

Livestock Judging Guide



By

Neal Smith

Extension Area Specialist – 4-H

Module 5: Swine



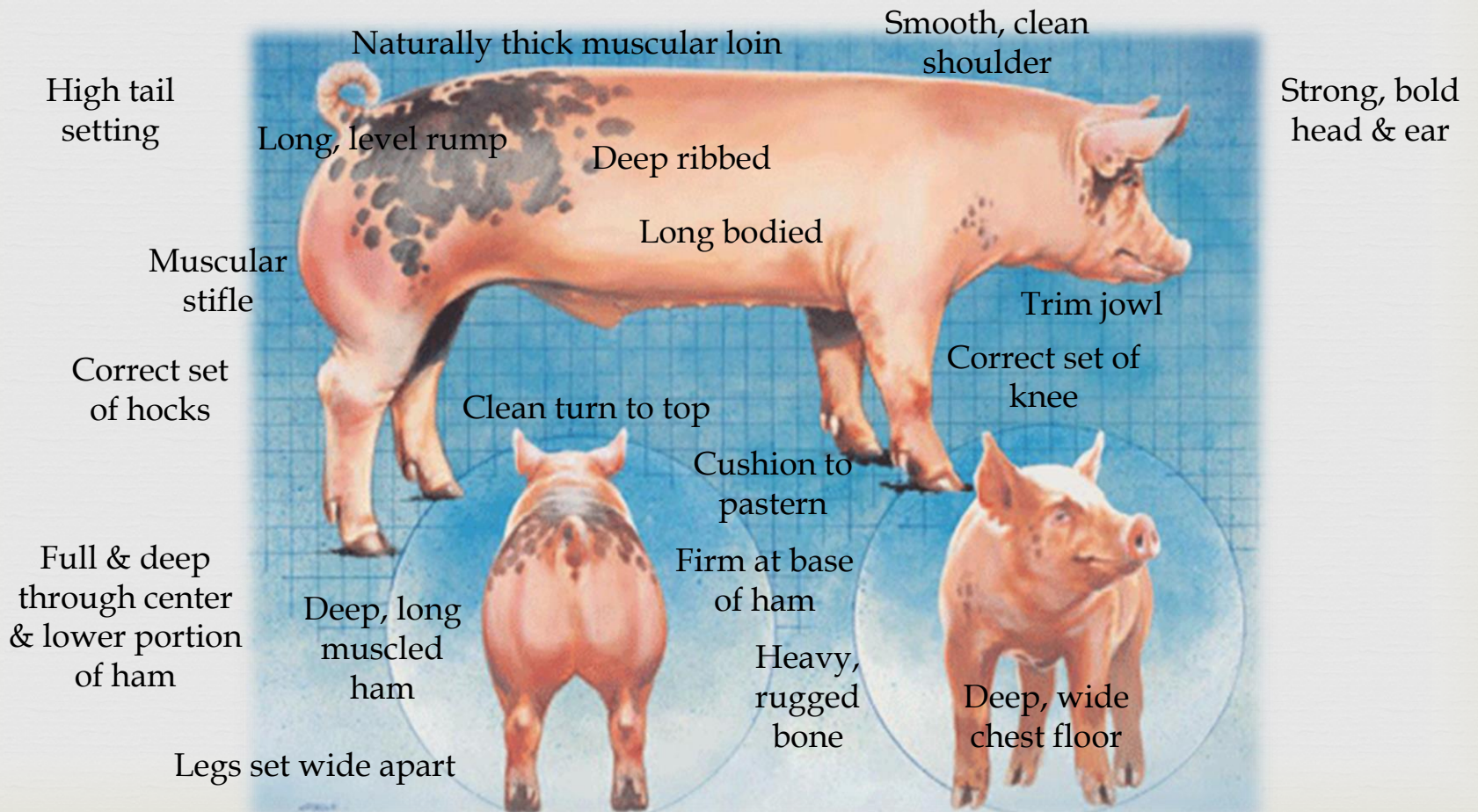
Judging Market Hogs

Judging Market Hogs



- ❧ Ideal market barrow:
 - ❧ Weighs approx. 220 to 250 lbs.
 - ❧ Will meet meat-type hog certification standards
 - ❧ Minimum of 29.75 inches long
 - ❧ Less than 1.0 inches of last rib fat depth
 - ❧ Greater than 4.75 square inches of loin eye area
 - ❧ Clean down the topline
 - ❧ Abundance of muscling in ham and loin region

