

MANAGING WEIGHT GAIN IN PIGS (and making them look their best)
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It is not enough to merely weigh enough to make the minimum weight, or just barely slip in under the maximum weight when showing pigs. The pig **MUST** look it's absolute best when it takes it's first step into the show ring. Anything less is unacceptable.

So, how do we accomplish this task? The best method to arrive at the weight you desire for your pig and have it looking it's best, is to think about this when you purchase your pig. Beginning to think about this with 10 days or less until show time is poor planning, and a design for failure.

Progressive judges are selecting modern showpigs that are fresh, full, youthful, muscular, and are shown at about 6 months of age. So, the best way to limit the aggravation and mental anguish of holding a pig for extended periods of time is to purchase appropriately aged pigs. Pay attention to the date of birth, and use the days until weigh in at your show to calculate the age the pig will be at that time. If you find a really good pig that will be 7 months old at weigh in, select another that will be the right age.

Hand feeding your pigs will result in most control over weight gain. You determine how much feed the pig will receive each day, and you have control over the ultimate weight of the pig. Allow your pig to grow fairly normally until at least 150 lbs. It is important to feed the correct amount of feed daily. Under feeding the pig will result in poor growth performance and underweight pigs with inferior muscling and body condition.

Below is a table containing the daily feeding rate for HONOR Show Chow grow/finish products, to produce normal growth and development:

FEED	50 – 100 lbs	100 – 150 lbs	150 – 200 lbs	200 – 250 lbs
HSC Showpig Grower	3.5 – 4 lbs	4 – 5 lbs	5 – 6 lbs	6 – 7 lbs
HSC Showpig Finisher	4 – 5 lbs	4.5 – 6 lbs	5.5 – 6 lbs	6 – 7 lbs
HSC Showpig 16	-	5 – 6 lbs	6 – 7 lbs	6 – 7 lbs

By feeding the correct amounts per day you will ensure your pig will have the proper nutrition to adequately express it's genetic roadmap. If nutrition is limited early on before the pig reaches about 150 lbs, the pig will not have the opportunity to reach its genetic potential for muscle and frame size. In addition, the pig might well be permanently programmed for a negative outcome.

Okay, you purchased an appropriately aged pig and just happened to grow fast and efficiently. You find yourself in this situation:

maximum weight limit	280 lbs
weight of your pig	240 lbs
days until show	45
pig needs muscle shape	
pig needs help with rib shape	
pig needs more cover	

Since the pig needs more muscle shape, Paylean will be fed for the final 14 – 21 days. Paylean will greatly increase growth rate. So, the pig will need to grow a little slower prior to being fed Paylean to manage weight.

The pig also needs help with rib shape. Beet pulp will help greatly with adding gut fill and rib shape. The pig will also need to be fed an energy supplement to increase body condition or cover.

The following is a list of products that will be needed to manage weight gain and have the pig looking it's best on show day:

- HONOR Show Chow Powerfill
- High Octane Champion Drive Topdress
- High Octane Power Fuel
- High Octane Showpig Paylean Premix
- Beet pulp (shreds or ground)

The basic principle behind slowing growth and keeping the pig fresh, muscular and youthful appearing is to meet it's daily nutrient requirements in as small a daily feeding rate as possible. In that way the pig remains looking great, but cannot grow fast because of the small daily meals.

To accomplish this, use the supplements above to concentrate essential amino acids, energy, minerals and vitamins.

Another very important point to remember is the pig will lose some weight during the transportation to the show. At any one time during the feeding period, a pig will have somewhere between 6 and 8 lbs of feed in it's digestive tract. When the pig is transported to show, it empties the contents of the digestive tract along with losing some water weight in the form of urination. Conservatively, the average pig will lose 5 lbs during transportation. Add this weight on the weight the pig can gain before going "overweight"

The pig weighs 240 lbs currently, the maximum weight limit is 280 lbs, and it will lose 5 lbs on the trip to the show for a total amount it can gain in the next 45 of 45 lbs (280 – 240 + 5).

The pig will be fed Paylean for the final 14 days leading up to show, so it will gain faster for that period. The pig will need to gain slower for the initial 31 days. Feed so that the pig gains about 0.60 to 0.70 lbs per day. Feed this diet for the first 21 days:

HONOR Show Chow Powerfill	2 lbs
High Octane Champion Drive	1/2 lbs
High Octane Power Fuel	1/2 lbs
Beet pulp	3/4 to 1 lbs

If the pig did not need to improve in cover, Champion Drive could be fed at 1 lbs per day and the Power Fuel could be omitted at this point. However, Paylean does two other things well in addition to improving weight gain. Paylean also decreases the amount of body fat (if sufficient energy is not fed each day), and it also drastically increases muscle. So in order to produce a pig with “soft” muscle on show day, we will need to improve the body fat (cover) of the pig prior to feeding Paylean. That is why the Power Fuel has been placed in the diet above.

Champion Drive will also do a very nice job at improving the shape and volume of the pig’s top. It is a very useful tool in creating the “show” look you want.

Usually pigs will not eat dry beet pulp well. In order to get them to consume the beet pulp well, soak in water for 5 minutes and then add to the feed.

It is also important to note that when hand or limit feeding the pig needs to receive two equally sized meals about 12 hours apart each day. So, divide the above in two equal feedings morning and evening. In addition, NEVER limit water intake.

The pig should gain an average of about 0.7 lbs per day on the above diet. Remember that pigs are different and respond to nutrition, especially small daily portions differently. One pig might gain 0.5 lbs per day on the above diet, while another may well gain 0.8 lbs per day. So weigh the pigs frequently when limiting weight gain. Weighing everyday is not too often. If you find the pig is gaining slower or faster than you desire adjust the feed, either an increase to improve growth rate, or decrease to slow growth rate.

At the end of the initial 21 days, the pig should have gained about 15 lbs. That will put the pig at 255 lbs with 24 days until weigh in. Remember that the pig will be fed Paylean the final 14 days, so for the next 10 days we will need to 1) continue to limit growth, 2) increase body condition, and 3 keep the pig looking great.

Feed the following diet for the next 10 days to continue limiting growth and improving cover:

(Again total per day)

HONOR Show Chow Powerfill	1 1/2 lbs
High Octane Champion Drive	1/2 lbs
High Octane Power Fuel	1 lbs
Beet pulp	3/4 to 1 lbs

The pig should again gain 0.70 lbs per day. However during the period the pig should be increasing body condition (cover) at a faster rate. At the end of the 10 days the pigs should have gained 7.0 lbs and should now weigh 262 lbs.

There is now 14 days left until weigh in, and the pig can gain 23 lbs, for an average daily gain of about 1.64 lbs per day.

Feed the following diet (again divided into two equal feedings per day):

HONOR Show Chow Powerfill	1 1/2 lbs
High Octane Champion Drive	1 lbs
High Octane Power Fuel	1 lbs
High Octane Showpig Paylean Premix	2 ounces
Beet pulp	3/4 to 1 lbs

If you find that the pig is gaining less than the 1.64 lbs per day, you can increase the Powerfill to 2 lbs per day. At the end of this 14 days the pig should be muscular, fresh, youthful, and full.

Remember that the goal is to not only get the pig where you want it to weigh, but have it looking it's absolute best on show day. Exercise is an vital component to a great feeding program. It is especially important when managing weight gain. A daily routine of walking and practicing showing is important to the success of your showpig project.

Do not be afraid to ask for help. There are experienced feeders that can be a wealth of experience for you. You can also e-mail me at kburg@landolakes.com for help and information.