Livestock Judging Guide

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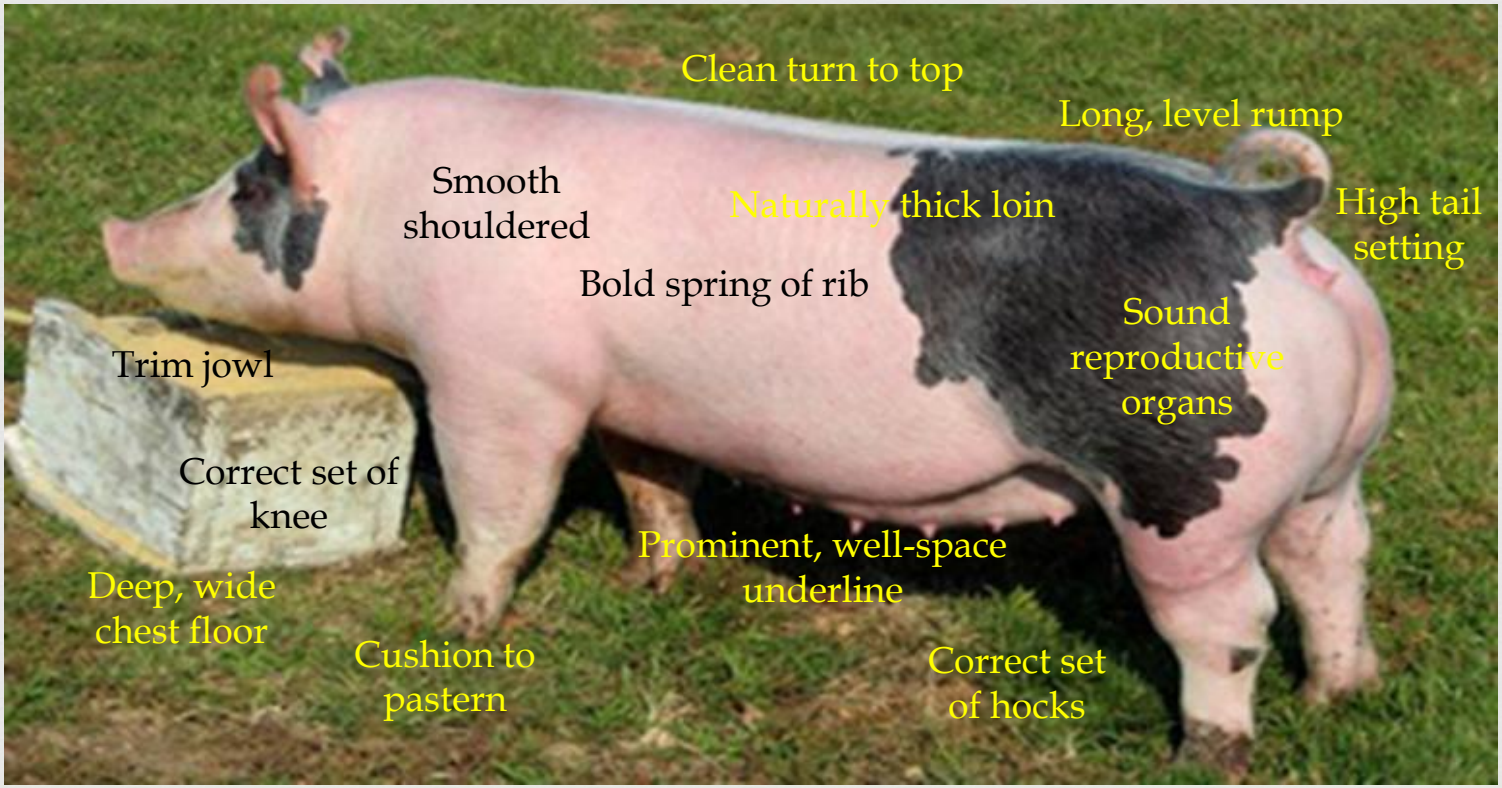
Module 4: Swine

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



Judging Breeding Gilts

- 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

Judging Breeding Gilts

- 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

Judging Breeding Gilts

- 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

Judging Breeding Gilts

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

Judging Breeding Gilts

- 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

Judging Breeding Gilts

Poor Structure

Dewclaws touching the ground, too much set to pasterns

Poor Structure

Feet turned outward, restricts flexibility, additional joint stress

Judging Breeding Gilts

- Hocks should be constructed of:
  - Flat, clean bone
  - Approximately 20 degrees of set

Correct set and curvature to the hocks

Judging Breeding Gilts

Post-legged

Hocks too straight, round bone design, lacks flexibility

Unsoundness

Swollen or "puffy joints from hocks being too straight

Judging Breeding Gilts

- 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.

