

# CAMP VERDE SWINE PROJECT HANDBOOK

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this handbook is to assist you in successfully raising a market swine project. The information contained in the following pages will act as a guideline. It must be understood that this material is not the only information you will need to raise your animal, but it does cover the most common aspects of the project. Should any questions arise concerning your project, don't hesitate to contact your project advisor for help.

Good luck on your endeavor of raising a market hog project. With hard work and dedication, your project will be a success!

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## **WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW BEFORE BUYING A SWINE PROJECT**

1. A swine project can be a very exciting and rewarding experience or a very frustrating and discouraging project depending on the amount of time and energy you put into the project.
2. The duration of a market swine project is anywhere from 3-4 months. It is important that as much attention be given to your project during the last months as is given during the first months.
3. Raising market swine is not a hit and miss proposition, you must be consistent in how you raise your animal. Achieving maximum results requires maximum input from you. In other words, you get out of your project what you put into it.
4. It is critical that a person understands that the animal will be dependent on you for every aspect of its well-being including feed, water, shelter, health, exercise, etc. You must be willing to provide for each of these areas on a daily basis for the duration of the project.

## **GETTING READY FOR YOUR SWINE PROJECT**

1. If you are housing your animal at the Camp Verde Ag. Farm facility, you will need to do the following:
  - a. Fill out a Pen Rent Contract.
  - b. Disinfect your pen with bleach.
  - c. Make sure the waterer and feeder works.
2. If you plan to raise your animal at home, make sure your pen is properly prepared prior to receiving your swine project. The pen should meet the following requirements:
  - a. It should be large enough to allow your animal to exercise (About 15' x 20' is adequate).
  - b. Shade/shelter should be provided in the pen (over a concrete slab).
  - c. Adequate feeding and watering facilities must be provided.
  - d. The fencing should be free of loose wires, loose boards, protruding nails, etc... The floor should also be free of boards, wire, nails, etc.
  - e. It should be sturdy enough to prevent the animal from getting out.
3. You should purchase your feed 1 -2 days prior to receiving your animal. Check with your advisor on the kind of feed to purchase and from whom.

## **PURCHASING YOUR ANIMAL**

1. There are different ways to purchase a swine project. No one way is right or wrong. You need to determine what is best for you in terms of your budget. The most common ways of buying an animal are:
  - a. Purchase your animal through your advisor. Your advisor will travel to various swine producers to select and purchase market animals. He then brings them to school where students will then select their animals.
  - b. Purchase an animal on your own. You **MUST** have advisor approval to do this.
  - c. Purchase your animal through a sale. Sometimes you find good deals at sales, but usually you end up paying a little more for your animal.
2. Whichever way you choose to purchase your animal, make sure that you consult with your project advisor prior to buying it. You should obtain a bill of sale from the seller to keep for your records.

## **STARTING OFF RIGHT**

1. As soon as you get your animal, it is imperative that you observe your animal closely for any signs of illness. Generally, if swine are hauled a long distance, the chance of illness is greater than those hauled shorter distances. Signs to watch for include runny eyes and/or nose, droopy head, and inactivity. It will take a few days for the animal to acclimate itself to its new surroundings.
2. Your animal may not want to eat the first day or so. This is normal. However, if it is not eating by the second day, you should contact your advisor. (Refer to the section on feeding for more information.)
3. Training the animal as early as possible is important. The quicker the animal can be gentled down and work for you the better. It is much easier to teach a smaller animal to work than a larger one. **DON'T WAIT!!**

## **FEEDING YOUR MARKET SWINE PROJECT**

1. Nutrition is the single most important aspect of raising a quality market swine project. Consistency is the key word when feeding swine with regards to the type of feed, amount of feed, and feeding schedule. A proper feeding program can make the difference between a high quality animal and a poor quality animal.
2. One of the most overlooked elements of a good feeding program is water. The water your animal drinks should be fresh, clean, and cool at all times. Dirty or stagnant water can have an affect on the health of your animal. The water trough should be cleaned on a regular basis, preferably daily. A good rule of thumb on water is that if you wouldn't drink it, your animal probably wouldn't drink it either if given a choice. If using an automatic watering

system, make sure the pipes are not in direct sunlight as this will warm the water.

