Adams County Swine Tag-In Procedures

In an effort to help prevent the introduction and spread of Swine Enteric Coronavirus Disease (SECD) (previously known as Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea virus (PEDv) and other diseases found in young swine, as well as new restrictions and social distancing from COVID-19, Adams County will not be holding a Swine Weigh-in/Tagging. Please follow the following procedures to ensure your swine are eligible for show at the 2020 Adams County Swine Market Show.

The following is the Procedure Adams County 4-H will be following to tag market swine intended for the Adams County Fair:

Mailing of Swine Tags and Forms

1. Enroll in the 4-H Program and Market Swine Project.
2. Fill out online form to request the number of tags your family needs.
   a. Link: https://forms.gle/wvuXQbK3SMTYmzpW7
3. Tags and required forms will be mailed to your home.
   a. **Tags** – you will receive one tag for each market hog. If at any point a tag is ripped out of an ear, contact Kenzie at the 4-H office immediately for a replacement.
   b. **Tagger** – because our office is not open at this time, members must use their own taggers as the office will have no taggers available to rent. We use allflex tags, however any standard tagger will work.
   c. **Nomination Forms** – you will receive 3 nomination forms; Adams County, State Fair, and SE Weld County
      i. Nomination forms must be returned to the Extension Office (mail or dropbox) by 4:30pm, May 15th.
         1. If you plan to exhibit at the Adams County Fair ONLY – you will complete the purple county nomination form.
         2. If you plan to exhibit at the Adams County and/or Colorado State Fair – you will complete the orange nomination form.
         3. If you are eligible to compete at the SE Weld County Fair you will fill out the quarter page blue nomination form.
      ii. Nomination forms must be completely filled out (one per exhibitor) including member signature, Premise ID number and animal and exhibitor information (don’t forget to mark ear notches on back).
   d. **Ownership Affidavit** - complete one form per member. You may use multiple forms if your hogs come from different producers.
   e. **DNA Envelopes** – one envelope and sticker will be provided per hog. Please see information on page 2 to learn how to properly collect hair for DNA sample.
At Home

Once you have received supplies from the Extension Office, perform the following steps when you get home:

1. **Tag your pig(s):**
   a. Refer to the instructions on page 4 to learn how to tag your pig.

2. **Collect a DNA sample from each pig:**
   a. *Hair must be plucked (not cut) to include follicle cells.*
   b. A minimum of 10-20 hairs should be obtained (using small needle-nose pliers is the easiest way)
   c. It is recommended to collect hairs plucked from between the shoulder blades
   d. Hairs which can easily be removed by plucking may already be dead with little follicle cells with DNA left.
   e. To prevent contamination from human skin, use of clean gloves or an instrument for plucking is recommended.
   f. Then place the hairs into the provided DNA envelope and seal with the provided sticker.
   g. Return this collection sample along with the other required paperwork to the Extension Office by the deadline.

3. **Record necessary information on your Nomination forms:**
   a. This includes marking ear notches for each pig on the back of forms. See pgs. 6-8 for info on how to read ear notches.

4. **Take 4 pictures of each nominated pig:**
   a. Left Side View
   b. Right Side View
   c. A close up of ear notches (usually easiest from behind)
   d. Clear picture showing tag in ear

5. **Upload pictures to 4HOnline animal profile – DUE May 15th, no exceptions!**
   a. See project tipsheet online under “member resources” for instructions on how to upload photos to 4HOnline. More instructions are also available on the 4-H website.

6. **Collect all paperwork to turn into Extension Office:**
   a. Proof of Ownership – You MUST provide proof of ownership of your animals. An Affidavit of Ownership is attached to your packet and must be filled out completely.
   b. Primary Care Form (only needed from those who’s animals are housed at an address other than their own, all other members completed this online during enrollment).
   c. Completed Nomination Forms
Submit All Information at Extension Office and 4HOnline  
Deadline: May 15th

Make sure to check off that you have returned all required information to Office and 4HOnline by May 15th:

Turned in to Extension Office:  
☐ Completed Nomination forms  
☐ DNA Envelopes  
☐ Ownership Affidavit  
☐ Primary Care Form (if applicable)

Uploaded to 4HOnline:

☐ 4 Swine pictures and required ID information
Tagging Your Swine

FITTING INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place the male part of the ear tag firmly on the applicator pin.

2. Push the female part of the ear tag under the tongue into the jaw of the applicator.

Make sure the parts line up correctly on the applicator and will lock together when correctly fitted. This is done by gently closing the tagger to see if the male metal tip lines up with the hole in the female side. Do not totally compress the tool.

