2015 4-H MARKET HOG PROJECT GUIDELINE

Raising a market hog will help you to learn about the requirements of an animal grown for meat. You will also learn important life skills such as responsibility along the way. One of the advantages to this project is a fairly low initial investment. You must raise one or two market hogs from approximately 2 months of age and weighing 50 pounds in April to a market weight of 220-290 pounds at about 5-1/2 months of age. Market hogs weighing under 220 and over 290 lbs. will be sent home immediately following weigh in and may not be exhibited. Members enrolled in the 4-H Market Hog project are required to own their animals by 60 days prior to the Delaware State Fair. However, if you are going to purchase a feeder pig for this project, you must purchase it in mid-April in order for it to be market weight by the Delaware State Fair. Pigs must not be farrowed before January 1. The fair allows you to raise as many market hogs as you wish but you are permitted to show a maximum of two market hogs. Only one entry in a weight class will be accepted.

Your hog must be identified with an ear tag in order to be eligible for the Market Hog Show and Jr. Livestock Auction at the Delaware State Fair. Tagging of livestock for the Delaware State Fair will occur on several different dates and at three different locations this year. In addition, the swine department has instituted a new policy that market hogs tagged in May must meet minimum weight requirements at tagging time or they will not be tagged for the state fair. If you choose to participate in the 4-H/FFA Rate of Gain Contest sponsored by the Delaware Farm Bureau, you need to attend the tagging/weigh specified for your county. If you choose not to participate in the 4-H/FFA Rate of Gain Contest you may tag at any of the three locations regardless of what county you are enrolled in. Please see the guidelines for the 2015 4-H/FFA Rate of Gain Educational Contest for further details. Entry information for the 2015 4-H/FFA Rate of Gain Contest will be handed out at the tagging locations.

No oil or colorants may be used on hogs; water only.

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The dates, locations and minimum weights for tagging and weigh-ins this year are as follows:

- Saturday, May 2, 9 am-12 pm – Cook Farm 3300 Frazer Rd. Newark (NC County)- **minimum weight is 75 lbs.**
- Saturday, May 2, 9 am- 11 am - Georgetown Research and Education Center (Sussex County)- **minimum weight is 75 lbs.**
- Saturday, May 9, 9 am- 11 pm - Delaware State Fair (Kent County)- **minimum weight is 80 lbs.**
- Friday, May 15, 6 pm- 9 pm- Delaware State Fair (Kent County Jackpot Show and County 4-H Show Participants Only)- **minimum weight is 85 lbs.**
- Tuesday, May 19, 5 pm- 8 pm - Delaware State Fair (Kent County)- **minimum weight is 85 lbs.**

Untagged hogs will not be accepted for the Delaware State Fair Market Hog Show and sale. **State fair entries open April 1 this year and the closing deadline for entries is June 1, 2015.** Delaware State Fair entries will be accepted online only on a first come first serve basis. Any entries over barn capacity will be placed on a waiting list, if necessary. Please do not wait until the deadline to submit your entries.

**A. Quality Assurance Training:**

All junior exhibitors showing market hogs must have completed Quality Assurance training. Pork Quality Assurance(PQA) training is a program that was put together by the National Pork Producers Association. Commercial hog producers across the county have been required to have this certification since 1999 in order to market their hogs. It covers important issues such as proper drug use, withdrawal times, and ethics. The certification you receive is good for one year. There is a testing option for older youth, which is good for more than one year. Call for more information on the testing option for certification. Dates and times for 2015 Quality Assurance training classes are:

- April 16, 2015 - NCC PQA Classroom Training- New Castle Country Extension Office 6:30-8:30 pm
- April 21, 2015 - Sussex County PQA Classroom Training-Carvel Center 6:30-8:30 pm
- June 1, 2015- FINAL PQA Classroom Training- Kent County Extension Office- 6:30-8:30 pm

You may attend any of the training locations but RSVP’s are required in order to have enough materials on hand. Children under 8 years of age(as of January 1, 2015) will need to have an adult attend the training with them. Please RSVP to Susan Garey at 730-4000 or truehart@udel.edu. Additional information on the Youth PQA Program certification requirements, testing dates and online certification options, can be found here [https://extension.udel.edu/4h/files/2012/02/2015-PQA-Certification.pdf](https://extension.udel.edu/4h/files/2012/02/2015-PQA-Certification.pdf)
B. What Kind of Hog Do You Purchase for This Project?