3. Your advisor will direct you on how to feed your animal. Feed recommendations are based on individual differences in weight, rate of gain, and conformation. It is important to know exactly how much you are feeding so that accurate average daily gains can be calculated. This information will tell you whether you are on track to meet the desired projected weight for your animal.
4. If you are raising your animal at home, or hand-feeding, it is very important to set feeding times in the morning and evening and then stick to them. There should be no more than a 15 minute variation in feeding times from day to day. Drastic changes in the feeding times can have an adverse affect on your animal in terms of appetite and health.
5. Whenever a new feed, or increase in feed is introduced, the change should be made gradually over a period of time. Never change feed or feed quantities without checking with your advisor.
6. Make sure that the animal is eating all the feed at each feeding. Feed that is not consumed by the next feeding should be removed and the amount fed should be reduced in proportion to the amount left over. Increase the amount any time the feed is completely consumed by the next feeding, but increases should be limited to one half pound per day.
7. If your animal goes off feed for more than one day, contact your advisor or a veterinarian immediately. Generally, lack of appetite is one of the first signs of illness. The sooner the illness is detected, the easier it is to treat. Any type of illness will cause a decrease in the daily gain and could affect the desired end weight.
8. It may be necessary to add a feed supplement to the ration. The supplement will help in increasing growth, appetite, feed efficiency, health, and stress resistance. Check with your advisor before adding a supplement to your feeding program.

### **CARING FOR YOUR MARKET SWINE PROJECT**

1. At least once a day, look your animal over carefully to see if everything appears all right. Check for the way it walks, for sores or cuts, for scours, or for runny nose or fast breathing. If any of these occurs, consult your advisor immediately.
2. Clean your pen at least once a day. Make sure the water and feed are OK.
3. As soon as possible, start to walk your animal. This is both for exercise and to practice for showmanship. Do this once a day before feeding.
4. Do not administer any medications without consulting your advisor or a veterinarian first.

## **SHOWMANSHIP**

1. The main purpose of showmanship is to present your animal to the judge in a manner that will make your animal look its best. Showing can emphasize strong points and de-emphasize weak points of the animal.
2. Success in showing begins at home. You and your animal cannot learn proper showing techniques at the last minute. It is important that you practice as often as possible. Showing can be a very rewarding experience if you take the time to learn how to show. When starting out, not only the animal must be trained, but the exhibitor must be "trained" as well.
3. Listed below are a few general characteristics of a good showman.

A good showman:

- a. Is confident in his/her abilities.
- b. Understands the importance and purpose of proper showing techniques.
- c. Is alert in the show ring.
- d. Knows where the judge is at all times.
- e. Is conscience of the appearance of his/her animal at all times?
- f. Works the animal calmly and smoothly.
- g. Is not distracted by people or events outside the show ring.
- h. Starts showing from the time he/she enters the ring until he/she leaves the ring at the conclusion of the class.
- i. Is courteous to the other exhibitors in the ring.
- j. Displays good sportsmanship by congratulating the winners and accepting congratulations graciously.
- k. Gives his/her best effort every time he/she is in the show ring.

## **SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT**

1. The following IS a list of supplies and equipment needed for your swine project.
  - a. Cane
  - b. Hair conditioner
  - c. Nylon brush
  - d. Spray bottle
  - e. Dish soap

## HOW MUCH WILL THIS PROJECT COST?

1. Listed below are the common items and their approximate costs of a market swine project.

ITEM	EXPENSES
Swine	\$250.00
Feed	\$200.00
Veterinary Supplies	\$20.00
Fair Expenses	\$50.00
Insurance	\$20.00
<b>Total Estimated Cost</b>	<b>\$540.00</b>

Swine cost vary from \$200 to \$400. It is suggested that you purchase on the lower end of the range. The Department will be making arrangements to purchase animals. Let us know your needs and price range. On delivery you will need to pay for your animal.

