Introduction

A topic often discussed in mainstream media is animal welfare. In recent years, video images of improper treatment of animals have surfaced, and the treatment of food animals has been a topic of controversy that has even landed on the floor of congressional debate. As a youth activity, livestock exhibition should be at the forefront of setting the tone for the proper treatment of animals in years to come.

Unlike some other states, Indiana has not enacted legislation mandating food animal production practices. However, with the number of people becoming disassociated with food animal production, it is clear that failing to promote proper animal welfare can paint a poor image for animal agriculture. Indiana 4-H firmly believes that by educating our youth on how to properly care for their animals, we will have taken an essential step to ‘bridging the gap' that continues to widen between animal agriculturalists and the general public.

Sometimes, the stress experienced by the youth and adults involved in livestock exhibition causes them to overlook the stress being placed on the animals. A stressful time at any show is during weigh-in, and, in some cases, the animal itself experiences the most undue stress. When feed and water have been withheld from animals, not only can cooperation and health of the animal be compromised, but also animal handlers often times become impatient, which leads to increased frustration levels of all those involved with the process.

-Dr. Jodi Sterle, Texas Swine Extension Specialist and Superintendent of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Swine Show, had this to say about the declared weight system when Indiana 4-H was examining the change in the fall of 2009:

“All of our shows declare weights. This is something that I really tried hard to implement about 6 years ago when we had more stressors...It took me a while to wrap my head around it, but I finally asked myself - do I really want this barrow, who weighed 284 at home, to be sucked down to go across the scales (adding more time, manpower and stress to the show), only to be bulked back up again after weighing in and before showing? This is a lot of undue stress.”

In an effort to promote animal welfare, Indiana 4-H has implemented the declared weight system at the 2010 Indiana State Fair 4-H Swine Show. The following information has been developed in an attempt to seamlessly transition from the previous method and adopt a very similar system that has been used for years at the Indiana State Fair Open Barrow Show. In addition to this change, some minor alterations that were discussed at the fall 2009 Indiana State Fair Breed Managers meeting have also been approved., They will be addressed in this document as well.

Information about the 4-H Swine Show begins on page 62 of the 2010 4-H/FFA Indiana State Fair Handbook/Premium List. The swine information can be found at http://www.in.gov/statefair/fair/competition/4h_handbook.html.
Common Practice for Swine Weigh-in

**Traditional Weight System**

- The pig naturally weighs 260 lbs.
- The pig weighs-in at the show at 250 lbs.
- The pig is shown at their natural weight of 260 lbs.

To gain a perceived competitive advantage, the feeding, watering, and exercising protocol for the pig is modified to reduce its weight so it can be shown in a lighter weight class.

In an effort to gain a perceived competitive advantage, the feeding, watering, and exercising protocol for the pig is modified once again so the weight can be returned to its natural state.

Increased Stress Period!

2-3 Days Prior to Weigh-in

Weigh-in

Reweigh after class (ISF rules ± 15 lbs. of show weight)

**Declared Weight System**

- The pig naturally weighs 260 lbs.
- The pig’s show weight is declared at 250 lbs. regardless of their actual weight
- The pig is shown at their natural weight of 260 lbs.

There is no need to modify the feeding, watering, and exercising protocol to gain a perceived competitive advantage because the exhibitor can declare the pig’s show weight.

There is no need to modify the feeding, watering, and exercising protocol to return the pig to its natural weight, because it has never been altered.

No Increased Stress Period due to modified feeding, watering, and exercising protocol

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2-3 Days Prior to Weigh-in

Weigh-in

Reweigh after class (ISF rules ± 15 lbs. of show weight)
How will this work?
The weigh-in procedure in 2010 is very similar to the 2009 procedure, with just one change. Examine the comparison of the two years below to see just how similar it will be in 2010.

