

Producing the Ideal Market Hog

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I. Ideal Pig =

- A. **Rapid Gaining** -
 - 1. 2 pounds per day between 50# and 260#.
 - 2. Minimum feed cost (Less than 3 lb feed per lb of gain).
- B. **Weight** - 250-280#.
- C. **Lean** -
 - 1. Between 0.5 and 0.85 inch of last rib fat and 10th rib fat.
 - 2. Last Rib Fat is used to calculate USDA grade
 - 3. USDA Grade of 1. USDA Grade = (4 x LRFat) - Muscle Score
 - 4. 10th Rib Fat is more accurate and is used to calculate % muscle and Lean gain/Day on feed.
 - 5. Last Rib Fat will be greater than 10th Rib Fat on lean, muscular pigs but will be less than 10th Rib Fat on fat, light muscled pigs.
- D. **Muscle** -
 - 1. At least an Intermediate (2) muscle score.
 - 2. At least a 6 to 8 square inch loin eye area.
- E. **Soundness** - Free moving with no major structural problems
- F. **Sex** - Gilts are leaner and more muscular, but slower growing than barrows.
- G. **Quality** – Not PSE (pale, soft and exudative) or DFD (dark, firm and dry). Marbling depends on your market.
- H. The **champion** should be a very muscular pig (LEA over 6", probably over 7") that is structurally correct, has under 0.85 inch of backfat and is in the correct weight range.

II. How do we reach the ideal?

- A. **Genetics** - most important, because carcass traits (especially muscling) are highly heritable. Do not use pigs that are stress gene carriers.
- B. **Feeding to proper weight** (very important for fat).
 - 1. For some large framed animals the ideal weight will be 275 lbs.
 - 2. Some pigs are already too fat at 220 lbs.
- C. **Proper feed and management.**
 - 1. Properly balanced diets and good health practices yield rapid growth.
 - 2. Protein requirements for max. lean gain is > than for max ADG.
 - 3. Genetically lean fast growing pigs require more protein than fatter pigs
 - 4. If you do not own the Pork Industry Handbook, you should.
- D. **Exercise** affects live appearance more than carcass traits.