



## SHOW SOLUTIONS

### How does feeding at shows differ from feeding at home? Helpful advice from our species experts

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#### Swine tips from swine specialist, Ryan Sites

When feeding at shows, try to stay on the same time schedule as you do at home. People like to eat around roughly the same time every day, whether we are at home or elsewhere, and our livestock feel the same way. Start prepping and training your show pig at home for eating at desired times. At our house, we call it the "20-minute drill." We give them 20 minutes to eat and then take the feed away until the next feeding time. By pulling the feed, they realize they can't snack on it all day, and this encourages the pigs to eat everything in front of them.

At most shows, we feed the same amount at the show that we feed at home, with the exception of an extra feeding before going into the ring. However, this does depend on the hog's weight. If your show has a weigh-in and no weigh back, then feeding a lesser amount more frequently throughout the day is a good strategy for keeping pigs full. On the flip side, if you're required to turn in weight cards, I recommend sticking to twice daily feedings and pushing lots of water.

Hydration is imperative at shows. With automatic waterers at home, it can be hard to tell exactly how much pigs are drinking daily. So, offering them water every two to three hours at shows is imperative for keeping them hydrated. Bringing your own water to a show is a not a bad idea, but it's not absolutely necessary. If you're having trouble with your animal drinking the water somewhere, try using an electrolyte or Show-Rite's newest product, Swell, to mask the taste of unappealing water. Swell is an incredible tool designed to promote the bulk and overall dimension of your show pig. Swell can be mixed with water or feed, and the results are impressive.

If your pigs are prone to going off feed in stressful situations, try rinsing them off and cooling them down before feeding. We also try top dressing with fat or an additive that they have not had before to entice them into consumption. Slopping the feed or wet feeding can also encourage consumption and help keep them hydrated.

Lastly, be prepared for hot temperatures. Utilizing fans and rinsing often will help to keep your show animals comfortable.

#### Sheep tips from sheep specialist, Cooper Newcomb

When feeding at shows, we always decrease the amount of feed and increase the number of feedings throughout the day. When trying to determine how often you should be feeding, you should take the temperature into consideration since you are watering at the same time. For example, if a lamb has been getting 1.5 pounds per day at home and then you go to a show, you may increase to feeding them 2 pounds per day. But, instead of feeding only twice a day, you would split the 2 pounds into half-pound increments and feed four times throughout the day.

The most important thing to remember is to provide plenty of water throughout the day. As animals go through stress, they go through more water. Going to a new place and shows is stressful for sheep, so water multiple times per day, regardless of how often you decide to feed. Also, if the lamb is carrying more condition, it won't need as many fluids. Comparatively, if a lamb is thinner, it will need more attention (food and water) at the show.

I would also recommend having your animals trained to eat wet feed. This becomes especially important if the show doesn't condone drenching. Remember, drenching isn't unhealthy if the proper technique is used. If you are uncertain of what the proper technique is, be sure and ask someone with experience to demonstrate and teach you.

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### **Cattle tips from industry expert, Dave Guyer**

Feeding at shows should be very similar to feeding at home. A lot of times when you get to shows, you decide to start trying new things. The next thing you know, you have thrown your cattle completely off feed and they become rung out and need to fill up.

A simple trick that I utilize when heading to shows is feeding a small quantity before leaving so that when we arrive at our destination the cattle are naturally a little bit hungry. Once at shows, I do not feed the full, normal feeding amount because nerves and a change in environment plays a role in cattle's eating habits and can commonly cause loose stool.

A major difference in being at a show versus being at home is that they will typically be tied up during the day, and possibly during the night as well. So, be sure to give them plenty of exercise. You might not think exercise has anything to do with feeding, but if your calf is uncomfortable, they won't eat.

You also want to stay on the same time schedule as your normal daily feeding times. Remember to feed an abundance of good grass hay to keep them full. As exhibitors and family members, we are all going to deal with nerves and show jitters, and the calf is no different. The more you go to shows, the more the calf relaxes and becomes comfortable with the changing surroundings and environment. With that said, remember to be patient when attending shows — especially your first show — and don't get carried away trying a lot of new things because you will end up throwing your animals off feed and going backward rather than forward. To sum things up, stay on the path that got you to the show and don't overthink things.

### **Goat tips from industry expert, Glen Martin**

First things first: Minimizing stress is a major key to maximizing the potential of a market wether. Getting the wether away from home, even if only hauling to a friend's house or the local show barn, can be monumental in acclimating the show wether to travel. The stress of leaving home and having the goats learn to eat and drink on the road can really set the tone for an individual's success in the ring.

If you're feeding Show-Rite Advancer Plus, then you have a jumpstart on the competition. The fact that you have fed the best goat feed available means that your goat's muscle cells have the maximum available nutrients through the unique feed formulation and the Rite Factor technology, which creates a muscular build and a smooth, expressive look. Thus, you're able to cut your feed volume at any given time and increase feeding frequency. We refer to this as "breaking up feedings". We do this to reduce the volume of feed consumed at one time. Doing this several days ahead of traveling to a show will reduce the expansion of the goat's midsection. This will create a natural tightening of the belly. Breaking up feedings pulls the belly up and creates a more desirable, streamlined look. As we cut feed consumption, we continue to push water to our wethers, realizing they need 0.5–1 gallon per day to maximize muscle shape. At our house, we also begin adding additional Rite Factor about 45–60 days pre-show to increase muscle shape in our wether projects.

Where it is acceptable to drench and use muzzles, we do both so that we can put the proper amount of fluid into our finicky show wether, insuring that he does not get dehydrated. We utilize the muzzle to keep our goats from consuming the bedding and anything unwanted that may exist in our trailer or in our pen at the show.

I'd also recommend keeping goats covered once they are sheared. Be prepared with items that can help with temperature control. They need to be comfortable, whether the temperature is hot or cold.

And last, but certainly not least, my kids are firm believers in Attitude Adjustment. We give 10–15 cc three times per day, starting the day before we leave for a show, and we continue through show day. This keeps the show wether more relaxed, which translates into a calmer showman and a better experience.

In conclusion, common sense and tactful planning with feed, travel and hydration will improve success and increase the fun your family has exhibiting market wethers.

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