Comparison of the 2009 and 2010 Indiana State Fair Swine Show Weigh-in Procedure (changes appear in bold)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Animal arrives in holding pen of either the East or West show ring depending on breed</td>
<td>-Animal arrives in holding pen of either the East or West show ring depending on breed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Animal is moved from holding pen to placing pen to be examined by breed sifter and/or 4-H staff</td>
<td>-Animal is moved from holding pen to placing pen to be examined by breed sifter and/or 4-H staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>-All crossbreds and purebreds passing breed inspection move to tagging and weighing line</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Animals move through line, and are ear-tagged</td>
<td>-Animals move through line, and are ear-tagged</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Animal enters scales, and is weighed</td>
<td>-Animal enters scales, and is weighed</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Weight is determined to be the show weight and is recorded on weigh ticket</td>
<td>-Individual accompanying animal either accepts weight as the animals’ show weight, or declares an alternate weight to be used as the show weight. The show weight is recorded on weigh ticket</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Copy of weigh ticket is returned to individual accompanying animal</td>
<td>-Copy of weigh ticket is returned to individual accompanying animal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Animal exits scales and is returned to exhibitors pen</td>
<td>-Animal exits scales and is returned to exhibitors pen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Frequently Asked Questions
Below is a series of questions that have been asked regarding the declared weight system.

Q: This says declaring must take place before the pig leaves the scales. Is that true? How do I prepare for that?
A: Yes, that is how the process will be implemented at the 2010 Indiana State Fair so personnel will always be available to answer questions. We recommend using the test scales prior to coming to the official scales to prepare. That way when the pig is weighed on the official scales, an idea of what to declare has already been determined, as you will have an idea of what it should weigh. Read below for recommendations on how to determine the declared show weight.

Q: Which weight is the sale weight?
A: The buyer at the 2010 Indiana State Fair 4-H Show will accept the declared weight as the sale weight.

Q: Do I have to declare a show weight?
A: Yes, however, the official scale weight can simply be accepted as the show weight, or the individual entering the pig can decide to declare a different show weight as long as the pig is within the acceptable weight range.

Q: Which barrows can declare their show weight?
A: All barrows that weigh within the acceptable weight range used in past years for show entry (230-295 lbs.).
Q: I thought 280 lbs. was the maximum weight for barrows in the past. Is this not the case?
A: Barrows have been allowed to weigh between 281-295 lbs. in previous years, and their show weight has been recorded as 280 lbs. (in some instances, their actual weight was used to determine classes). Basically, swine weighing between 281-295 lbs. were allowed to declare their show weight as 280 lbs. in previous years.

Q: Does that mean that if my barrow weighs between 281-295 lbs. that I have to declare his show weight at 280 lbs.?
A: No, in an attempt to reduce confusion by minimizing changes, at the 2010 Indiana State Fair 4-H Show, all barrows that previously weighed between 230-295 lbs. at weigh-in are eligible to show. However, the show weight range is still 230-280 lbs., meaning that all declared show weights must fall between 230-280 lbs.

Q: So, it sounds like this isn't a new procedure for Indiana. Is that true?
A: Yes, the declared weight system has been used for years at the Indiana State Fair Open Barrow Show. Indirectly, it has been in place for barrows weighing 281-295 lbs. at the Indiana State Fair 4-H Show, and is commonly used on the Indiana Junior Swine Circuit.

Q: Is there still a 15 pound weigh-back at the end of class?
A: Yes, the top two placing pigs from each class will still be required to weigh within 15 lbs. of their declared show weight. Basically, the show will operate the same, except each exhibitor now has complete control over determining what weight their pig will show at.

Q: What weight is the 15 pound weigh-back at the end of class determined from?
A: The 15 pound weigh back will be determined from the declared show weight. This is the only weight that will be recorded on the weigh ticket.

Q: What do you mean ‘complete control over determining what weight their pig shows at’?
A: In the past, a common practice was to withhold feed and water from swine projects to manipulate their weight when they cross the scales, in hopes that they would weigh the optimal weight determined by the exhibitor. With this system, each exhibitor is able to determine the optimal show weight of their project without any need to withhold feed and water to manipulate their weight.

