

## Pork Prose

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### Selling Market Hogs

The right marketing decision, at today's tight margins — can mean the difference between profit and loss. Last time I discussed feeder pig marketing alternatives. Market hogs deserve the same considerations as feeder pigs before selling. When will you market them, how will you market them, and what degree of quality will make it worth your while?

As with feeder pigs, the decision as to when to sell hogs should be thought out in advance. Remember that the heavier the hog gets, the less efficient he will be. And as I'm sure all of you have experienced first hand, hogs are discounted when they pass 240 pounds.

### Choosing the Right Market Weight

Let's say the current price for a 210-pound hog is \$50/cwt. That pencils out to \$105 per head. What difference would it make if you sold him at 230 pounds?

It would take an extra 84 pounds of feed (F/G of 4.2). With feed prices at \$.09/lb that amounts to \$7.56. The overhead cost for hogs of this size is roughly \$.18/day. At a growth rate of 2 pounds per day, it'll take 10 days to put on the extra weight — or a total overhead cost of \$1.80.

So the added cost of pushing this hog to 230 pounds would be \$9.36. But you'll be getting another \$10.00 for the hog (20 extra pounds @ \$50/cwt.). So you'll make an extra \$.64 per head.

Keep this hog until he reaches 250 pounds and he'll probably be docked \$2/cwt. Add in the cost of extra feed and overhead, and you can expect a four dollar drop in profits compared to selling him at 210 pounds.

So it appears that the heavier the hog gets, the slimmer the margin becomes. Will it always work this way? Most of the time you're further ahead to sell at the lightest weight your packer will stand. But to be sure, you've got to push that pencil.

### How To Sell Market Hogs

During 1978, 73.8 percent of the hogs in this country were sold through direct markets. Another 15.9 percent moved through ter-

minals, while only 10.3 percent were marketed through auctions. Of those hogs sold direct, only 13 percent were sold grade and yield.

What's the best way to go today? Direct markets (buying stations) are popular for several reasons. First, producers know exactly what their hogs will bring. Second, there's no commission. And, of course, checks are written on the spot.

The lack of surprises makes the direct method seem a lot better than the auction. But what about selling grade and yield? The answer will depend on whom you ask. Some producers rave about grade and yield. With the right hogs and the right program it can make you a lot of money.

But other producers aren't so satisfied. The reasons why were outlined in a recent report from the USDA. All in all, the report is rather critical, primarily because grade and yield statements can be misleading. For example, the statement may indicate you were paid a dollar or two over the "base price," when in fact you didn't get any more for your hogs than if you'd sold them elsewhere.

And, of course, every grade and yield program is different. That's evident from the USDA report. And having recently contacted Eastern packers, I have to agree. Some packers here base premiums on dressing percent. Others use backfat measurement as the indicator. And some subjectively evaluate muscling and fat to arrive at price discounts or premiums.

So how can you tell what you're getting? One way is to sell hogs grade and yield and simply divide the dollars you receive by the total live weight. Compare this price per pound with the local live markets.

Another alternative is to sort your hogs into similar groups. Sell some direct, sell some grade and yield, and sell some through the auction, all on the same day or during the same week. If you're like other producers who do this regularly, you'll come up with some interesting results.

### Market Hog Quality

Today hogs are sold by the pound — with little regard to quality. That's OK for now, but it sure won't improve our long-run image with the consumer. Our current USDA grades are useless, since more than 95 percent of all hogs will be U.S. No. 1 or 2. These grades are being revised. But revision alone isn't the answer. Swine producers need an incentive to improve quality. The only thing that will really work is to pay a lot more for the good hogs and a lot less for the poor ones.

In summary, the best market manager is the one who makes the best of what he has. You can't predict markets. Even the folks who make a living at that business aren't doing so hot lately. But you can take current information and use it to your advantage. To calculate the best market weight, know your production costs. To arrive at where to sell, know your transportation costs. And to decide how to sell, stay on top of every market price.

## 'Green-broke' calves and kids stage field day at Benton

BENTON — FFA and 4-H members from six counties converged on the Shady Hollow Angus Farm of Chuck and Kay Chapman, Benton, last Saturday for what may be the only event of its kind this year. The event was called the Susquehanna Cattlemen's Association First Annual "Little I" and Field Day.

Following a fitting demonstration at 9 a.m., 20 youngsters drew lots for a "green-broke" Angus calf. Though many of the entrants had never held a haltered calf, they were required to wash, clip, groom and teach their calves to lead in time for a fitting and showmanship contest at 3:30 that afternoon.