You may select a barrow or gilt, which may be purebred or crossbred. **Gilts entered in Breed Classes and Open Crossbred Gilt Classes are not eligible to compete in the Market Hog Contest.** Gilts not making market weight can enter the Open and Junior Crossbred Gilt Class but you must remove the DSF ear tag from their ear and they must weigh between 200 and 300 lbs. A feeder pig suitable for a project animal could weigh anywhere from 40-75 lbs. depending on the date purchased. Your project animal may come from your own herd, a family herd, or from a local swine producer. When selecting your project, look for a healthy pig that:

- is well muscled
- has a minimal amount of back fat
- has deep, full hams
- is long, trim, and smooth
- walks free of any stiffness or lameness
- is thrifty, free of disease and outward signs of illness and well vaccinated

C. What Do You Need to Raise a Market Hog?

Hogs should be raised under a confinement system. Modest but adequate housing can be provided easily by a total confinement arrangement in a barn or shelters on dry lots.

A good shelter:

- provides protection from harsh weather and shade in the summer
- includes 8 to 10 square ft./pig
- can be simple and inexpensive
- should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before each use

Feed and water may be provided by self-feeders and nipple drinkers or with the use of simple troughs. Provide one feeder hole for every four pigs and one nipple drinker for every 20 pigs. A good trough:

- is large enough to provide a full day supply of water or feed
- is constructed so pigs cannot slide down in it
- is built so pigs cannot turn it over

D. Health Concerns:

Your pigs should have been vaccinated prior to you purchasing them. You should ask whomever you purchase your project animal
from, what the animal has been vaccinated and treated for and when this occurred. Please consult the “Vaccination Guidelines for Show Pigs- A 4-H Primer…” http://extension.udel.edu/4h/files/2012/02/VaccinationprogramsSwine.pdf for more information specific to types and timing of vaccinations for show pigs. These guidelines have been developed in response to specific animal health problems that have been observed at the Delaware State Fair. Your pigs should be de-wormed a few days after you get them home. You should de-worm your pig two times, three weeks apart. This three-week interval is very important because the life cycle of parasites is three weeks long. The medication only kills the larva and adult stages of the worm. The egg stage is not killed. By waiting three weeks and de-worming your pig again, you are killing those eggs that have developed into adults.

Ivomec is the top choice of medications because it is the only type that kills both internal and external parasites (mites, lice, etc.). If you chose to de-worm your pig with another type of medication, you must also dust your pig with an approved hog mange/louse product. Typically these products have side effects that are too dangerous to warrant use by children so if you decide to go this route please ask an adult for assistance.

Be watchful for health problems. Things to look for include diarrhea, excessive coughing, and sneezing. You should spend time with your pig so you are familiar with its normal behavior. If you know what is “normal” for your animal, then you will be able to quickly spot when it might be having problems. It is also important to remember that pigs do not have sweat glands and therefore lack the ability to cool themselves. You may need to cool your pigs by wetting them with cold water during the summer (when temperatures exceed 80˚F). Do not drench an overheated pig with cold water as you may put them into shock.

Do not wait until fair time to teach your pig to drive. Rather, begin at home when your pig weighs approximately 150 pounds. Use a cane or a whip to guide your pig but do not hit your pig. Light taps beside the head are sufficient to direct the pig. Begin to brush your pig’s hair now so that it is in good shape by fair time.

E. Feeding Your Pig:

Your pig should be on a self-feeding program using a 16-20% protein feed depending on the body composition of the pig. A medicated feed is satisfactory until pigs get to 125 pounds. Once they reach this weight they do not need medication unless a problem develops. You want to avoid using medicated feed after this point because you do not want drug residues in your pig at the time it is slaughtered.
As a general rule of thumb, a growing market hog should gain 1.5-2 lbs/day. This is important to know so that you can project a finished weight for your pig at fair time and ensure that it will be within the acceptable weights for a market hog at the Delaware State Fair. Fresh water is very important, especially in hot weather. Pigs will drink approximately 1⅓ quarts of water for every pound of feed they eat.

