pigs normally stay close to food – many walk their pigs outside enclosures
  - Consider using large fenced area
  - Get them used to touch behind ears with 'whip'
- Practice getting them into trailer
  - Make it a game with food



# Fair! – 5 P's

- Proper Preparation Prevents Poor Performance
- Crazy busy!
  - Starts at home – Start a checklist of what you need at fairgrounds
    - Keep schedule handy – Use the 'SCHED' App for your phone
  - Pigs can get nervous and cranky – more training = better results
    - Be patient – ask for help
- Pay attention to pig as you grow with them
  - Do they mind better fed or will they work better in order to get food?
  - Remember this as you go through fair week
- Represent 4-H and your Club with Pride!
  - Many opportunities to talk to fair attendees, small groups – Show Off!

# The Show Ring

- Be ready by practicing before fair
  - You AND your pig need to practice
  - Go to clinics – watch youtube videos
- Get the jitters out before entering
  - Maybe walk your pig before show
  - Try to keep them calm
- Don't freak out!
  - Be patient – Ring masters will help
  - Focus on your pig – not others
- Smile!!

# The Sale

- Consider marketing your animal to local business/friends/family, etc
- Buyers are buying you AND the pig – show confidence while selling
- Get the jitters out early
- Pig sale split in half – Over 100 hogs to sell
  - Half start after Poultry and Rabbit
  - Half after steers/goats/sheep
- Order determined by numbers drawn during weigh-in
  - Grand and Reserve Champions go first – Junior and Senior Divisions

# Carcass Evaluation

- Perhaps the most important step of project
  - Project focus should be to raise great tasting, healthy pork
- Certified Inspector evaluates each carcass for quality
- Get to see the full circle of swine industry
- Planned tour of meat processing facility prior to Evaluation Day
- Swine of Excellence
  - Montana Pork Producers recognizes top graded hogs

# When does Project start?

- Now!
- Important Dates
  - Market Project pigs going to 2019 fair must be born after January 1<sup>st</sup> 2019
  - Tagging – April 19th– 11:00 am – 1:00 pm
  - Register for fair – June 15<sup>th</sup>
  - Weigh in – July 22<sup>nd</sup>

# Project Expectations

## Parents and Leaders:

- Enjoy and Learn!
- Humanely care for your pig
- Work with your pig regularly
- Teach Others

## 4-H Members:

- Win?
  - Showmanship
  - Market
- Learn?
  - Pig Production
  - Breeding
- Earn Money?
  - Cost vs Selling Price

# Fair Expectations

- Commitment
- Work as a Team
- Share Experiences
- Represent your Club and 4-H with Pride and Professionalism
- Fair Ain't over until the barns are empty!

# Fair Expectations

- Feeding
  - Cleanliness – How Often
  - Respect other participants
- Water
  - Watering Tube – Easy to build and keeps things clean
- Sale
  - Be ready!
  - Pictures with Pig
- Clean Up – Everyone helps!
- Carcass Evaluation – Normally three/four days after fair
  - Perhaps the most important part of project
  - Swine of Excellence Award



# Record Books

- Very Important to Document your Project!
  - Keep good records – Helps answer questions from judges and others
  - Keep track of expenditures
    - How much did you really earn?
- Historical Importance
  - If you do swine more than one year, great way to compare progress
- Great reference if using 4-H Experience for further Education
- **THAT'S WHEN IT ENDS!!**

# What I wish I'd known!

- One thing that everyone should know about starting a swine project is that you should treat it like a business. Purchase a pig that is appropriate for your budget. Remember you still have to purchase feed, straw, whips, etc.
- I learned that its very important to build trust between you and your animal. One major key to doing this is start working with your pigs about 1-2 weeks after you bring them home. The more you work with them each day the better the outcome in the ring!
- The most challenging thing about raising a pig is loading them into a trailer for the first time. To make this easier, start when they are little and make it a fun experience for you and your pig by putting food/treats in the trailer.
- Whenever I had a question or a concern about my pig I contacted our local vet (Dr. Stav - Bridger Vet). Another good person to ask questions is your breeder.

# Clinics and Workshops

- Quality Assurance – Required every 3 Years
- Tizer Meat Tour – TBD
- Showmanship Clinic – TBD
- Nationally Recognized Lamb/Swine Camp – June 5-6
  - In conjunction with Jackpot
- Other ideas?