The morning hours more closely resembled a rodeo, as calves alternately locked all four legs and then exploded in all directions. Many of the more than 70 adults from Columbia, Montour, Lycoming, Union, Snyder and Northumberland Counties expressed doubts that a show would ever take place.

Patterned after similar events staged by dairy clubs throughout the state, the idea was first presented to the Susquehanna Cattlemen's president, Polled Hereford breeder Richard

Francola, by Columbia County extension agent Robert Huston.

During the discussions that followed, the board of directors determined that risk could be minimized by tying the calves out for three hours each night for the three nights prior to the event, and by instructing the youngsters to avoid their animal's feet.

Those youngsters below the age of 13 were teamed two-per-calf with an adult sponsor who was to instruct and assist the young showmen with the more delicate and difficult elements of clipping.

The seniors worked alone under the watchful eye of York County resident of Bill Wise, the demonstrator and judge. Bill had been selected as a result of having recently been named grand champion showman in four species at the 1984 Little "I" at Penn State where he is an animal production major. Bill is also the vice president of the Pennsylvania Junior Angus Association.

When 3:30 rolled around, the judge knew he had his work cut out for him, and the audience knew they had underestimated the skill and tenacity of these young people. One well-groomed calf after another walked into the makeshift

show ring clearly under the control of the proud young person at the halter.

The results were as follows:

Junior division fitting: 1. John George and Nathan Hampton, Columbia Co. 2. Doug Marquardt, Lycoming Co.

Senior division fitting: 1. Heather Ream, Lycoming Co. 2. Ann Haladay, Columbia Co.

Junior division showmanship, group one: 1. John George, 2. Doug Marquardt.

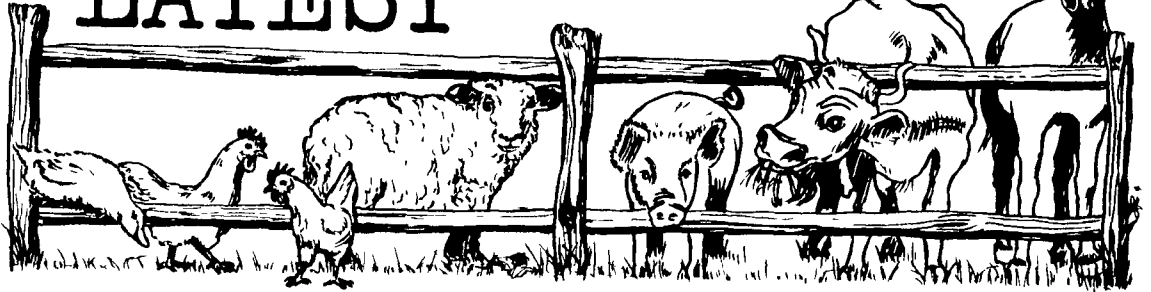
Junior division showmanship, group two: 1. Faith George, Columbia Co. 2. Nathan Hampton, Columbia Co.

Senior division showmanship: 1. Kristy Harding, Lycoming Co. 2. Ann Haladay.

In addition, each participant received a halter, with all awards made available by donations from area ag businessmen.

When asked after the event if it was worth all the work, Chuck and Kay Chapman said that watching all the youngsters learn, including their own 9-year-old, Eddie, not only made it worthwhile, but they would do it again in a minute. This year's hosts are eagerly awaiting the Second Annual "Little I" and Field Day.

## LIVESTOCK LATEST



## 18 states represented at Nat'l Junior Shorthorn Show

LOUISVILLE, KY — Sherri Rose, Logansport, Ind., walked away with the top honors at this year's National Junior Shorthorn Heifer Show with her entry HS Desert Playmate. HS Desert Playmate was selected as the junior and grand champion female in the show, topping entries from 18 states by over 130 exhibitors. She is an April 18, 1983 daughter of SRS Instant Replay 102X x and out of HS Desert Bloom 163rd car. She posted a hip height of 54.25 inches, weight of 1,065 pounds, and a weight per day of age (WDA) of 2.35 pounds.

One hundred forty-eight heifers and 13 steers were shown in the 1984 National Junior Shorthorn Heifer Show and steer show held July 17 and 18 at the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center, Louisville, Ky. The two-day event was judged by Mr. George Ellis, Columbus, Mont., and Mr. Rex Tribbett, Linden, Ind.