Judging Breeding Gilts

Calf-kneed

Knees have too much set or curvature

Buck-kneed

Inadequate length between the foot and knee

Judging Breeding Gilts

- 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

Judging Breeding Gilts

Rump too steep

Rump extremely too steep

Rumps too short & steep restrict movement and cause extra stress on other joints.

Judging Breeding Gilts

- 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

Judging Breeding Gilts

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

Judging Breeding Gilts

- 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

Judging Breeding Gilts

- Evaluating Underline Quality
  - Good underlines are needed to raise large litters
  - Consider:
    - Teat accessibility
    - Teat number
    - Teat size
    - Teat placement

Judging Breeding Gilts

- 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

Judging Breeding Gilts

Very Good Underline

Poor Underline

Uneven teat size, uneven spacing, only two functional teats

Judging Breeding Gilts

- 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

Judging Breeding Gilts

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

Judging Breeding Gilts

- 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

Judging Breeding Gilts

- 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

Judging Breeding Gilts

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

Judging Breeding Gilts

- 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

Judging Breeding Gilts

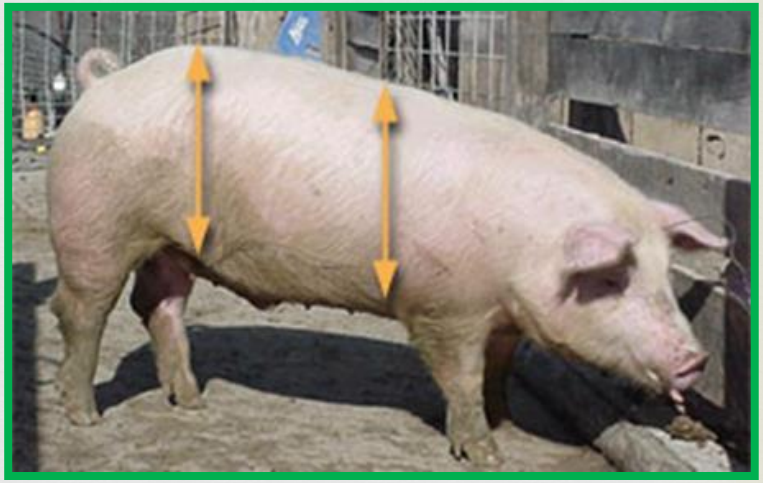
Lacks Adequate Depth

Shallow in the rear flank

Unbalanced

Too deep in rear flank

Uniform Body Depth



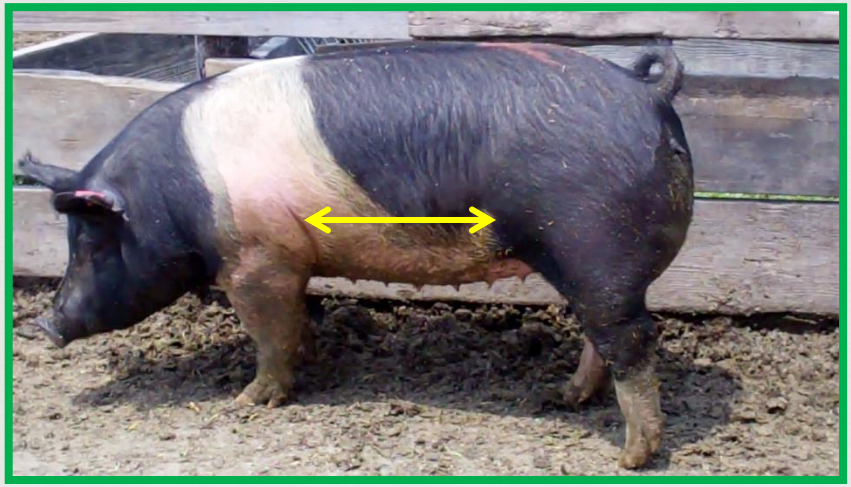
Beginning to show excessive body depth due to fat

