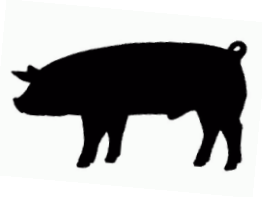


Swine Showmanship



Showmanship is one of the most important parts of a 4-H swine project. Showmanship is judged on your ability to exhibit an animal to its best advantage. Advanced planning and practice at home are keys to becoming a good showman. Planning, practicing, and neat appearance will help you achieve success showing swine.

Your personal appearance is important. Dress neatly and look like a livestock person. Wear leather shoes or boots for safety and appearance. If the animal steps on your foot, it is much easier for the hog's foot to slip off a leather boot than an athletic shoe, and the leather shoes are thicker than canvas shoes.

Wear cleaned pressed jeans or slacks and a neat button-down or sport shirt, not a T-shirt. Tuck in your shirt, and wear a belt for added neatness. It is best not to wear a cap since it may take the judge's concentration away from the animal.

Equipment Needed

A **driving tool** is required to guide or drive the hog. You can use a livestock cane, whip, riding crop, or stick. The tool of choice, however, is a fiberglass driving stick.

You should use a **small hand brush** to brush the hog and as an additional driving tool. The brush needs to be small enough to fit in your back pocket or the palm of your hand.

Use a **spray bottle** of water to groom and cool the hog. Do not take the bottle into the ring during the show. Your need for the spray bottle is discussed later in this publication.

Before the Show

You must thoroughly wash your hog and be sure it is clean. Pay particular attention to the ears; scrubbing with your brush will adequately clean them. Take special care not to get water in the ears of the hog as it will affect its equilibrium. Before returning a clean hog to the pen, check for, remove, and replace any soiled bedding.

Just before entering the ring, mist the hog with water from your spray bottle. Brush the hog's hair the way it naturally lies -- do not pull the hog's top straight back. This will make the top appear flat and a flat top appears fat. Brush the hair with a natural part down the spine to give the hog the appearance of a meatier top.

Do not use oils or powders on a hog since these items make the animal hot. Packers are less likely to accept hogs that have oils or powders on them or hogs that have been clipped. Daily brushing and proper hair care can eliminate the need for clipping.

Practice Showing

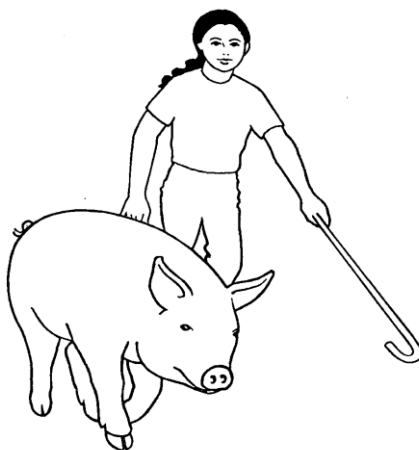
A superior job in showing a hog starts long before the class is called. Practice your driving at home to help control the hog and to polish your showing skills.

Pretend a tree or other object is the judge. Work on moving around the object as you would around a judge in the show-ring. Once you gain control of the hog, driving in a figure eight pattern provides practice for any show-ring situation you might encounter.

In the Show Ring

Be prompt and on time for your class. Being prompt shows you are organized and ready to work; it is courtesy to the other exhibitors.

Upon entering the ring, the hog may take off running. Calmly walk over to the hog and take control by driving it 10 to 15 feet in front of the judge. Do not drive the hog any closer to the judge unless requested.



Use your cane or driving stick to move the animal. Touch the animal from the fore rib forward (shoulder and jowl area) to turn. If you want the hog to move to the right, touch the left jowl of the hog. If the hog needs to move to the left, touch the right side. Never beat or hit the hog. Keep the driving tool off the top, loin, and ham areas.

Just because you have a cane or whip does not mean you have to constantly tap your hog. When the hog is moving, let it walk. Do not rush the hog. Use the driving tool only when it is needed to keep the hog moving from one point to another in front of the judge.

Always keep the hog between you and the judge; this provides the judge with a full view. When you move or change directions, switch the driving tool to the other hand. Try not to use your hands or knees to drive the animal. Younger exhibitors may have to use their hands or knees at times, but the only acceptable time to do this is during penning.

When walking your hog, calmly move with the hog, staying on the side opposite the judge. A slight bend at the waist may give you better control of the hog. Be relaxed. If you are calm, your hog will be calm and respond to your commands.

Be courteous at all times and aware of "danger zones" to avoid. One danger zone is groups of other hogs. If your hog gets in a group, let it work its way out. **Do not** block the view of another hog or exhibitor.

In a group of hogs, your hog may engage in a fight. **Do not** jump between the fighting hogs. You may use the cane to assist in controlling the situation. Simply snare or hook your hog's nose and pull it away from the other hog. This will help separate the hogs so a ring man can get a board between the fighting animals.

Another "danger zone" is a corner of the show-ring. If your hog gets in a corner, do not beat the hog to move it out. Place your brush on the hog's snout. The hog will not like the bristles and should move from the corner.

If you are selected to be penned, **do not** stop showing. Raise your hand, work your hog toward the pen area, and drive it into the designated pen, closing and latching the gate. **Do not** wait for a ringman, but continue to move the hog to a pen as mentioned so the show can continue to move smoothly.

While in the pen, position your hog's nose towards the front of the gate and bend down next to your hog. Have someone bring your spray bottle to the pen area. Spray and brush your hog, allow it to relax, but do not let it lie down.

If the judge sprinkles shavings or other materials on your hog, brush the substance off as inconspicuously as possible. This shows an awareness of what is going on and it shows a pride in exhibiting.

When you leave the pen to reenter the show ring, **close and latch** the gate behind you. This show ring courtesy prevents other hogs from entering the pen and taking time away from the judge's view.

Make eye contact with the judge. This is important because good eye contact ensures you will not miss a cue to be penned or to follow some other request. Additionally, the judge is more likely to look at your hog.

Be ready to answer questions about your project. The judge may ask any number of questions about your animal and the swine industry to find out what you have learned from your 4-H swine project. Questions may be easy and include such items as the weight, gender, breed, age, or parts of the animal. They may also include carcass composition, swine management practices, feeding and nutrition, or marketing systems. Learn all you can, and be prepared for any type of question.

When the class is over or you are dismissed, continue to show the hog as you leave the ring. Listen to the judge's comments, and learn from the experience of showing your animal.

After The Show

Return your hog to its pen. Be sure the gate is locked, and provide fresh water. Go back to the show and try to learn more by observing other exhibitors.

Be a gracious participant or winner. Congratulate exhibitors who had a good day. Learn from experience and strive to do better at the next show. **Remember:** Just by participating, working hard, and doing your best, you are a winner!