

Junior Purebred Gilts to Show by Weight within Age

At the August 2022 National Swine Registry Executive Committee Meeting, it was voted unanimously to exhibit National Junior Swine Association purebred gilts by weight within month of birth. This method of exhibition was developed to exhibit gilts that have a measurable trait and keep birthdate as a show parameter. This method of exhibiting junior purebred gilts will take effect January 1, 2023. This rule only applies to NJSA Junior Show purebred gilts.

The issue of over-aging purebred animals has been addressed as a serious concern for decades and has been identified as a long-term threat to the sustainability of the NSR and purebred swine industry. The intent of the rule change is to correct what is, and has been, a serious problem in the industry. Without technology to accurately determine age and maturity of animals, the new policy's intent is to level the playing field for breeders and junior members alike. The Executive Committee believes that this new policy will allow animals of similar size to be compared and evaluated equally, without the advantage of age at NSR events. Weights, farrowing dates, and Weight per Day of Age (WDA) will be published in show catalogs and when appropriate, used as consideration for judges to make decisions.

What does the process look like?

Junior purebred gilts will be exhibited by weight within a month of birth. First, age requirements to be eligible to show will stay the same for the respective events. Purebred gilts will be entered into the age classes by the month they were farrowed within the age requirements for the show. After check-in at each event, purebred gilts will be brought to designated breed eligibility check and scale area(s).

Junior exhibitors will be required to bring the original registration paper and the completed weight card for each purebred gilt. Purebred gilts will be checked for breed eligibility and weighed. The registration paper will be stamped after the weight of the purebred gilt has been obtained. This will streamline the process at the next NJSA show. If an animal is exhibited at other NJSA events, the exhibitor can bring their stamped registration paper and the event weight card straight to the scale.

Junior purebred gilts will be shown youngest to oldest by month. Within the month of age, junior purebred gilts will be shown lightest weight to heaviest weight. Divisions will be broken by NJSA staff dependent on number of classes and number of purebred gilts exhibited for each breed.

Data Collection and Monitoring

To collect data to help form future decisions on how to exhibit purebred gilts, a minimum of three gilts per class will be weighed after exiting the class outside the show ring. This is not a weigh back. This is solely for assessment and data collection purposes. This will aid in the consideration of whether a weigh back process is warranted in the future. Simply put, if gilt weights after a class are drastically different from weigh in process, a weigh back policy may need to be imposed. It will be up to the exhibitors and their animal management that dictates what needs to be done to maintain the integrity of the show and animal well-being concerns.

Conclusion

The making of this decision was not taken lightly and was the result of multiple in-depth discussions. The intent of this change in how junior purebred gilts are exhibited is to ensure the long-term sustainability and success of the purebred swine industry, as well as protect the playing field of our junior membership and industry drivers. If members feel inclined to discuss this policy change or need clarification, we encourage them to visit with their respective Executive Committee members, contact the NSR office and periodically check NSR information platforms for updates.