Q: What do you mean ‘without any need to withhold feed and water’?
A: Indiana 4-H has always promoted the proper treatment of animals, but with the system used in the past, some exhibitors felt it was necessary to withhold feed and water so their animal weighed a desired weight. Now, animals can remain on full feed and water during the entire process, and still show at the weight desired by the exhibitor.

Q: So with the declared weight system there is never a need to withhold feed and water?
A: Yes, if managed properly there is no competitive advantage to withhold feed and water. If the pig is full when it crosses the scale, is within the accepted weight range, and a manageable show weight is declared, the outcome of the show should be fair to both the 4-H members and the animals.

Q: What about pigs that weigh outside the 230-295 pound range at weigh-in?
A: Each exhibitor will be allowed one (1) reweigh as in the past for their project to weigh in the 230-295 pound weight range eligible to declare into the show. If exhibitors know that a modified feeding, watering, and exercising program is necessary for their project to be less than 295 lbs. at weigh-in, Indiana 4-H strongly encourages the health and wellness of the animal as the ultimate goal. Under no circumstances will Indiana 4-H condone withholding feed and water from livestock projects.

Q: How can I prevent withholding feed and water at all times?
A: Only bring animals that, when full of feed and water, naturally weigh between 230-295 lbs. Then, declare the show weight at a manageable weight so the pig can weigh within 15 lbs. at the conclusion of their class without restricting feed and water. A good rule of thumb for novice exhibitors is to accept the actual weight of the pig, or weigh them in full, subtract 5 lbs. from the full weight and declare that as the show weight. (Some examples are provided at the end of this document). By only reducing the weight by 5 lbs., you are factoring the potential growth of the pig (~2 lbs./day) while at the fair into your declared weight. This can prevent the need to withhold feed and water to be within the 15 pound reweigh after class.
**Q: Are there any new changes with gilts?**
A: Yes, there are a few to be aware of. At the fall 2009 Breed Managers Meeting, it was determined that to improve the quality of the gilt show ALL gilts should weigh 200 lbs. or more to show. This means that when gilts are tagged and weighed, even the purebred gilts must weigh over 200 lbs. to show.

**Q: Are exhibitors allowed to declare the show weight of their gilts?**
A: Only crossbred gilts will be declaring weights. They will use the same system as the barrows; however, the only weight restriction is the minimum of 200 lbs. Purebred gilts will still be shown by age, but must also weigh a minimum of 200 lbs. to be shown.

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**Declaring Show Weight Walkthroughs**

Below are some possible scenarios that may be encountered at the 2010 Indiana State Fair 4-H Swine Show. Keep in mind our recommendations are to be used as guidelines to aid in maximizing the educational value of the program. They are simply recommendations. Each exhibitor will be held responsible for declaring their project’s show weight.

"**My barrow or crossbred gilt weighed 265 lbs when they weighed-in, what are my options?**"

**Option 1**
Accept 265 lbs. as the show weight
- The maximum reweigh weight is now 280 lbs.
- The minimum reweigh weight is now 250 lbs.
- This is the easiest and simplest option

**Option 2**
Declare a lighter show weight by simply subtracting 5 lbs. from the official scale weight resulting in a declared show weight of 260 lbs
- The maximum reweigh weight is now 275 lbs.
- The minimum reweigh weight is now 245 lbs.
  - As long as the animal was weighed-in full, a moderate reduction in weight should be manageable without compromising animal welfare.
  - If a large reduction is declared it is unlikely that a healthy modification to the feeding, watering, and exercising protocol for the pig can take place prior to reweighing at the end of showing. Indiana 4-H only supports the implementation of animal care methods that put the health and well being of the animal as a top priority.
  - Reducing the show weight may prevent your project from being in a class with pigs that are much heavier, but drastic reductions could cause undue stress to the pig, and to the exhibitor.

