

Declared Weight System at the Tennessee State Junior Swine Show

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Introduction

Livestock exhibitions are a showcase of the youth livestock experience. They are a place where youth show off what they have learned with their animal in front of their family, friends and the general public. Because of this increased scrutiny, it is essential to reduce undue stress on the animal at every opportunity. Some people feel they get a perceived competitive advantage by withholding feed and water to cause their animal to lose weight prior to a show's weigh-in. After weighing the animal, they will get the animal back to their normal weight and potentially have the heaviest animal in a particular class. Withholding feed and water from an animal can cause undue stress and can compromise their normal health and behavior.

The declared weight system promotes animal welfare while maintaining an environment of education, fairness and competition. Youth are able to show their pig at their desired weight without compromising animal health. Additionally, this system can help alleviate concerns of weight variation between scales by limiting the number of scales needed at larger swine shows.

Possible Scenarios for Declaring Show Weight

Below are recommendations based on some possible scenarios at the Tennessee State Junior Swine Show. Keep in mind that these are simply recommendations. Each exhibitor will be held responsible for declaring the show weight of his or her animals.

“My market hog or crossbred breeding gilt weighed 265 pounds at weigh-in. What are my options?”

Option 1 – Accept 265 pounds as the show weight.

- The maximum reweigh weight is now 280 pounds.
- The minimum reweigh weight is now 250 pounds.
- This is the easiest and simplest option.

Option 2 – Declare a lighter show weight by subtracting 5 pounds from the actual weight, resulting in a declared show weight of 260 pounds.

- The maximum reweigh weight is now 275 pounds.
- The minimum reweigh weight is now 245 pounds.
- If the animal was full when weighed, a 5-pound reduction should be a manageable show weight. Reducing the show weight may prevent an exhibitor's pig from showing with much heavier pigs.

- If a larger reduction is declared, a healthy modification to feeding and watering is unlikely and could cause undue stress to the pig and to the exhibitor.
 - It also increases the risk of being disqualified due to being above the maximum reweigh weight.

Option 3 – Declare a heavier show weight by adding 5 pounds to the actual weight, resulting in a declared show weight of 270 pounds.

- The maximum reweigh weight is now 285 pounds.
- The minimum reweigh weight is now 255 pounds.
- If the animal was full when weighed, a 5-pound increase should be a manageable show weight. Increasing the show weight may allow an exhibitor's pig to show with much heavier pigs.
 - It also increases the risk of being disqualified due to being below the minimum reweigh weight.

Important Points to Remember

- Market hogs must weigh between 230-305 pounds to be eligible for the market classes.
 - Declared weights for market hogs must be within this range.
- Crossbred breeding gilts must weigh between 230-350 pounds to be eligible for breeding gilt classes.
 - Declared weights for crossbred breeding gilts must be within this range.
- The top 2-3 placing animals in each class will be re-weighed at the show ring and their weight must be no more than 15 pounds above or below their declared weight.
 - If they are more than 15 pounds above or below their declared weight, they will be disqualified.
- Market hogs and crossbred breeding gilts weighing between 180-229 pounds must show in the Prospect Class.
- Market hogs and crossbred breeding gilts weighing below 180 pounds or above their respective maximum weights are ONLY eligible to be shown in showmanship.
- Declared weight cards must be turned in by the published time for all market hogs and crossbred breeding gilts.