

# **PIG CARE GUIDE**



## **PIG START UP:**

- Modern show pigs usually look their best at about 6-8 months of age. So, when purchasing your pigs select appropriate aged pigs for the show you plan to go to.
- A competitive pig will cost \$500-750+, you can get one for less if you look hard
  - Pigs can get up to \$1,500+ however this doesn't mean you will automatically win. Poor feeding can make a top notch pig go to waste
- Barrow: Market animal (castrated male)
  - Terminal shows mean the barrow will not come home after you show
  - Examples include but not limited to San Antonio, Houston, and some county shows
  - "Premium" shows mean it is non-terminal
- Gilt: Breeding animal (young female that has not had a litter yet)
- When selecting a pig, talk with your AST to get with a reputable breeder!!

## **Costs to Expect (after building a pen):**

- Entry Fees
  - Most major shows are \$30 per pig
  - Most jackpot shows are about \$25 for the show, and \$5 for an optional showmanship
- Hotel rooms (if you go to majors)
- Gate and parking passes for major shows
  - Most gate and parking passes are \$45 per pass. Exhibitor gets 1 free pass so family must purchase their own
- Feed (Most good quality feeds will cost near \$20 per 50lb bag)
- Supplements
- Shavings (usually cost \$5 per bag, use multiple bags at a time- you will need to change shavings regularly!!)
- Have about \$500 set aside for emergency vet bills- hopefully you don't have to use it!
- Wormers
- Other Misc. such as tack, lotions, shampoos, etc.

# PIG CARE GUIDE

## Shopping List:

(Website to purchase: <https://www.sullivansupply.com/product-category/hogs/>)

\*can also get most of this at Tractor Supply, stock show vendors, or other feed stores.

- Practice pig whip
- Show pig whip
- Pump up spray bottle
- Pig Face Brush (smaller and has very soft bristles)
- Regular Show Pig Brush (usually has a handle and is very coarse and thick bristles)
- Skin-So-Soft, Luster's Pink Lotion, Skin Shield or some sort of oiled skin conditioner (DO NOT USE THESE ON SHOW DAY)
- Exhibitor Clip
- Buckets
- Waterer (with nipple- not a trough)
- Hanging feed bucket



Deciding which type of whip to use depends on the pig, however I suggest starting with a firmer whip like the ones on the right.



Using a feeder that is fully rounded will allow your pig to get more of the feed than the ones with flat backs and a sharp corner in the feeder- it is also easier to clean!

Pigs will not keep a trough/bucket clean as a way of permanent water system like other animals. A pig watering nipple should be attached to an automatic watering system, a PVC pipe waterer or even out of a trough or trashcan. Be sure to keep a lid or cover over their water supply to keep it clean.

# PIG CARE GUIDE

**Daily Care:** exercise, feed, and skin conditioning (this should take close to an hour a day)

- 30 Minutes **MINIMUM EACH DAY** spending one on one time with pigs
  - Pigs are extremely intelligent and social, the more time you spend with them, the easier your life will be when training them!!
- Skin conditioning treatment- take whatever skin conditioner you choose and brush it into their skin to keep them from having skin issues
  - DO not use Dawn soap frequently when giving baths- if the pig has a skin infection, parasite, or a really tough stain then you can use it but don't make a habit of it- it will dry them out!
- Walking- YOU. NEED. TO. WALK. YOUR. PIG. EVERY. SINGLE. DAY. Even if it is just 10-15 minutes!! Focus on keeping their head up, continuing to walk and staying a controlled speed.
  - Tips for keeping head up: Dip a show stick in honey or vanilla and hang it over their head as you walk them. (another show stick to drive them)
  - Tips for walking at a controlled speed: Have a second person stand in front of you and your pig with treats (common treats pigs like: m&m's, marshmallows, cheese puffs, nilla wafers, and other cookies). This will help keep the pig at bay, if the pig darts off, somebody needs to slam a stick or their leg in front of them to encourage them to stop. The treats can help by keeping the pig to learn how to steer (as they offer treats, they need to be walking left and right as you tap them with the show stick. This will help them learn how to "drive" too.



