

# Declared Weights at the Iowa State Fair Swine Shows

In an effort to promote animal welfare the Iowa State Fair has implemented the declared weight system at all Iowa State Fair Swine Shows. The following information has been developed to help make a seamless transition from the previous method(s).

More information about the 4-H, FFA and Open Class Swine Shows as well as all other Iowa State Fair livestock shows is in the Iowa State Fair Premium List, which can be found at <https://www.iowastatefair.org/participate/competition/how-to-enter/>

For additional information regarding Iowa State Fair Swine shows please feel free to contact the following:

Dr. Jodi Sterle, 4-H Swine Superintendent  
515-294-7997 [jsterle@iastate.edu](mailto:jsterle@iastate.edu)

Bret Spurgin, FFA Swine Superintendent  
641-895-2291 [bspurgi@charles-city.k12.ia.us](mailto:bspurgi@charles-city.k12.ia.us)

Jen Cannon, Iowa State Fair Competitive Events Director  
515-262-3111 x207 [jcannon@iowastatefair.org](mailto:jcannon@iowastatefair.org)

Ernie Barnes, Iowa State Fair Swine Superintendent  
515-360-6188 [EBarnes@pork.org](mailto:EBarnes@pork.org)

## The following steps follow the pig from arrival on the Fairgrounds thru the check-in:

1. Arrive on the Fairgrounds during your designated time via Gate 8 on Dean Avenue located on the south side of the Fairgrounds. Follow the direction of Livestock Control.
2. Unload pigs into assigned pens. Feed and water animals accordingly.
3. Take health papers to the Veterinarian's Office on the south side of the Cattle Barn.
4. Go to the Swine Barn Office to pick up a check in number and declared weight card.
5. Go thru Check-in when your number is called.
6. Take pigs to check-in area to verify ear notches, check registration paper (registered breeding swine), tattoo pigs that will be sold to the packer.
7. **4-H** & **FFA** turn in declared weight(s) at check-in.
8. Return pigs to pens; water and feed like normal.

Scales will be provided in areas throughout the Swine barn; such scales are unofficial and are provided for the exhibitors convenience only. No other scales will be allowed.

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**NOTHING  
COMPARES**

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **Q. What is the advantage of using declared weights?**

**A:** In the past, a common practice was to withhold feed and water from swine projects to manipulate the weight when the animals crossed the scales in hopes that animals would weigh the optimal weight as determined by the exhibitor. With this current system, each exhibitor is able to determine the optimal show weight of his or her project without any need to withhold feed and water to manipulate the animal's weight

## **Q: Do I have to declare a show weight?**

**A:** Yes. However, the weight read on the scale can simply be accepted as the declared weight, or the individual entering the pig can decide to declare a different show weight as long as the pig is within the acceptable weight range (see page 4)

## **Q: Which weight is the sale weight?**

**A:** The buyer at the Iowa State Fair will accept the declared weight as the sale weight. Exhibitors will be paid on the declared weight.

## **Q: Is there a weigh-back at the end of class?**

**A:** Yes. Several pigs from each class will be required to weigh within 15 pounds above or below their declared show weight. Basically, the show will operate the same, except each exhibitor now has complete control over determining what weight their pig will show at. Pigs not weighing within 15 pounds of its official declared weight will be disqualified.

## **Q: What is used to determine the 15-pound reweigh at the end of class?**

**A:** The 15-pound weigh-back will be determined from the declared weight.

## **Q. Will pigs still be tattooed by the packer?**

**A.** Yes, pigs being sold to the packer will still be tattooed. This will occur during check in as it has in previous years.

## **Q: How can I prevent withholding feed and water at all times?**

**A:** Only bring animals that, when full of feed and water, naturally weigh more than 230 pounds. Then declare the show weight at a manageable weight so the pig can weigh within 15 pounds at the conclusion of their class without restricting feed and water. A good rule of thumb for novice exhibitors is to accept the actual weight of the pig, or weigh them full, subtract 5 pounds from the full weight, and declare that as the show weight. (Some examples are provided at the end of this document.) By only reducing the weight by 5 pounds, the exhibitor can factor in the potential growth of the pig (less than 2 lbs./day while at the fair) into the declared weight. This can prevent the need to withhold feed and water to be within the 15-pound reweigh after class.