Ideal Market Hog



Judging Market Hogs



Steps to Judging Swine

- First view from the ground and work up
- Next evaluate from rear to front
- Rank class on traits of importance
- Evaluate most important traits first
- Eliminate easy placings
- Place the remainder based on the volume of important traits

Judging Market Hogs



Ranking of Traits for Market Hogs

- Degree of muscling
- Growth
- Capacity or volume
- Degree of leanness
- Structure and soundness



Judging Market Hogs



œ Evaluating Degree of Muscling

œ Indicators of degree of muscling:

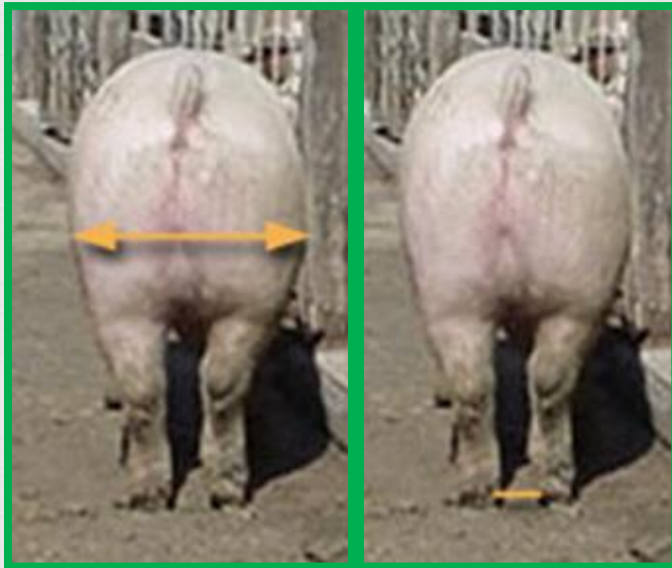
- œ First - thickness through center of ham
- œ Second - width at the ground between feet (standing & walking)
 - œ Base width and width of pigs top should be equal
 - œ Red flag - Top width exceeding base width indicates fat



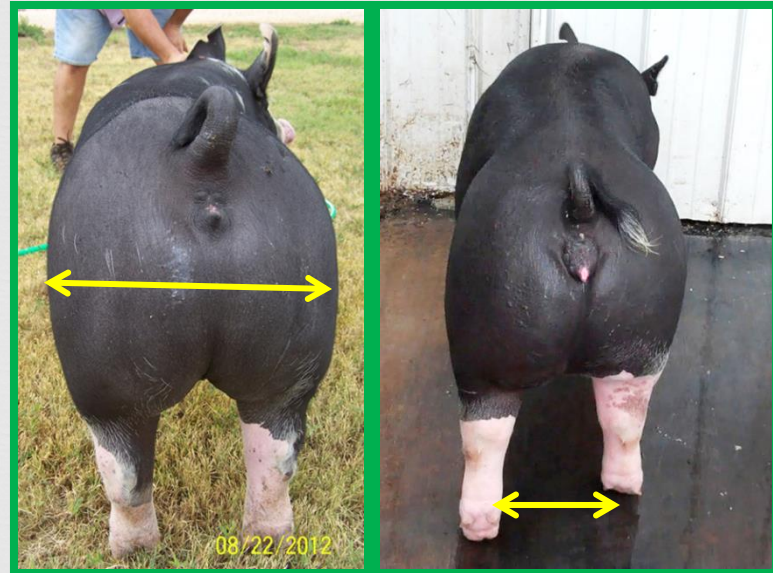
Judging Market Hogs



Narrow Width



Good Width



Judging Market Hogs



œ Evaluating Degree of Muscling

œ Indicators of degree of muscling:

œ Third - shape over the top (or loin)

œ Muscular top should be “butterfly” shape

œ Indicates leanness

œ Loins on both sides of backbone extending higher than center

œ “Flat” top indicates fat

Butterfly top



Judging Market Hogs



☞ Evaluating Growth

- ☞ Hogs are sold by the pound
- ☞ Important that pigs have good growth rate
- ☞ Pigs should reach market weight at an early age
- ☞ Assume all animals in a class are the same age
- ☞ Heaviest pig is the fastest growing
- ☞ Lightest pig is the slowest growing

Judging Market Hogs



œ Evaluating Capacity or Volume

œ Hogs with good capacity or volume will be able:

œ To consume feed necessary for growth

œ To perform well in terms of reproduction

œ Capacity or volume is determined by:

œ Body width

œ Body depth

œ Body length

œ Balance (how well these three factors fit together)

