



What Makes a Successful Show?

By: Julie Flynn

Organizing a livestock competition, show or event requires a certain amount of experience, knowledge and connections. Most of all, it takes good judges. A good judge does not show favoritism towards animals or people - a good judge will pick the winner based on the animal and its qualities. In addition to locating and hiring a suitable, experienced judge, there are several other factors to consider. Who will attend and what will be the prize? How to attract the finest animals to participate and how to make sure the event is a success for all? Much depends on the organizing party's passion and enthusiasm - livestock competitions are not just about the winners and losers. The event planners are about organizing events to bring together the finest enthusiasts, sellers, buyers and, above all, to keep traditions alive and standards high.

Animals

For an event organizer the aim is always to keep the standards high - livestock shows are about showing animals in their finest form. Judges look at several details which depend on what type of animal is in question. In cattle shows, beef cows are judged by their muscular structure. In relation to dairy cows, however, focus will be on its ability and efficiency in producing milk - for instance, for a walking dairy cow, legs and how it moves are of high value. It is not only cows which participate: sheep are a familiar sight at livestock shows and again, fall under a very unique, detailed judging criteria. According to expert judges, muscles and legs are also the sheep's vital areas - they are carefully analyzed in order to find a winner. But not all judges follow set criteria: many experienced judges, while respecting the main rules, have their own preferences in what makes a good, valuable animal.

The owners who participate in shows often prepare their animals for weeks, polishing every angle, making sure they look their best. Today, prizes are large and stakes are high - each competitor wants to make sure they have a shot at winning. The looks aren't everything, however - it is the organizer's responsibility to keep the paperwork in check: to avoid tampering, each participant must follow the strict rules and regulations set by the official bodies.

Event Promotion

These days, livestock events sizes vary from huge to small, from local level to state level. For any event to be a success, adequate marketing and promotion is vital. It is important to have a marketing budget for each event and develop a promotional strategy based on how much funds are at disposal. After the target audience has been decided upon, factors to be considered are, for instance, marketing channels: will it be sufficient for this event to be advertised in local newspapers only? What marketing material is required and who will produce them? Additionally, could this particular livestock show benefit from innovative marketing tactics? To take things one step further and make the event even more professional, promotional gifts can be a good idea - depending on the nature of the event and its guests.

Judges

When selecting a suitable judge, a few things need to be considered. As a main rule, judges are hired to evaluate the livestock - not the people. For many, becoming a successful judge has been a lifelong dream and they have been in the business for decades. In livestock judging, experience is the key - many of today's judges started young by attending shows, getting to know people and the animals.

When selecting a judge, it is wise to first pay attention to the experience: how many shows has he/she judged and do they have enough expertise on the animals being judged? A good idea is also to look at the potential judge's educational history: where did they receive their training and when - how successful have they been after that? A judge must also be a very good communicator. They must be able to clearly express why the animal being judged is of particular value and, most importantly, be honest in their evaluations. It may be good to find a judge further away from where the event is held. This is to keep the judge as impartial as possible - often times livestock shows are family affairs and while each event is an opportunity to see friends as well as show off the fine, polished animals, judges have a more independent part to play.



Understanding Moderate Frame Verses Small Frame

By: Ryan Harrell

Understanding moderate frame versus small frame can be tricky for some exhibitors and judges. Moderate frame allows the pig to have more chest, width of base and makes them thicker down their top and rump. With the current trends in the swine industry, selection is key for moderate frame. Yet, with every trend in the industry you get extremes. Smaller framed pigs can be a problem as they mature and max out at weights of 230 pounds. The packer still prefers heavier hogs and the bottom of the base price is usually around 230 pounds. Smaller framed pigs generally grow much slower and have poorer feed to gain ratios.

Keep in mind when a judge is seeking or discussing moderate frame, they are not wanting small frame. There is a difference between the two and the industry is still seeking some growth and performance in their show animals as well.

When selecting animals, a short framed pig will usually have the end of its ribs pretty close to the ham or ham loin junction. As the pig grows it will continue to look shorter and start to become unbalanced.

Keep this in mind as you select pigs for your show. The industry is not selecting short framed pigs but more moderate in size.



Featured Livestock Judging Team

Purdue University



Introducing Our New Judges

Amanda Cain: Starkville, Mississippi (left)

Ryan Holaway: Chico, Texas (right)

Special Thanks To This Months New Newsletter Subscribers

4 New Subscribers for the Month:



The Current Mistakes in Swine Showmanship

By: Ryan Harrell

Some of the current trends in swine showmanship have changed in the past few years. It is unclear who or what judges have made these changes. Currently in the swine industry, we are now seeing showmen doing the following:

- Over tapping.
- Putting their hand on the pigs back.
- The use of a large brush.
- Exhibitors bending over excessively when showing.
- Oddly positioning your unused arm.

Over tapping is defined as the exhibitor tapping the pig excessively, back and forth on the face or the head of the pig. In all honesty, it is very distracting as a judge to see a kid whipping back and forth on their pig. In addition, the pig gets confused on which direction you are asking it to move. Exhibitors who excessively whip the pig, will be slower at turning their pig and the pig will jam up on them more in the show ring.

Exhibitors who put their **hands on the pigs back** is a bad habit to start in showmanship. The judge needs to see every view of your pig. When you touch the pig, it will make them drive slower, even make them run faster or even makes your pig sway its back. As a judge, I want to see how level the pigs top line is, so avoid making it look unnatural or doing things to distract me as a judge. In large classes you have your few seconds to show me your animal before I move on to the pig for their look.

Kids showing with a **large brush** is currently being used in the show ring. Don't get me wrong, keeping your pig clean is the purpose of the brush, but a large brush is also distracting. Exhibitors are using a large brush to tap the back of the pig. Apparently this helps keep the pig moving. But once again, blocking the top line of the pig being shown. I personally am not a big fan of the big brush, as some times you need your free hand to open a gate, break up a fight, move a pig out of a corner, shake hands with the judge, or even switch hands with your whip.

When showing pigs, the exhibitor should stand more upright in a natural position. Some exhibitors are **bending over excessively** when showing their pig. Once again, this is not naturally and looks uncomfortable and displeasing to the eye of the judge. If you are bending down to help drive your pig faster, then I would recommend standing more upright and use a longer whip or pipe.

Some exhibitors are bending their **free hand** as if it is in a cast or is broken. Once, again you should hold your free in a comfortable and normal appearing position to the judges eye. Never hold your free hand behind your back and this also looks awkward to the judge as well.

Try to avoid some of the bad habits other exhibitors are doing. Some judges may like these habits and select for it, but others (most) will more than likely not want you to show your pig this way.



Featured July 2013 Poland Boars

Official Placing: 2-1-4-3

Cuts: 3-2-4

For more information on the July 2013 Poland Boar Class of the month, visit our home page. Each month The Judging Connection.com features a class of the month and a judge from our directory. The public is allowed to vote on the class of the month. The official results of the class is determined from the featured judge of the month.



Featured July Judge

Kaycee Vollmar

Mills, WY.

Kaycee judges Cattle, Starter Calves, Sheep, Club Lambs, Swine and Meat Goats.

Kaycee was a member of the Colorado State Livestock Judging Team and attended Casper Community College. Kaycee was active on both livestock judging teams and won multiple top ten honors in reasons and placings.



Featured Livestock Judging Individual

Cody Reichart
(Purdue University)