F. Fitting and Showing:

Pig Preparation:

- Wash and clean your pig thoroughly
- Do not attempt to part or curl the hair on your pig. Groom the hair to lie in its natural direction.
- Do not use oils or colorants.
- Work with your pig so that it is gentle and easily handled.

If you need help, ask another older 4-Her to help you.

Tips on Showing:

- Carry your brush into the ring but keep it in your pocket or otherwise out of sight most of the time. Try to use it when the judge is not looking unless he/she deliberately puts shavings on your pig.
- An open area 20 feet from the judge provides a better place to show a pig than crowded area within several feet of the judge.
- Show your pig at a slow to moderate walk as he looks best while on the move, and keep him moving.
- Bring your pig to an immediate halt if the judge indicates a desire to inspect him at a standing position.
- Permit your pig to stand for brief moments if he remains alert and does not assume an awkward position.
- Make no attempt to place your pig’s feet by handling them.
- Keep your pig within clear view of the judge.
- Use a light whip, cane or stick to direct the pig about the arena. The pig responds to light taps or the mere sight of a show stick.
• Never force your pig to make abrupt turns in the show ring. Don’t permit him to walk into a spot that makes it necessary to back out. Don’t over show your pig as it will fret and tire him.
• Make no effort to improve the arch of a pig’s back by pushing its nose down or its rump forward. Actually, such tactics make the pig look worse.

G. Costs:

The following information will give some guidance on the financial aspects of the project.

- Feeder pig at start of project- $100-150 per head
- 700 Pounds of feed at $20.00/50 lb. bag. = $280.00
- Miscellaneous cost = $20.00

Total costs = $400-450.00*

* This figure may vary greatly depending on how much you decide to spend on the purchase of your pig and the type of feed you decide to use.

H. Showing:

All exhibitors showing market hogs at the state fair must have completed a PQA training or test. You must bring a copy of your PQA certificate to the state fair with you. This will be turned in to the swine department superintendents prior to your market hog being weighed. **If you do not have a PQA certificate, you will not be permitted to show. Once the state fair has started, no reprinting of PQA certificates will occur so you need to plan ahead.** Market hog classes will be divided based on weight. All animals will be weighed on Saturday, July 25th. Exhibitors or a designated individual must be present or your hog will not be weighed. You are permitted to show one market hog per class, two market hogs total. Weigh in on Saturday July 25th will begin immediately following a mandatory barn meeting for all livestock exhibitors at 8 am in the Kent Building.

Junior Livestock exhibitors must show their own animals in the Junior Show. No assistance is permitted in the show ring at any time in all junior livestock classes except assistance given by a designated ring steward. There is a dress code for exhibitors showing livestock at the Delaware State Fair and in 4-H related shows. The State Fair rulebook states that showman will wear appropriate show attire.

- Pants- clean, neat jeans or slacks (no shorts)
- Shirt- clean, with a collar and sleeves (no T-shirts or tank tops)
- Shoes- hard soled shoes or boots (no open-toed shoes)
This type of attire will tell those watching the show that we take pride in our projects and it will keep members from unnecessary injury.

I. **Junior Livestock Auction:**

Every year a limited number of market hogs are selected by the junior livestock auction committee and the chairman of livestock exhibits for the Delaware State Fair to participate in the Junior Livestock Auction. The number is based on the total number of market hogs being shown and is normally equal to the top 30% of market animals being shown in a livestock department. Exhibitors of the Champion and Reserve Champion Market Hogs are strongly encouraged to sell their animals in the auction. Each exhibitor is limited to a maximum of three animals across all livestock species with no more than two animals entered per species. Each individual selling an animal is strongly encouraged to contact a minimum of three potential buyers who will come to the fair and bid on their animals. The Fair is not responsible for providing buyers for the exhibitors. *Exhibitors that sell animals through the Junior Livestock Auction are strongly encouraged to send their buyers thank you notes.*

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