Judging Market Hogs



Width:

- Best evaluated starting at the ground and working up
- Pigs with good width will:
 - Walk and stand wide both in front and rear
 - Have good width through the chest
- Top width (top 1/3) and base width (lower 1/3) should be equal
- Middle 1/3 of the animal should be the widest

Judging Market Hogs



Too Narrow



Narrow tracking at the walk

Good Width



Good chest width equates to good capacity or volume

Good Width



Wide based in the standing position

Judging Market Hogs



∞ Depth of Body:

- ∞ Important for capacity for feeding and reproduction
- ∞ Should be uniform from fore flank to rear flank
- ∞ Be careful –
 - ∞ Excessively deep appearing hog could indicate a fat problem
- ∞ Lack of depth, or shallow body, will:
 - ∞ Take away from overall balance
 - ∞ Hurt pig's placing due to lack of a production look

Judging Market Hogs



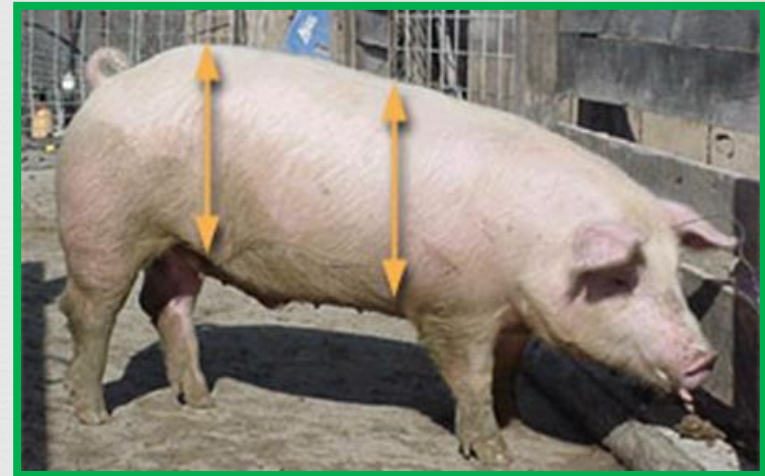
Lacks Adequate Depth



Unbalanced



Uniform Body Depth



Shallow in the rear flank

Too deep in rear flank

Beginning to show
excessive body depth
due to fat

Judging Market Hogs



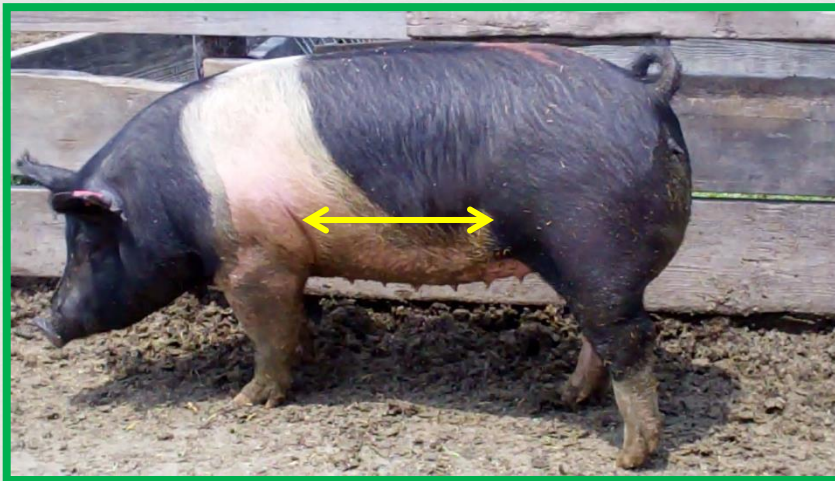
∞ Length of Body

- ∞ Increased importance due to heavier market weights
- ∞ Measured visually from flank to flank
- ∞ Hogs typical growth curve:
 - ∞ Grows frame > Deposits muscle > Deposits fat
- ∞ Longer bodied & bigger framed hogs mature later
- ∞ Later maturity delays fat being deposited
- ∞ Higher weights before fat deposited
 - ∞ 260 lbs. versus 220 lbs.