EAR TAG INSTALLATION

1. The tag should be positioned in the animal’s ear approximately half way between the head and the tip of the ear and between the ridge of cartilage in the ear avoiding any obvious veins. If you get the ear tag out towards the tip of the ear the retention rate drops dramatically. Place the tag so the number is on the outside of the ear so it can be read from above the pig:

2. Make sure you squeeze the installation tool completely shut. Many ear tags are lost because one end of the tag has not been properly seated into the other side.
3. However, do not squeeze the panel of the tag up tight to the ear with the thought that this will make tag stay on better. All this does is promote infection in the wound as the air cannot get around the tag to promote the healing process.
4. Rotate the tag to the right and the left to ensure free movement.
5. Disinfect the applicator when finished, between each animal. Use alcohol or another strong solution.
6. Check the ears after a few days and disinfect as necessary if infection (redness/swelling) appears.
If you need assistance with tagging your animals, please consider contacting any of the following people who may be willing to help you (while observing social distancing)

- 4-H Project Leader – The Swine project leader in your club is great resource – no visits may be made by leaders during COVID-19 restrictions
- Breeder/Seller – The breeder and/or seller of your pig may be willing to tag them for you upon pick-up or shortly after.
- 4-H Swine Superintendent – contact office for contact information – no visits may be made by leaders during COVID-19 restrictions
- You are always welcome to contact the Extension office and 4-H agents with any questions or concerns you have at 303-345-5025
Ear Notching: Performing and Reading

Ear-notching helps identify a pig’s litter and which one of the litter it is, giving each pig a unique identity number. Notches are placed in one of five locations in the pig’s right ear — to show the litter number — and in one of three locations in the left ear — to show the individual pig number. “Reading” the notches allows producers, judges, and other swine professionals to know more about the pig they’re viewing.

Correctly notching the pig is key. Each pig must be notched differently. So, to notch pigs properly, you must know the location and associated number of each notch.

The most common ear-notching system is shown in Figure 1.

The right ear has five locations for notches, and each location is assigned a number. Those five numbers are 1, 3, 81, 9, or 27. Look at Figure 1 to find each notch location. Except for the 81 notch, one or two notches may be at each of the other four locations.

![Figure 1. Universal ear notching system](image)

To determine the litter number for a pig, add the numerical values assigned to each notch, as shown in Figure 2.

- Litter No. = 1+1+81+9 = 92
- Litter No. = 1+3+3+27 = 34

![Figure 2. Examples for litter numbers 92 and 34.](image)

The left ear has three locations for notches, and each location is assigned a number. Those three numbers are 1, 3 and 9. Look at Figure 1 to find each notch location. As with litter numbers, the number values are added. (Figure 3).

The litter number is notched in the pig’s right ear and the individual pig number in the pig’s left ear.
Pig No. = 1+1+3+9 = 14

Figure 3. Examples for pig numbers 14 and 7.

Combining Both Ears

After a pig is notched in its right and left ear, it has a unique identity. Examples are shown in Figure 4.

Litter No. 1+1+9+27 = 38 (pig’s right ear)
Pig No. 1+3 = 4 (pig’s left ear)
This pig’s identity is 38-4.

Litter No. 3+3+81 = 87
Pig No. 3+9 = 12
This pig’s identity is 87-12.
Techniques to Ensure Effective Notching

Avoid placing a notch midway in the outside edge of either ear (that is, close to the dotted line indicated in Figure 1). Such marks can easily be mistaken for either a 1 or a 3 or a 9 or a 27.

Remember, the reference to left and right ear refers to the pig’s left or right ear, as viewed from the rear of the pig. Left and right does not refer the viewers’ left or right in a situation where the pig is facing the viewer.

If pigs are notched at 1-3 days of age, the task is much easier. If you allow pigs to become large (100 lb), the task is considerably more demanding mentally and physically.

Use a V-ear notcher to notch piglets weighing less than about 25 pounds. These notchers typically make a notch that is 3/16 to 1/4 inch deep (Figure 5). For larger pigs, a notcher that makes notches 1/2 inch deep is recommended.

It is important to have some disinfectant available to dip the notchers in after each use. In some cases, spraying larger pigs with a wound dressing can be helpful.

Avoid making notches too shallow, as they may become hard to read or possibly heal shut. A notch that is too deep, especially one toward the ear tip, may result in a torn ear.

Leave at least 1/4 inch between notches to ensure easy reading. Do not make notches too close to the tip of the ear, as these can be torn off. When making the #27 notch, uncurl the ear with your fingers so you can make it deep into the cartilage. Otherwise, it might be unreadable later.

If notching ears on older or larger pigs, it may be necessary to house them in separate pens until the notches heal. Pen mates not notched may be attracted to the bloody notches and start ear biting.

When combining ear notching with other pig processing, consider doing the notching last, as it tends to cause more bleeding than other procedures, such as teeth clipping, naval care, injections or tail docking.