So...you want to raise a hog?

Raising a hog for a livestock project takes a lot of work, time and effort. Are you ready for the challenge? If so, keep reading! This newsletter will provide you an overview of the ins and outs of raising a hog project and showing and selling your project at the Washington County Youth Fair.

Project Timeline

**November**
- Purchase your hog
- Record beginning weight
- Brush and work with your pig daily
- Enter information in record book

**December**
- Weigh hog
- Calculate average daily gain to estimate fair weight
- Wash and work out hog regularly

**January**
- Weigh hog
- Make sponsor and buyer contacts
- Wash your hog regularly
- Brush and work out hog regularly with hog bat or cane
- Review show rules

**February**
- **Washington County Youth Fair Entry Deadline February 1**
- Washington County Youth Fair Show and Sale

Did you know this comes from pigs???
- Insulin from the pancreas
- Gelatin from the bones
- Footballs from the hides
- Heart valves for human transplants
- Insulation from hair
- Crayons, floor wax, cosmetics, cellophane, cement, chalk, antifreeze all come from fatty acids and glycerin
Designing your hog pen

- Hogs need a **minimum** of 15 square feet. This means you should have a 3’ X 5’ pen for each animal.
- Larger pens are fine—the hog will get more exercise, build more muscle and stay leaner.
- Hogs are social animals. Hogs raised together will outperform hogs that are raised alone as long as feed is not limited, and they are from the same farm.
- Hanging a rubber inner tube in the pen for a toy will increase gains and reduce fighting.
- Concrete, followed by wood, are the best floor materials because you can keep them dry and clean. But this is a market project, and dirt is much cheaper. Dirt floors are harder to keep dry and manure free.
- Pen design is very important. 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.
- Hogs will spill or lay in their water trough to try and cool off.
- You may want your gate near the lowers end of the pen so it’s easy to clean out.

This is a sample design using three 16 ft. hog panels with one cut in half for the ends. This pen would be big enough for up to 8 hogs with a final cost of about $100 including the feeder and automatic waterer.
Feeding your Pig

- **Provide fresh, clean water.**
  - Automatic waterers are best. Check daily to make sure it is working properly.
  - As an alternative, a water trough that can be easily cleaned and not turned over is fine as long as the water is continually fresh.

- **Provide a fresh supply of feed.**
  - Hand feeding twice a day is best.
  - Automatic feeders provide a better alternative for once a day feedings.
  - 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.
- Record each feed purchase as you buy so that you won’t forget how much you’ve been feeding.

### How much weight should your hog gain?

3 pounds of feed = 1 pound of gain in a hog

- Needs to gain 1.5-2 pounds/day

<table>
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<th>Body Weight</th>
<th>% Protein</th>
<th>Lbs. of Feed/Day</th>
<th>Average Daily Gain</th>
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<td>2.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>190</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>210 +</td>
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<td>8.5</td>
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Learning to keep accurate records is an essential part of all 4-H projects. Not only do records serve as a testament to all your hard work, they also

- Help you evaluate the true cost and value of your project
- Serve as a handy place to track expenses
- Allow you a place to reflect on what your project has meant to you
- Are a valuable tool for tracking animal health.

It’s important to work on your record books regularly from the onset of your project. Set aside an hour or so every week to record the week’s purchases and receipts and to work on your project story and pictures.

It’s a good idea to keep a “sloppy copy” on hand for your weekly work, and then transfer your work into a final “clean copy” just before it’s due.

Record books are evaluated on neatness, completeness, accuracy and evidence of work. Let’s look at each of these categories a little closer.

**NEATNESS:** Is your book clean and free from stains, rips, wrinkles, eraser marks, etc.? Is your handwriting clear and easy to read? Did you avoid scribbling over mistakes? Is your book neatly bound?

**COMPLETENESS:** Are all the blanks filled out? Use N/A if the blank is not applicable to your project. Write none if it was applicable but not done. Write a 0 if there is no value. Do you have all the required signatures? Are all the sections of adequate length?