## HOW DO I SELL MY PROJECT AND HOW MUCH CAN I MAKE?

1. One of the first questions most new swine exhibitors ask is how much can I make on my project?" This question is a valid one. Most students figure that if you spend a great deal of money on the project, the returns should also be great. Unfortunately, this statement is not always accurate. The animal will be sold at the fair through a public auction with the animal being sold to the highest bidder. These buyers are under no obligation to support and buy these livestock projects. It is your job to find buyers for your animal. You must remember that you are selling a product and you must approach this part of your project as a salesman. The buyers will not come to you, you must go to them.
2. Before you approach a prospective buyer, you must first understand how the process works so that you can accurately answer any questions that may arise in your conversation with the buyer. You begin by calculating your break-even price. By dividing the estimated fair weight of the animal into the total cost, you will know how much per pound needed to break even. The next part of the process is to know what the buyer's options are with the animal once it has been sold. The most common option used is the resale or buy-back. The buyer simply pays the difference between the current market price and their bid. The animal is then sold by the fair to a commercial packer for the current market price. The buyer does not take possession of the animal. With the other two options, the buyer takes possession of the animal or carcass. The custom processing option allows the buyer to choose where the animal will be processed. The animal is taken to this location by the fair, and the cut and wrapped meat is then picked up by the buyer. The live pick-up option allows the buyer to take possession of the live animal from the fair.

3. You must also be able to explain to the buyer what benefits they receive from buying your project. A buyer basically receives two benefits -advertising at the auction and a tax deduction. The only amount of the purchase price that can be deducted is any amount paid over and above the current market price.
4. Armed with this information, you can begin your search for buyers. Anyone can buy an animal at the fair, but the most common buyers are local businesses. The two most common methods of finding buyers are through personal contact or by writing letters to prospective buyers. Personal contact is a much preferred method because the buyer has the chance to meet the owner of the animal and ask any questions concerning the project or selling process. The letter writing method does not afford these opportunities. When meeting with a buyer, the student should approach the buyer in a business-like manner; calling ahead and making an appointment with them, dressing in the official FFA or PALS uniform, being prepared, etc.
5. Above all, be persistent in your search for a buyer. You may be turned down a few times before finding someone willing to buy your animal. Don't give up. The financial success of your project depends on you finding a buyer. You may want to find more than one buyer in the event one of them does not show up at the auction.
6. Another key element to "successfully selling your animal is to approach buyers early. Don't wait until just before the fair to start contacting people. You will not be the only person at the fair selling an animal. Begin several months prior to the fair. Many buyers will buy from the first person that contacts them. Avoid the rush, start early.
7. To find out more specific information concerning the auction process, approaching buyers, commonly asked questions, etc., contact your project advisor.

## **DUTIES OF SWINE EXHIBITORS**

1. Follow all instructions given to you by your advisor. Communication is the key to a successful project.
2. Clean your pens daily. Scrape the dried manure into the gutter, wash down the pen, and clean the gutter.
3. Make sure your animal does not go without feed (even for one feeding). Plan ahead!
4. All exhibitors will be required to meet with their advisor periodically to discuss the progress of their animal, to weigh the animal, and for informational meetings. All meetings with the advisor will be scheduled as much as possible around the student's schedules.
5. The Camp Verde FFA/PALS Advisors employ a "three -strike" system. If for any reason you do not abide by any of the rules and/or guidelines set forth in this handbook, you will receive a "strike" for each violation. After three "strikes", YOU'RE OUT!
6. If you encounter any problems at all concerning your market swine project, someone else's animals, or the facilities, please contact your advisor immediately!