Judging Breeding Gilts

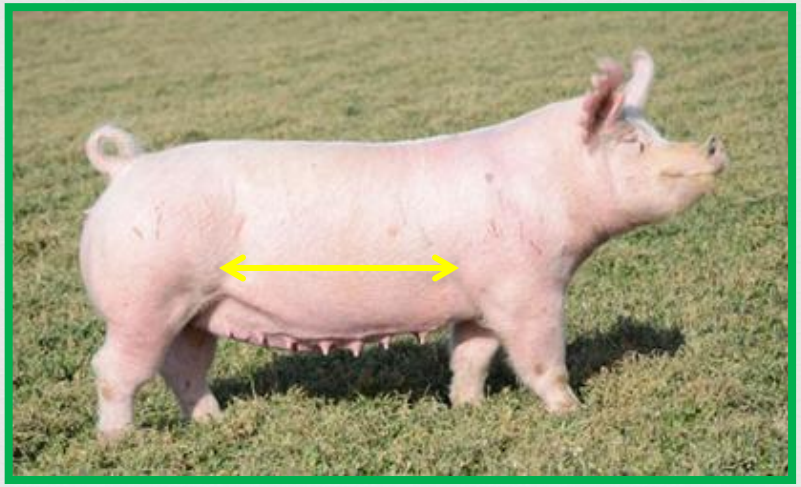
- Length of Body
  - Increased importance due to heavier market weights
  - Measured visually from flank to flank
  - Hogs typical growth curve:
    - Grows frame > Deposits muscle > Deposits fat
  - Longer bodied & bigger framed hogs mature later
  - Later maturity delays fat being deposited
  - Higher weights before fat deposited
    - 260 lbs. versus 220 lbs.