**Option 3**
Declare any lighter show weight between 230-264 lbs.
- The maximum reweigh weight is calculated to be 15 lbs. heavier than the declared show weight.
- The minimum reweigh weight is calculated to be 15 lbs. lighter than the declared show weight.
  - As long as the animal was weighed-in full, a moderate increase in weight should be manageable without compromising animal welfare.
  - Declaring a heavier show weight can be very easy or very difficult. If it is approached with the mindset of simply adding a set weight, like 5 lbs. in our example, then this option is very easy and manageable.
  - Increasing the show weight may allow your project to be in a class with pigs that are much heavier.

**Option 4**
Declare a heavier show weight by simply adding 5 lbs. to the official scale weight resulting in a declared show weight of 270 lbs.
- The maximum reweigh weight is now 285 lbs.
- The minimum reweigh weight is now 255 lbs.
  - As long as the animal was weighed-in full, a moderate increase in weight should be manageable without compromising animal welfare.
  - Declaring a heavier show weight can be very easy or very difficult. If it is approached with the mindset of simply adding a set weight, like 5 lbs. in our example, then this option is very easy and manageable.

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**Option 5**
Declare a heavier show weight between 266-280 lbs.
- The maximum reweigh weight is now 15 lbs. heavier than the declared show weight.
- The minimum reweigh weight is now 15 lbs. lighter than the declared show weight.
  - As long as the animal was weighed-in full, any increase in weight should not require feed and water restriction.
  - If a large increase is declared, such as to 280 lbs., there should not be a need to reduce feed and water intake. However, the pig will likely show in a class with much heavier pigs.

**“My barrow weighed 296 or more lbs when he weighed-in, what are my options?”**

**Option 1**
Your option is the same as in previous years. Your barrow is not allowed entry into the show because his weight is not within the range determined to be acceptable for declaring. You are allowed one (1) reweigh for your barrow to be within the acceptable range (230-295 lbs.) for declaring.

- Bringing barrows to the 2010 Indiana State Fair 4-H Swine Show that are heavier than the already established 15 lbs. overage range for acceptability (281-295 lbs.) is strongly discouraged by Indiana 4-H. Doing so may require a modified feeding and watering protocol which could negate the positive animal welfare practice being established by declaring show weights.

**“My barrow weighed 290 lbs when he weighed-in, what are my options?”**

**Option 1**
Declare a lighter show weight between 230-280 lbs.
- 280 lbs. would seem like the logical choice as that is the weight that would allow the most weight gain of your pig in order to still meet the reweigh requirements after class.
- If 280 lbs. was declared:
  - The maximum reweigh weight is now 295 lbs.
  - The minimum reweigh weight is now 265 lbs.
- If a large reduction is declared it is unlikely that a healthy modification to the feeding, watering, and exercising protocol for the pig can take place prior to reweighing at the end of showing. Indiana 4-H only supports the implementation of animal care methods that put the health and well being of the animal as a top priority.

**“My barrow weighed 225 lbs at weigh in, what are my options?”**

**Option 1**
- Your option is the same as in previous years. You are allowed one (1) reweigh attempt for your barrow to reach the 230 lbs. minimum to be allowed to declare a show weight.

**“My gilt (purebred or crossbred) weighed 195 lbs at weigh in, what are my options?”**

**Option 1**
- You are allowed one (1) reweigh attempt for your gilt to reach the 200 lbs. minimum established for the 2010 Indiana State Fair 4-H Show.

For additional information regarding the 2010 Indiana State Fair 4-H Swine Show please contact Kyle Culp at culp@purdue.edu

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**Notes**
- Purebred gilts will still show by age, but must weigh at least 200 lbs for entry into the show.
- Remember, the declared weight is the only recorded weight. Once you have declared your weight, all reweigh weights will be determined from the declared show weight.