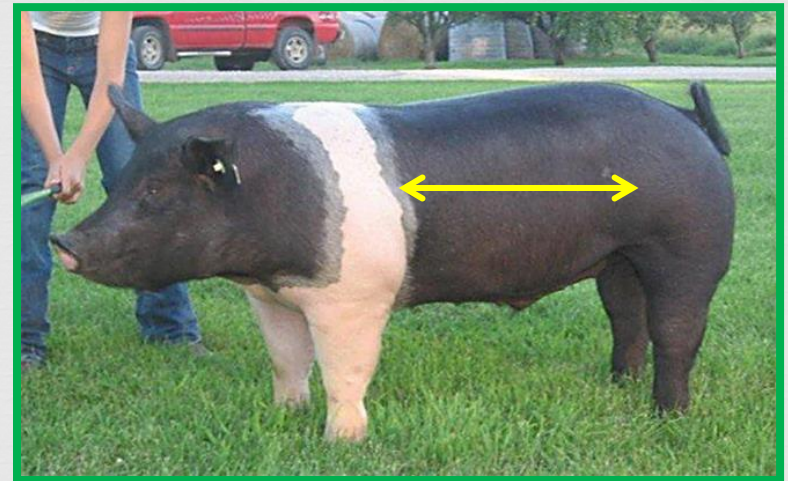
Judging Market Hogs



Short Body Length



Good Body Length



Judging Market Hogs



œ Evaluating Degree of Leanness

œ Degree of leanness is influenced by:

- œ Degree of muscling
- œ Frame size
- œ Sex of animal
- œ Age
- œ Weight



Judging Market Hogs



Judging Market Hogs



- ❧ Evaluating Degree of Leanness
 - ❧ Evaluate leanness only after degree of muscling is determined
 - ❧ Heavy muscled hogs will be lean
 - ❧ Light muscled hogs will be fat
 - ❧ Gilts mature at a later age (or heavier weight) than barrows
 - ❧ At same age or weight, gilts will be leaner than barrows

Judging Market Hogs



∞ Evaluating Degree of Leanness

∞ Fat will be deposited from:

- ∞ Front to rear
- ∞ First in cheeks and jowl
- ∞ Then behind and over shoulders
- ∞ Then in the flanks
- ∞ Finally around tailhead

∞ Evaluate leanness by looking:

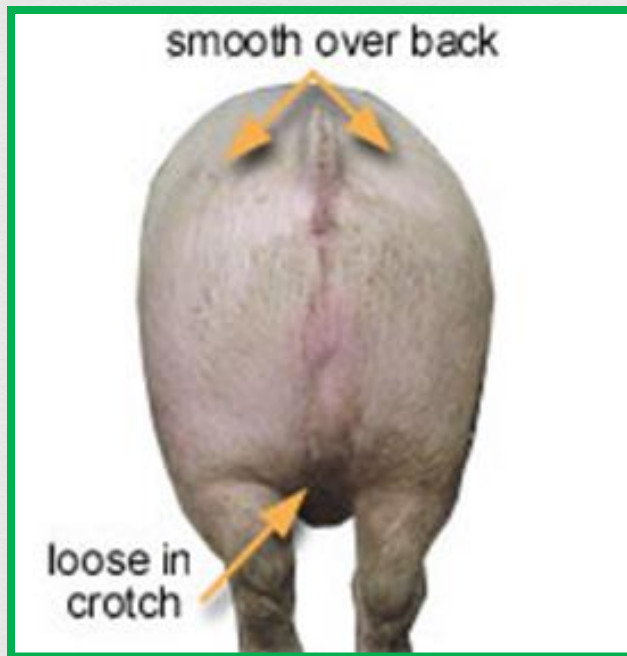
- ∞ For indentions over & behind shoulders
- ∞ At ham-loin junction
- ∞ For presence of a dimple just in front of tailhead



