Livestock Judging Guide

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Module 4: Swine

Judging Breeding Gilts
Judging Breeding Gilts

Ideal breeding gilt has:
- Trimness
- Moderate development in high-priced areas
- Adequate size for age
- Large body capacity or volume
- Correct underpinning
- Superior mammary system
Ideal Breeding Gilt

- Smooth shouldered
- Bold spring of rib
- Clean turn to top
- Long, level rump
- Naturally thick loin
- Sound reproductive organs
- High tail setting
- Deep, long muscled ham
- Heavy, rugged bone
- Trim jowl
- Correct set of knee
- Deep, wide chest floor
- Cushion to pastern
- Correct set of hocks
- Prominent, well-space underline
- Naturally thick loin
- Sound reproductive organs
- High tail setting
- Deep, long muscled ham
- Heavy, rugged bone
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Steps to Judging Swine
- First view from the ground and work up
- Next evaluate from rear to front
- Rank class on traits of importance
- Evaluate most important traits first
- Eliminate easy placings
- Place the remainder based on the volume of important traits
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- Ranking of Traits for Maternal Lines
  - Structure and soundness
  - Growth
  - Underline quality
  - Capacity or volume
  - Degree of muscling
  - Degree of leanness

- Maternal lines:
  - Female offspring kept for breeding purposes
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- Ranking of Traits for **Terminal Lines**
  - Structure and soundness
  - Degree of muscling
  - Growth
  - Capacity or volume
  - Degree of leanness
  - Underline quality

- Terminal lines of gilts:
  - Offspring sold to slaughter
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Evaluating Structure & Soundness

- Best viewed beginning at the ground and working upward
- Give attention to:
  - Feet & pasterns
  - Hocks
  - Knees
  - Rump
  - Shoulders
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Feet & Pasterns

Feet
- Big, with even toes
- Squarely set forward

Pasterns
- Set at 45 degree angle to ground
- Maximum cushion & flexibility

Good feet, squarely set & pasterns with correct angle
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Poor Structure

Dewclaws touching the ground, too much set to pasterns

Poor Structure

Feet turned outward, restricts flexibility, additional joint stress
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- Hocks should be constructed of:
  - Flat, clean bone
  - Approximately 20 degrees of set

Correct set and curvature to the hocks
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Post-legged

Hocks too straight, round bone design, lacks flexibility

Unsoundness

Swollen or “puffy joints from hocks being too straight
Knees should:

- Be straight or slightly set backward
- Provide cushion & flex to front end

Correct set to the knees. Note the slight backward set or curvature.
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Calf-kneed

Knees have too much set or curvature

Buck-kneed

Inadequate length between the foot and knee
Rump structure should be:
- Average or above average in length
- Level to slightly sloping from front to back

This type rump allows for:
- Maximum power & strength
- Additional flexibility
- Good length of stride
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Rump too steep

Rump extremely too steep

Rumps too short & steep restrict movement and cause extra stress on other joints.
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- Shoulders should have:
  - Adequate set to allow front leg to extend at a correct angle
  - Shoulder set is directly related to length of stride

Correct slope and set to the shoulder
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Shoulder too straight

Gives appearance of shoulder being forced forward into the neck, resulting in short strides off front end

Extremely straight

Severely limits flexibility through front end, puts tremendous pressure on the knee and pastern joints
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- Evaluating Growth
  - Hogs are sold by the pound
  - Important that pigs have good growth rate
  - Pigs should reach market weight at an early age
  - Assume all animals in a class are the same age
  - Heaviest pig is the fastest growing
  - Lightest pig is the slowest growing
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Evaluating Underline Quality

Good underlines are needed to raise large litters
Consider:
- Teat accessibility
- Teat number
- Teat size
- Teat placement
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- Teat accessibility
  - Both rows should point directly downward
  - Should not point outward
- Teat number
  - Good underline will have 6 to 7 teats per side
- Teat size
  - About the size of a pencil eraser
  - Will fit into piglet’s mouth
- Teat placement
  - Teats spaced 2.5 to 3.0 inches apart
  - Enough space for piglet’s to nurse
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Very Good Underline