Judging Breeding Gilts

Short Body Length



Good Body Length



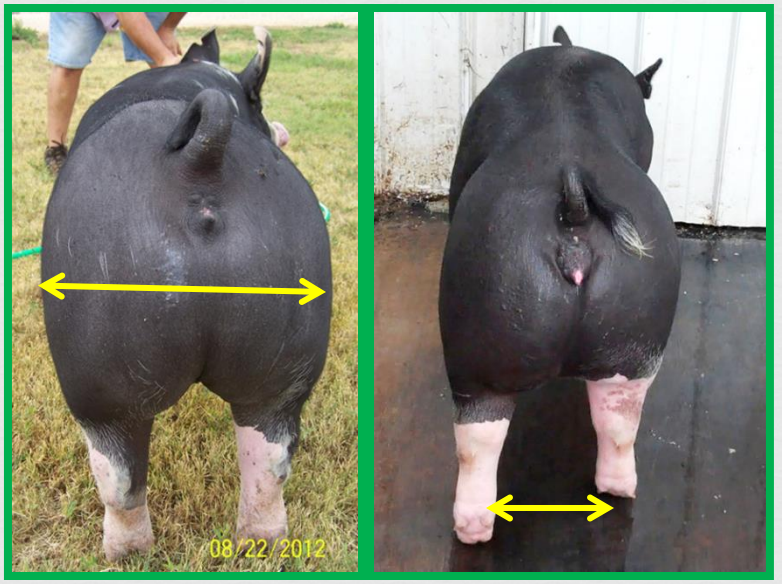
Judging Breeding Gilts

- 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

Judging Breeding Gilts

Narrow Width

Good Width



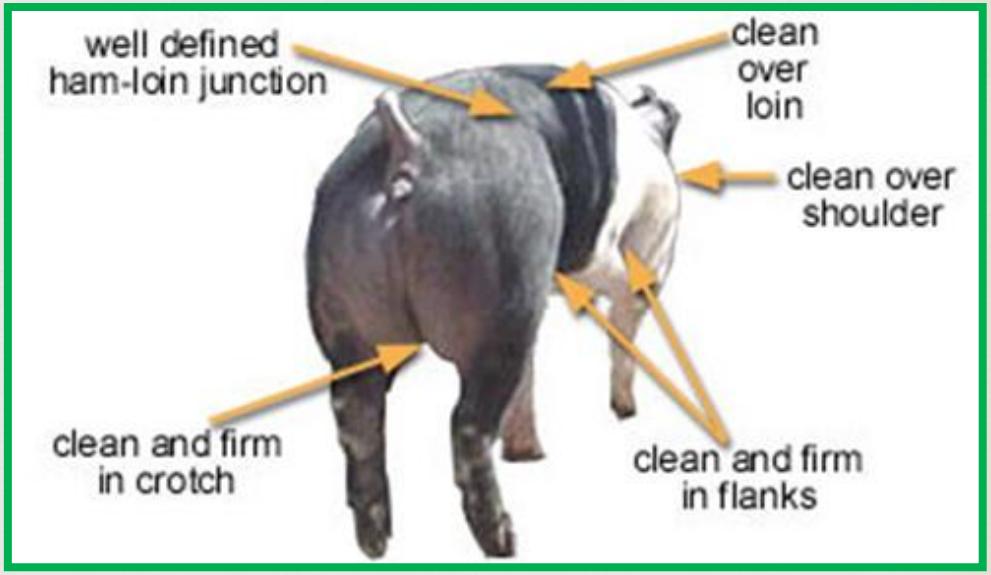
Judging Breeding Gilts

- 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

Judging Breeding Gilts

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



Judging Breeding Gilts

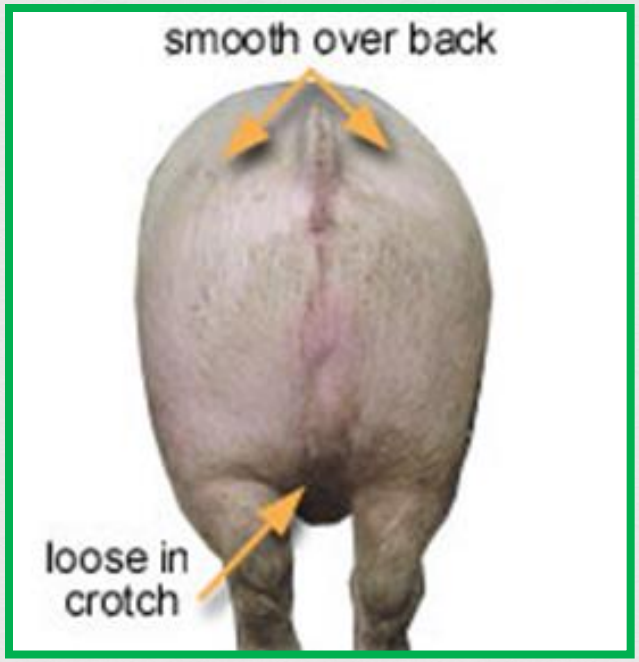
- Evaluating Degree of Leanness
  - Evaluate leanness only after degree of muscling is determined
  - Heavy muscled hogs will be lean
  - Light muscled hogs will be fat
  - Gilts mature at a later age (or heavier weight) than barrows
  - At same age or weight, gilts will be leaner than barrows

Judging Breeding Gilts

- Evaluating Degree of Leanness
  - Fat will be deposited from:
    - Front to rear
    - First in cheeks and jowl
    - 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

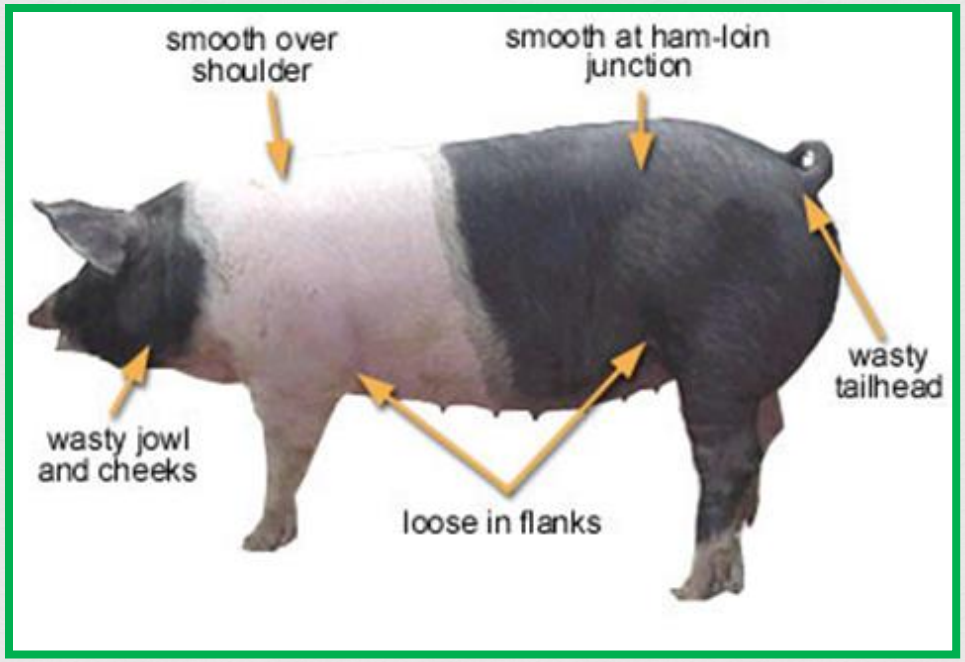
Judging Breeding Gilts

Too Fat



Notice pig is wider over the top than at the base

Too fat



Judging Breeding Gilts

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

Official Placing: 3 – 1 – 4 - 2
Cuts: 5 – 3 - 6

1st

2nd

3rd

4th