## **Q: What about gilts?**

**A:** Commercial gilts and Market gilts will use declared weights. Purebred gilts will still be shown by age.

## **Q: Are there any weight restrictions for gilts?**

**A:** There are no weight restrictions for Registered Gilts. Minimum weight for FFA commercial gilts is 230 pounds. 4- H commercial gilts do not have a minimum weight. All Market gilts must weigh at least 230 pounds. Please see page 4 for more information on minimum and maximum weights for each show.

# Possible Scenarios for Declaring Show Weight

Below are some possible scenarios that may be encountered at the Iowa State Fair Swine Show. Keep in mind that these recommendations are to be used as guidelines to aid in maximizing the educational value of the program while also maintaining appropriate animal care. They are simply recommendations. Each exhibitor will be held responsible for declaring the show weight of his or her animals.

## **“My barrow or crossbred gilt weighed 265 pounds at check-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 official scale 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.
- As long as the animal was full when weighed in, a reduction in 5 pounds should be a manageable show weight for the animal to fall within the reweigh guidelines and still receive appropriate care.
- Declaring a lighter show weight can be very easy or very difficult. If it is approached with the mindset of simply subtracting a set weight, such as the 5 pounds in this example, then this option is very easy and manageable.
- Reducing the show weight may prevent an exhibitor's project from being in a class with pigs that are significantly heavier.

### **Option 3**

Declare any lighter show weight between 230–264 pounds.

- The maximum reweigh weight is calculated to be 15 pounds heavier than the declared show weight.
- The minimum reweigh weight is calculated to be 15 pounds lighter than the declared show weight.
- As long as the animal was full when weighed in, a moderate reduction in weight should be manageable without compromising animal welfare.
- If a large reduction is declared, it is unlikely that a healthy modification to the feeding, watering, and exercise protocol for the pig can take place prior to reweighing at the end of the showing. The Iowa State Fair only supports the implementation of animal care methods that put the health and well-being of the animal as a top priority.
- Reducing the show weight may prevent an exhibitor's project from being in a class with pigs that are much heavier, but drastic reductions could cause undue stress to the pig and to the exhibitor.

## Option 4

Declare a heavier show weight by adding 5 pounds to the official scale 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.
- As long as the animal was full when weighed in, a moderate increase in weight should be manageable without compromising animal welfare.
- Declaring a heavier show weight can be very easy or very difficult. If it is approached with the mindset of simply adding a set weight, such as the 5 pounds in the example, then this option is very easy and manageable.
- Increasing the show weight may allow an exhibitor's project to be in a class with pigs that are significantly heavier.

## Option 5

Declare a heavier show weight between 266–280 pounds.

- The maximum reweigh weight is now 15 pounds heavier than the declared show weight.
- The minimum reweigh weight is now 15 pounds lighter than the declared show weight.
- As long as the animal was full when weighed in, any increase in weight should not require feed and water restriction.
- If a large increase is declared, such as to 280 pounds, there should not be a need to reduce feed and water intake. However, the pig will likely show in a class with significantly heavier pigs.

## Minimum and Maximum Declared Weights

	FFA	4-H	Open Class
Purebred Breeding Gilts	No Restrictions	No Restrictions	No Restrictions
Commercial Breeding Gilts	230 lbs - No Max*	No Restrictions	N/A
Market Swine (Gilts & Barrows)	230 lbs - No Max*	230 lbs -300 lbs	230 lbs -300 lbs

These are *declared* weight minimums and maximums. Pigs not having an actual weight within 15 lbs + or - of their declared weight will be disqualified.

There will be severe discounts from the packer for pigs under 230 lbs.

\*Swine less than 230 lbs and greater than 320 lbs will be sold to an alternate packer and will be loaded separately.

