



In the swine project area, you can learn about breeds, health care, production, management, showmanship, marketing, and careers in the swine industry.

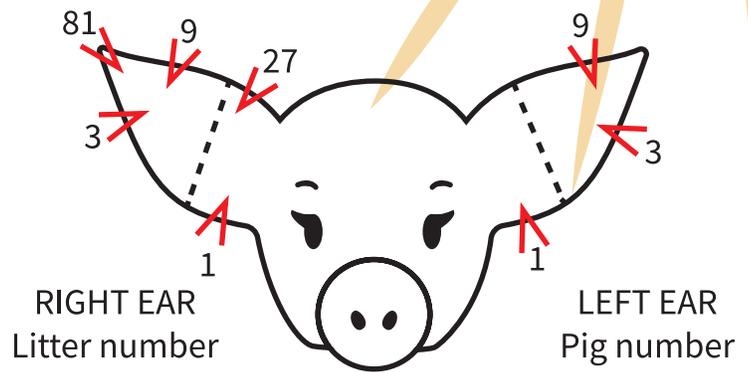


## Exploring 4-H Swine

### Spark Activity: Notches Not Names

Animal identification and record-keeping is an important part of being a responsible livestock owner. Some species have ear tags and others have tattoos. The universal system for pigs is ear notching. Reading ear notches looks confusing at first, but when you learn the system, it is very simple.

Use a paper plate or piece of paper to draw a pig's face and two large ears. Cut along the outside lines and then practice ear notching your pig.



Each ear is divided into four quadrants with one imaginary line drawn down the center of the ear from top to bottom and the other imaginary line drawn across the middle of the ear horizontally. A notch in the lower quadrant closest to the body has a value of “1,” a notch in the lower outside quadrant has a value of “3,” a notch in the top outside quadrant has a value of “9,” and a notch in the top quadrant closest to the body has a value of “27.” The very tip of the ear can be notched for “81.” The right ear is the litter number (like your last name, every piglet born in that litter has the same number) and the left ear is the pig number (like your first name, each piglet has a unique number). Instead of a first name and a last name, each pig is the litter number then a dash and then the pig number (i.e. piglet #7 from litter #32 would be known as “32-7”).

## 4-H Project Levels and Goals

### Beginner

- Learn breed names and descriptions
- Identify swine body parts
- Learn about livestock nutrition, feeding, health, and daily care
- Select, care for, and train your animal
- Learn how to show your animal
- Practice safety and sanitation
- Learn swine terminology

### Intermediate

- Explore normal pig characteristics
- Outline a pig health care plan
- Understand swine management practices
- Analyze and make decisions on how to solve swine issues
- Plan a facility to keep swine safe and healthy
- Research common parasites and treatment

### Advanced

- Interview agencies about environmental issues
- Research state or national swine organizations
- Explore careers in animal science and the pork industry
- Research the clinical signs and treatment of livestock diseases
- Calculate feed rations

## Put Your Project Into Action

### Show Your Skills

- Library display on swine by-products
- Public speaking contest with a swine nutrition topic

### Service and Leadership

- Volunteer your pig for an agriculture class at school
- Participate in a service project donating to food pantries
- Volunteer to help at your county livestock judging event
- Demonstrate proper safety techniques when handling an animal
- Organize and lead a club activity on how to care for your animal
- Lead a swine showmanship and grooming session before your county fair

### Entrepreneurship

- Provide confinement cleaning services for local hog operations

### Technology Connection

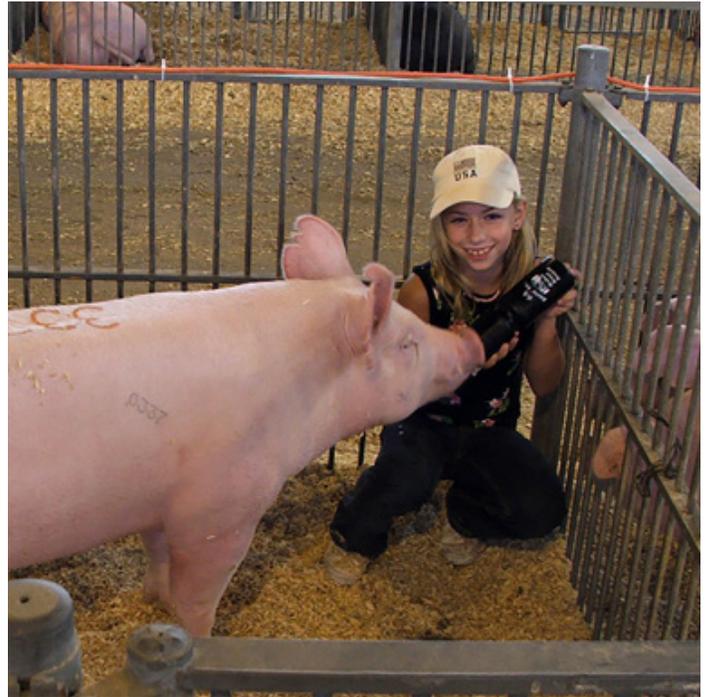
- Create an educational video of your swine project to share with others
- Human ultrasound, computer simulations, and robotics are all integrated into the modern-day swine industry

### Connecting with a Mentor

- Job shadow a swine feed nutritionist
- Visit with your school's Agricultural Education teacher
- Visit with local pork producers
- Swine Breeders
- Show pig producers

### Events

- Exhibit at your county fair
- Exhibit at the State Fair
- Judging Contests / Events
- State Junior Livestock Conference



### Careers for People Interested in Swine

Agricultural Educator  
Veterinarian  
Meat Inspector  
Auctioneer

Feed Sales  
Veterinarian  
Pork Producer  
Nutritionist

## Start a Conversation

How would you explain the swine industry to a consumer?  
What topics do you need to do more research on to be a more confident producer?

What do you like most about your swine project?

How can you use that passion to better your project next year?

## Want to learn more?

[go.illinois.edu/4Hswine](http://go.illinois.edu/4Hswine)

## Explore more at Illinois 4-H!

[4-H.extension.illinois.edu](http://4-H.extension.illinois.edu)



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**Credits:** Iowa State University Extension 4-H Swine Project Area Hot Sheet | UF/IFAS Extension Florida 4-H Project Handout | “Proper Way to Ear Notch Pigs” University of Nebraska - Lincoln Extension | 4-H Spark Sheets are a collaborative effort of 4-H staff, volunteers, alumni and teens from across Illinois. A big thanks to the many contributors and reviewers!