**ACCURACY:** Are all of your calculations correct? Do you have true values and not just rounded estimates? Are your inventory, miscellaneous expenses and feed costs correctly categorized? Are your subtotals carried?

**EVIDENCE of WORK:** Does your story follow the outline? Is it of sufficient length and largely free of spelling or grammar errors? Do you at least have the minimum number of pictures that show you doing work and not just your captions should be informative and educational. They should tell the reader both WHAT you are doing and WHY you are doing it!

Here’s an example with four captions. Can you tell which is the best caption?

1. Me and my hog.
2. What a pretty piggy!
3. I keep my pig moving in the ring to show his muscle and form.
4. Showmanship contest.

Which is the most informative and educational caption???
Inventory vs. Expenses

When recording your purchases, it’s important to know the difference between inventory and expenses.

**INVENTORY**: Items that you purchased, had given to you or already had on hand that will REMAIN at the end of the project. Inventory examples are halters, show sticks, fencing, buckets, pitchforks and wheelbarrows.

**EXPENSES**: Items that you purchased, had given to you or already had that will be USED UP during or by the end of your project. These might include fly spray, transportation fees, medical expenses or a show cane that you lost. Feed expenses are accounted for separately in your record book. Save your receipts to make tracking your expenses easier.

Keeping Healthy Hogs

- Frequent observation is important!
- Digestive diseases—watery feces over a 24 hour period or that is white or has blood or mucous in it. Diarrhea can be caused by parasites, chemicals, feedstuffs or diet changes.
- Respiratory diseases (Pneumonia) - water eyes, constant heavy breathing, runny nose, continual sneezing, limited or no weight gain, prolonged dry coughing.
- Call your vet if you notice these problems over a 24 hour period!

Swine Flu Precautions

- If you have a fever, do not work with your hog until you are fever free for a minimum of 24 hours.
- Work your hog with barn boots on—leave them at the barn. Do not wear shoes that you wear around town, to school, etc.
- Boots should stay at the barn to prevent transmitting anything back to your home.

Biosecurity Basics

Biosecurity relates to protecting your farm, your animals and yourself from infections and illness. It is important to follow biosecurity practices no matter how big or small your farm.

**Practical Methods of Reducing your Biosecurity Risk**

- Isolate all purchased animals for a minimum of two weeks.
- When you return from a show or other situations where there was contact with other animals, isolate your show animals for a minimum of two weeks.
- Watch your animals closely for at least two weeks after any exposure to observe any signs of developing disease. Call your veterinarian at the first sign of sickness.
- Make sure trucks and trailers used to haul your animals are clean and disinfected.
- Avoid sharing grooming equipment and feed and water containers. Clean and disinfect your equipment when you return from shows.
- Wash with soap and water after handling your animals and put on clean clothes. Keep your boots clean. Wear rubber boots when working with your animal and disinfect them after each use.
- Be cautious about who has contact with your animals. Visitors to your farm should wear clean clothes that have not been in contact with other animals. Make sure their shoes and boots are clean and disinfected.
- At the fair or show, be sure your animals have access to clean water and feed in containers you bring from home. Minimize nose-to-nose contact with other animals as much as possible.
Showing off your hog

It all begins at home with daily practice and working with your hog!

- Train your pig to walk with its head up
- As soon as you enter the show ring, locate the judge.
- Show intensity by being focused.
- 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 and look like you are following it.
- Use a slow pace.
- Don’t overuse your whip or cane.
- Posture should be slightly bent over with the whip or cane level with the hog’s back.
- Never place your whip/cane between the pig and judge.

When do you brush your pig?

DAILY

- To get it used to you
- Every day to train its hair—front to rear in a downward motion

IN THE RING

- When the pig gets dirty
- When the judge handles the pig
- Keep your brush in your pocket or behind your back when not in use

To learn more...

- Attend showmanship clinics or workshops to learn more.
- Go to area fair to watch kids showing their hogs.
- Practice showmanship at home and have mom or dad judge you.