1.

1. This is BAD! Your pig should not keep its head down, root, etc. It will cause its back to look humped up and not express the quality of their conformation.

3.



2.

2. This is DECENT. If your pig does this in the show ring, tap under his chin lightly with your whip to remind them to carry it higher.

3. This is GOOD. The pig should carry his head high, use your whip to lightly tap under their chin/cheek



4. This is PERFECT! The pig needs to carry their head high enough to where you can see the tip of their nose above their head when you stand behind them.



# **PIG CARE GUIDE**

## **Feeding:**

- There are 3 stages to feeding a pig: Starter, Grower and Finisher
- Pigs can eat between 6-8lbs per day after 75lbs.
  - Feed 3-4lbs each feeding if your pig can finish and needs to be pushed
  - Feed 2-3lbs each feeding if it needs to be maintained
  - Feed 1-2lbs each feeding if it needs to be held
  - This is the total weight- if you feed oats and/or supplements, take that into consideration
- Pigs gain on average 1.5lbs per day- it is much easier to “push” a pig than “hold” so **pay attention to weight minimums and maximums for the shows you plan to go to.**
  - At most, pigs can gain 3lbs per day but this is HARD to do and hard on your pig. Do not depend on this number!
- Your pigs need to eat good feed in order to be competitive.
- Sunglo, Moorman’s and Lindner’s are the top end feeds.
  - PURINA pig feed is not ideal, however they do have good supplements!
  - Pigs need to be fed TWICE a day. If they do not eat all of their morning or evening feed, take it away after 30ish minutes. Keep this up until they learn to finish all their food in one sitting.

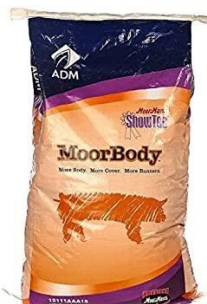
### Feeding Tips:

- Pigs should be offered ¼ pound to 1 pound of rolled oats each feeding, if your pig is “hard sided” and needs more cover and fat, use a pound. If they are heavier set and have plenty of cover, use a ¼ pound.
- Adding yogurt to feed can help increase probiotics and help with gut health. Use a plain flavored yogurt and mix in with feed.
- Many suggest adding sweeteners such as cake mix or syrup into feed when pigs won’t eat, I do not suggest this because they can become “picky” and won’t eat without it in the future- only do this if necessary
- Some feeds are pelleted and some are powder, you may need to pick a feed your pig prefers to encourage eating
  - If you feed a powder feed, make sure to add water. Some pigs prefer less water and the feed almost a paste texture and others prefer lots of water for a slop consistency.
- If your pig won’t drink enough water, add Kool-Aid or Gatorade powder to water. Do not add too much and follow label mixing instructions. Add just enough to flavor their water. Water should NOT turn blue/red/purple/etc. but just have a hint of the color.
- Add electrolytes in water 3 days before show
  - Refresh is a good choice
  - If your pig is “tight-moving”, don’t give them an electrolyte with sugar.
- Common supplements
  - High Octane Champion Drive: (1lb/day) To help muscling, feed a high protein feed or topdress



# PIG CARE GUIDE

- **High Octane Ultra Full:** (1lb-3lbs per day) For help in the flank area and lower third of the body cavity
- **MoorBody:** (0.5 -2lbs/day) fiber and highly saturated fat to help develop a hard finish and enhance appearance of skin and hair coat. It also provides citrus and beet pulp to create gut fill, expanding rib capacity
- **Sumo:** sheen and fat cover. Enhances bloom through all development stages.
- **Dyne:** (3oz per day) Each ounce of Dyne provides 150 calories for extra energy for peak performance
- **Paylean:** increases average daily gain and produce more muscle, and less fat- try to avoid if possible. Only use the last 45-90lbs of gain
  - **\*\*\*\*Unsound, heavily muscled, or stress positive pigs don't need Paylean\*\*\*\***
  - **\*\*\*\*Texas is one of the only states that allows Paylean- it may be banned before long so MAKE SURE TO READ ALL RULES ON ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES FOR YOUR SHOW BEFORE FEEDING!\*\*\*\***
- **Sunglo Explode:** (alternative to Paylean that is safer choice)
  - 4oz per day to increase appetite and gain
  - 8oz per day to build muscle mass



