

4-H Market Hog Project

Prepared by Claudia Meeks Baney
4-H Animal Science Specialist
Department of Animal Science

Project Timeline

Early September	Contact your 4-H Agent/FFA Advisor about showing a hog Begin preparing for your hog's arrival
September/October	Purchase your hog Attend county ear tagging Weigh your hog & record feed/health records Begin feeding your hog for growth
October	Wash & work out hog regularly Weigh your hog & calculate average daily gain to estimate show weight Submit your entry forms & fees to 4-H agent/FFA advisor
November	Regularly work with your hog to get it accustomed to being driven with a whip or cane Weigh your hog & record feed/health records Wash your hog regularly Attend county show clinics to learn about showmanship and fitting Practice for Skillathon & Showmanship Start on Youth Pork Quality Assurance Certification Get Health Certificate from veterinarian (within 90 days of state show)
December	Continue Skillathon Practice Attend Regional Shows Continue working & washing you hog
January	Continue to practice for skillathon Attend State Show



Project Budget

Below is a cost estimate for a market hog project. The estimate assumes the hog is purchased October 1 weighing 50 pounds. The average weight gain from October 1 until mid-January (106 days) is approximately 1.7 pounds per day, to reach 230 pounds. Feed costs are based on feeding roughly 7 pounds of feed per day. Health cost estimates are for getting health papers from a vet.

Expense	Unit	# of Units	Cost/unit	Total Value
Purchase Hog	Head	1	\$200	\$200
Feed	Cwt	7	\$30	\$210
Health	\$	1	\$20	\$20
Total				\$430

There are additional costs for the project. These cost are those related to supplies, facilities, and equipment that can be used more than one year.

Supply costs (show supplies, cane, bat, feeders) \$40

Facility costs (building a shelter) \$75

Equipment costs (feeders, waterers, hog panels) \$80

Keep in mind that some of county 4-H programs have show barns, supplies, and equipment exhibitors can borrow or use.

Selecting a Market Hog

It is really important that your market hog weigh between 230 - 270 pounds by the State Market Hog Show.

To figure out what size hog you should select, you need to determine the expected gain for your hog. Typically, hogs gain 1.5-1.9 pounds per day with the average being 1.7 pounds per day. You can calculate your average daily gain by adding together the amount of weight your hog gained over a period of time, then dividing it by the number of days within that period of time.

Example: Hog gained 55 pounds in 30 days, $55/30 = 1.83$

Date Purchased	Suggested Weight of Pigs to Be Selected to Weigh 230-270				
9/1	26-66	13-53	0-39	0-25	0-12
9/15	47-87	35-75	26-66	11-51	2-38
10/1	71-111	61-101	50-90	39-79	26-66
10/15	92-132	83-123	74-114	64-104	55-95
10/20	99-140	91-131	82-122	73-113	65-105
Expected Gain	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9

Knowing the weight of your hog throughout your project is very important. It can help you to determine average daily gain, as well as ensuring your pig will make weight.

The table below will help you to understand how much your hog should weigh throughout your project.

Date Weighed	Weight of Pigs Needed to Reach 230-270 pounds				
10/20	99-140	91-131	82-122	73-113	65-105
11/15	138-178	132-172	126-166	120-160	114-154
11/30	161-201	156-196	152-192	147-187	143-183
12/15	183-223	180-220	177-217	174-214	171-211
12/30	206-246	204-244	203-243	201-241	200-240
Expected Gain	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9

Showing

Success in the show rings begins at home with daily practice and working with your hog. Having a hog accustomed to you and being driven is important. Here are some keys to show ring success.

- Train your pig to walk with its head up
- As soon as you enter the show ring, locate the judge
- Head off your pig before it gets into corners
- Stay out of groups
- Keep hog moving 10-15 feet away from the judge
- Do not pass between the judge and pig
- Keep one eye on the pig and one eye on the judge
- Do not walk behind the pig
- Use a slow pace, your posture should be slightly bent
- Don't overuse your whip or cane, keep it level with the hog's back
- Never place your whip/cane between the pig and judge.

Facilities

Before you even look at hogs, your facilities and equipment needs to be in place. While an elaborate hog barn is not necessary, there are some basics are required to provide hogs with a healthy environment. Existing barns or sheds can easily be adapted for hogs. Hogs need a minimum of 15 square feet (3' X 5' pen) larger pens will provide more exercise for you hog keeping it lean. Hogs do well on both dirt and concrete floors, but maintaining cleanliness is important. If you have concrete floors, shaving should be used as shavings will provide more secure footing and less irritation to the hog. The hog needs a dry, warm place to eat and sleep. The feed trough and shelter should be located on the high end of the pen with good drainage. This will help your hog stay healthy and keep food from spoiling. It also makes manure cleanup a lot easier. Hogs naturally go to the bathroom away from where they sleep. Locate the water source or trough away from the shelter and feed.

Watering and Feeding

It is important to provide fresh, clean water. Automatic nipple waterers work best for hogs. Be sure to check daily to make sure it is working properly. A water trough that can be easily cleaned and not turned over can also be used as long as the water is continually fresh.

Feeding fresh feed is important. The best practice is hand feeding twice a day is best. An automatic feeder provides a better alternative for once a day feedings. You should feed slightly more than the pig cleans up at each feeding. The more feed wasted, the lower your profit will be. Clean out old feed at each feeding to prevent moldy and rotting feed. Automatic feeders must also be cleaned out regularly to prevent mold and maggots—check the top and bottom. Feed at the same time every day to maintain optimum appetite. Increase feed gradually—about 1 additional pound per day for every 20 days of gain.