Reserve grand champion honors went to Sarah Schilling, Lake Fork, Ill., on her summer champion female. Green Ridge Covergirl ET is a July 4, 1983 daughter of Mill Brook Ransom G-Nine 2975 and CH Mario's Maid ar. Performance data on this female included a weight of 965 pounds, a WDA of 2.56, and a hip height of 53 inches.

Champion bred and owned female was also the reserve junior champion female in the show. JB

Dee Dee x is owned and exhibited by Jerry Ross Bedwell, Okeene, Okla. Sired by Deerpark Leader 13th, she is out of Seven T's HB Deborah x, and was born March 27, 1983. Her show day weight was 1,085 pounds, her hip height was 54 inches, and she had a WDA of 2.28 pounds.

Senior champion female was also shown by Sarah Schilling. Her entry, Green Ridge Lassie Flora, is a February 24, 1983 daughter of Mill Brook Ransom G-Nine 2975 and out of CH Lassie Flora. Actual weight for the entry was 1,130 pounds, a hip height of 54.75 inches, and a WDA of 2.24. Reserve senior champion female was 3F Miss Queen 3J x, shown by David Bishop, McKinney, Tx. Born January 3, 1983, 3F Miss Queen posted a weight of 1,145 pounds, a height of 55 inches, and a WDA of 2.05 pounds. Her sire is WO Dividend 3J and her dam is 3F Heckland Queen x.

Reserve summer champion female was shown by Rob Johnson, Fredericktown, OH., on Mill Brook Louise 83. Mill Brook Louise 83 is a July 5, 1983 daughter of GM Irish Special and out of Mill Brook Louise 81. She posted a weight of 805 pounds, a hip height of 51.25 inches, and had a WDA of 2.14 pounds.

Calf champion female was shown by Shad Marston, Canton, Kans. His entry, Fieser's Rose Molly x, was born September 13,

1983. She weighed 685 pounds, has a height of 49.50 inches, and posted a WDA of 2.24 pounds. Sire of the female was Fieser's King Mont Adair and she is out of Fieser's Roan Molly. Following Marston with the reserve calf champion female was Robert Masterson, Guthrie, Tex. His entry, Sutherland Becky 439 x, was sired by Highfield Rathcannon and she is out of Sutherland Becky 865 x. She had a weight of 765 pounds, stood 49.50 inches tall at the hips, and had a WDA of 2.56 pounds.

In the steer show, two divisions were exhibited-progress and finished steers. Judge Tribbett made the placings in this show.

Champion progress steer was shown by Vanessa Gordon, Milledtown, Ill. Sired by Deerpark Leader 13th, the July 16, 1983 steer weighed 905 pounds, stood 53 inches tall at the hips, and had a WDA of 2.49 pounds. Reserve champion in the progress steer division was an entry from Janet Freed, Chickasha, Okla. Also sired by Deerpark Leader 13th, this calf was born September 10, 1983, and weighed 695 pounds. He was 50 inches tall at the hips, and had a WDA of 2.25 pounds.

The champion finished steer came from Jeff Swalve, Shannon Ill. His entry weighed 1,260 pounds, stood 56.75 inches tall at the hips, and had a WDA of 2.74 pounds. Sired by JBS Astronaut, he was

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## Chianina

(Continued from Page D2)

### Class 7

1 Geraldine Popp 2 John Eaton 3 Susan Bellford

### Class 8

1 Douglas Eastep 2 Leigh Ann Templeton 3 Kerri Kohr

### Class 9

1 Andrea Richards 2 John McKotch 3 Scott Hertzog

### Grand Champion Steer

Andrea Richards

### Reserve Champion Steer

John McKotch

### Judging Men's Div

1 Lance Kauff 2 Roy Weaver 3 Barry Longenecker

### Ladies Div

1 June Sunday 2 Sara Fought 3 Jackie Longenecker

### Junior Div

1 Chris Hopple 2 Kristie Kohr 3 Jan Waltz

### Team Judging

1 Cumberland County 2 Lancaster County 3 Cambria County

### Showmanship Senior

1 Chris Hopple 2 Margaret Herr 3 Donald Godfrey

### Intermediate

1 John Eaton 2 Andrea Richards, 3 Greg Christman

### Junior

1 Darby Smith, 2 Jodie Weaver 3 Stacy Suffel

### Weight Guessing Contest

1 Robert Pazetta, 2 Barry Longenecker 3 John Eastep