## Feeding Regimen:

- **Starter Stage:** Feed 1lb of feed each feeding for 10 days, then increase feeding by ¼lb until they aren't able to finish their meal
  - **Grower Stage:** Continue to feed as much as they will eat. Give supplements as needed. 100 days before the show, weigh in and see if your pig is on track or gaining too much/not enough to determine if you should add more feed or cut feed back.
  - **Finisher Stage:** 45 days out from show. Evaluate their weight gain to determine if pig needs to be pushed or held back.
    - Push: 3-4lbs of feed, supplements as needed, ½-1lb of oats
    - Hold: 1lb-1.5lbs of feed, supplements as needed, ¼lbs oats
1. Remember that muscle is protein. If you purchase a pig that is moderate to light muscled, you probably should look at feeding a 19% to 20% crude protein pig feed until the pig weighs at least 75 lbs.
    - If the pig you have purchased is heavily muscled, you may want to feed a lower crude protein feed, like 16%-18% early on to help the pig from developing "too much" muscle, and therefore becoming tight moving.
    - After a pig has reached 75lbs, feed will continue to be monitored and change if you see your pig getting too fat or too muscled, gaining too much or not enough and adjust.
      - If oats, supplements and lower protein feed don't do enough to get good fat cover on your pig, mix show fed with sow feed 50/50.

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## Husbandry:

- Your pig's pen needs to be large enough for them to be able to move around (minimum 6'X10')
  - If you have an outdoor pen, I suggest having a 3 and a half sided structure that has shavings/bedding, heat lamp when it's cold, fan when it's hot, that they can get out of the weather in.
  - This will 99% likely be the place that they will use for resting and will not poop/pee in this area. However, if they do, you HAVE to change shavings regularly.
- Concrete flooring
  - Easier to clean and better to maintain clean hair and skin
  - Make sure to use a stall mat in one spot and plenty of shavings throughout
  - \*Pressure wash with bleach and vinegar between pigs\*
- Dirt flooring
  - Sand preferred
  - Better for pigs with structural issues or arthritis



*Pens for one pig at the House  
Pens for multiple hogs or the school barn*





# PIG CARE GUIDE

## Illness Care:

- **Constipation:**
  - Pepto-Bismol (human dose equivalent)
  - 2oz of mineral oil
  - Gatorade (as much as they will drink)
  - Rub their belly to help loosen up the compaction
- **Scours (diarrhea)**
  - Pepto-Bismol (human dose equivalent)
  - SpectoGuard
- **Vomiting**
  - Pepto-Bismol 3X a day for a week unless the vomiting ends
  - If continues, contact a vet
- **Worming**
  - deworm every 30 days if on dirt, and 60 days if indoors/on concrete switching between Safeguard and Ivermectin
- **Dippity**
  - Clean with peroxide and give an antibiotic shot of some kind
  - Rub penicillin topically on it
  - If pig is showing to be in pain, Use some banamine or aspirin to help keep them comfortable
  - Control flies



sooner



- **Hernia**
  - Take to vet immediately!

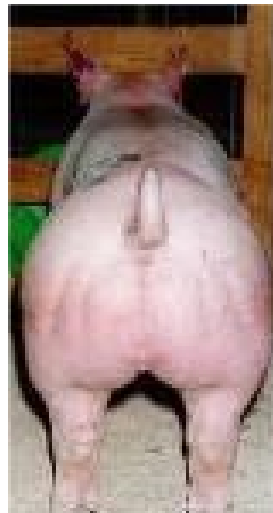




# PIG CARE GUIDE

## Quality of hogs:

Good Quality





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Decent Quality



Poor Quality

Narrow Width