Poor Underline

Uneven teat size, uneven spacing, only two functional teats
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Evaluating External Genitalia

- Should be well-developed
- Proper size and shape
- Beware of:
  - Too small vulva
  - Tipped or upturned vulva

Gilt has a well-developed vulva with good size and shape
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Small vulva could be a problem with natural mating

Small, slightly tipped vulva, problems with natural mating and farrowing

Small, tipped vulva, difficult natural mating
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Evaluating Capacity or Volume

- Hogs with good capacity or volume will be able:
  - To consume feed necessary for growth
  - To perform well in terms of reproduction

- Capacity or volume is determined by:
  - Body width
  - Body depth
  - Body length
  - Balance (how well these three factors fit together)
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Width:

- Best evaluated starting at the ground and working up
- Pigs with good width will:
  - Walk and stand wide both in front and rear
  - Have good width through the chest
- Top width (top 1/3) and base width (lower 1/3) should be equal
- Middle 1/3 of the animal should be the widest
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Too Narrow

Narrow tracking at the walk

Good Width

Good chest width equates to good capacity or volume

Good Width

Wide based in the standing position
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Depth of Body:
- Important for capacity for feeding and reproduction
- Should be uniform from fore flank to rear flank
- Be careful –
  - Excessively deep appearing hog could indicate a fat problem
- Lack of depth, or shallow body, will:
  - Take away from overall balance
  - Hurt pig’s placing due to lack of a production look
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Lacks Adequate Depth

Unbalanced

Uniform Body Depth

Shallow in the rear flank  Too deep in rear flank  Beginning to show excessive body depth due to fat
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- **Length of Body**
  - Increased importance due to heavier market weights
  - Measured visually from flank to flank
  - Hogs typical growth curve:
    - Grows frame > Deposits muscle > Deposits fat
  - Longer bodied & bigger framed hogs mature later
  - Later maturity delays fat being deposited
  - Higher weights before fat deposited
    - 260 lbs. versus 220 lbs.
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Short Body Length

Good Body Length
Evaluating Degree of Muscling

- Lower priority trait with maternal lines
- Higher priority trait with terminal lines
- Indicators of degree of muscling:
  - First - thickness through center of ham
  - Second - width at the ground between feet (standing & walking)
  - Base width and width of pigs top should be equal
  - Red flag – Top width exceeds base width
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Narrow Width

Good Width
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Evaluating Degree of Muscling

Indicators of degree of muscling:

- Third - shape over the top (or loin)
  - Muscular top should be “butterfly” shape
  - Indicates leanness
- Loins on both sides of backbone extending higher than center
  - “Flat” top indicates fat

Butterfly top
Evaluating Degree of Leannness

Degree of leanness is influenced by:
- Degree of muscling
- Frame size
- Sex of animal
- Age
- Weight
Evaluating Degree of Leanness

Evaluate leanness only after degree of muscling is determined

Heavy muscled hogs will be lean

Light muscled hogs will be fat

Gilts mature at a later age (or heavier weight) than barrows

At same age or weight, gilts will be leaner than barrows
 Evaluating Degree of Leanness

Fat will be deposited from:
- Front to rear
- First in cheeks and jowls
- Then behind and over shoulders
- Then in the flanks
- Finally around tailhead

Evaluate leanness by looking:
- For indentions over & behind shoulders
- At ham-loin junction
- For presence of a dimple just in front of tailhead
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Too Fat

Notice pig is wider over the top than at the base

Too fat
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**Extremely Lean**

Smooth, tight jowl and underline, indention at ham-loin junction, dimple above tailhead

**Lean Gilt**

Clean and firm in flanks, well defined ham-loin junction, clean & trim in crotch
Test Your Skills

Place this class of breeding gilts.
Official Placing: 3 – 1 – 4 – 2
Cuts: 5 – 3 – 6