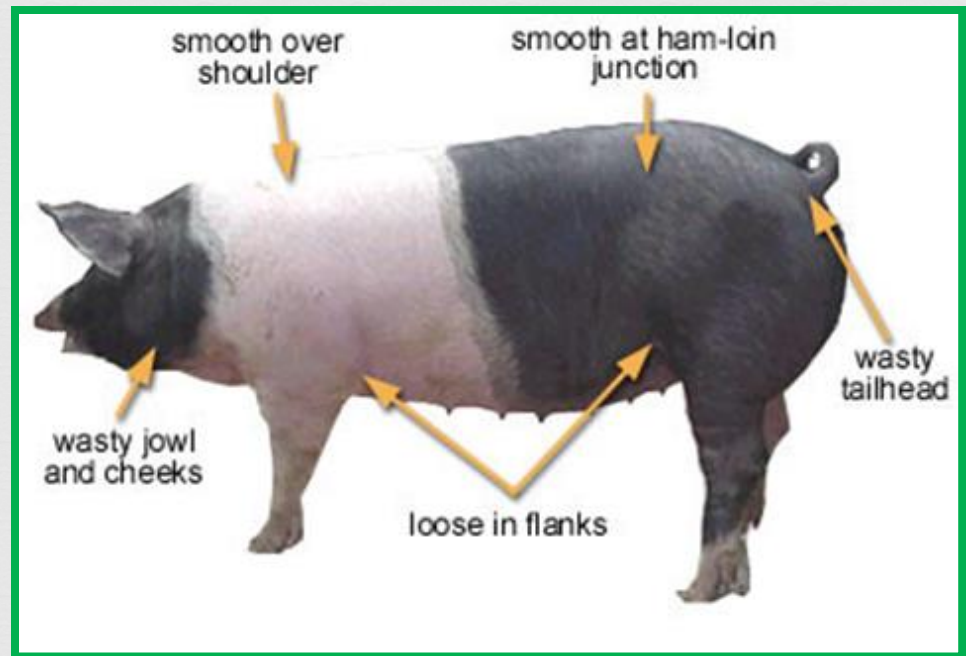
Judging Market Hogs



Too Fat



Too fat



Notice pig is wider over the top than at the base

Judging Market Hogs



Extremely Lean



Smooth, tight jowl and underline, indentation at ham-loin junction, dimple above tailhead

Lean Market Barrow



Clean and firm in flanks, well defined ham-loin junction, clean & trim in crotch

Judging Market Hogs



œ Evaluating Structure & Soundness

œ Best viewed beginning at the ground and working upward

œ Give attention to:

œ Feet & pasterns

œ Hocks

œ Knees

œ Rump

œ Shoulders



Judging Market Hogs



Feet & Pasterns

Feet

- Big, with even toes
- Squarely set forward

Pasterns

- Set at 45 degree angle to ground
- Maximum cushion & flexibility



Good feet, squarely set & pasterns with correct angle

Judging Market Hogs



Poor Structure



Dewclaws touching the ground, too much set to pasterns

Poor Structure



Feet turned outward, restricts flexibility, additional joint stress

Judging Market Hogs



- ❧ Hocks should be constructed of:
 - ❧ Flat, clean bone
 - ❧ Approximately 20 degrees of set

Correct set and curvature
to the hocks



Judging Market Hogs



Post-legged



Hocks too straight, round bone design, lacks flexibility

Unsoundness



Swollen or "puffy joints from hocks being too straight

Judging Market Hogs



☞ Knees should:

☞ Be straight or slightly set backward

☞ Provide cushion & flex to front end

Correct set to the knees.
Note the slight backward
set or curvature.



Judging Market Hogs



Calf-kneed



Knees have too much set or curvature

Buck-kneed



Inadequate length between the foot and knee

Judging Market Hogs



- ❧ Rump structure should be:
 - ❧ Average or above average in length
 - ❧ Level to slightly sloping from front to back
- ❧ This type rump allows for:
 - ❧ Maximum power & strength
 - ❧ Additional flexibility
 - ❧ Good length of stride



Judging Market Hogs



Rump too steep



Rump extremely too steep



Rumps too short & steep restrict movement and cause extra stress on other joints.

Judging Market Hogs



- œ Shoulders should have:
 - œ Adequate set to allow front leg to extend at a correct angle
- œ Shoulder set is directly related to length of stride

Correct slope and set
to the shoulder



Judging Market Hogs



Shoulder too straight



Gives appearance of shoulder being forced forward into the neck, resulting in short strides off front end

Extremely straight



Severely limits flexibility through front end, puts tremendous pressure on the knee and pastern joints

Test Your Skills



Place this class of market hogs.



Official Placing



Official Placing: 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
Cuts: 2 - 4 - 6

1st



4

2nd



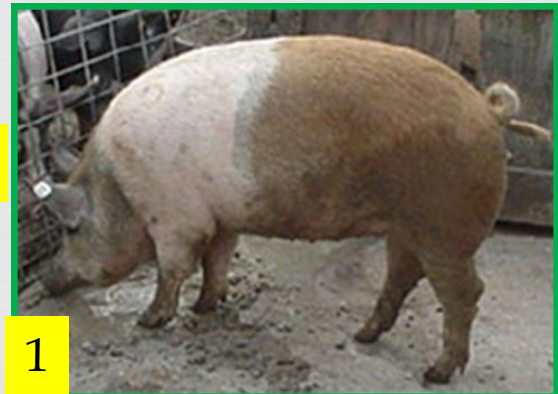
3

3rd



2

4th



1