



## SHOW SOLUTIONS

### Showmanship tips from the pros

June 2019

#### Cattle – Blake Bloomberg:

- Showmanship preparation begins at home — and starts long before the day of the show. Practice makes perfect, and it is vital to prepare not only yourself for the competition, but your animal as well. Getting in the ring as much as possible is crucial for both the animal and the exhibitor.
- Worry about the animal first. I often hear parents telling their kids, “Look at the judge!” In my opinion, it is much more important that the animal looks its best first. There is no question that eye contact has value, but the primary focus should be on ensuring that the animal is properly presented.
- A good way to learn is to watch the older exhibitors, who have a tremendous amount of experience, as much as possible. Also, don’t be afraid to ask them questions. When it comes to showmanship, each person can create their own craft, but it never hurts to borrow a few tactics from seasoned and accomplished veterans of the ring.
- Space is valuable. Depending on its size, the showing can get congested very quickly. Navigating the ring well and positioning yourself and your animal at proper angles and viewpoints for the judge are critical for success.
- Showmanship is subjective. If you are defeated, don’t take it personally; everyone has their own personal preference and style. Find a method that works for you and go with it.
- Enjoy the moment. The days are long, but the years are short. Cherish the time that you have and do the best you can.

#### Goats – Glen Martin:

- Goats must be trained to show at home so that, when they are at a show, both the exhibitor and the goat can have a positive and successful experience. Unfortunately, many exhibitors struggle with showmanship during their targeted shows, oftentimes because their goats aren’t completely trained for exhibition. Goats must be given the proper training and must also develop the endurance to compete for the duration of the class/show.
- Keep your goats hydrated. Failure to hydrate goats properly continues to be a major issue for many goat exhibitors. The fact is that muscle shape and show day performance have been proven to have a 75% correlation with the moisture levels in the goat’s body. Exhibitors must regularly hydrate their animals; however, placing a bucket of water in the pen does not necessarily guarantee that the animal is consuming enough. Your goat must consume roughly the same amount of fluid at the show that they do at home.
- Use the showing to your advantage. There is no substitute for showing knowledge and experience. If permitted, take your goat into the ring the day or evening prior to the actual show. Explore and get used to the ring and identify any issues that your goat might have with that particular showing. This will ensure that both you and your project avoid showing anxiety.

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- Make sure to pack everything you may need for the show. Pre-plan for any added supplements and show-day products that are not used daily at home. Be self-sufficient and supply what you need. Things like a rectal thermometer, ammonium chloride and kaolin pectin are necessary show box items that help exhibitors identify/treat possible illness while at the show. Plan for the worst so that you will have what you need, regardless of the situation.
- Be on time and know the show rules. You have worked hard all year, and now is your time to shine. Knowing the rules for exhibition and fitting for each show will help increase the likelihood that you will have a positive experience. Checking for your exhibitor name and goat identification on the board will help prevent any showing issues from arising. Arrive early; running late for weigh-in, check-in or your class will create issues that can seldom be fixed. You have worked with this animal for six to 10 months — don't ruin your chances by being late now.

### Sheep – Chance Neff:

- To me, the most important aspect of showmanship is to have your sheep broke. Putting in hours at the barn in preparation for the show is essential. If your sheep isn't properly broke, your chances of having a positive experience at a show are slim to none.
- We are showing livestock, so paying attention to them is the top priority. There is no doubt that ring awareness is important but paying attention to your project should take precedence.
- Keep calm. It can be frustrating, but sometimes our animals will act up, even after we put in a lot of work at home. Remember, this is a new environment, and it's easy to transfer our showing jitters to our animals. Take a couple of deep breaths and remain diligent about achieving your goal; things will come together in the end.

### Hogs – Doug Albright:

- When it comes to making a pig look its best, hog showmanship is everything. Knowing your pig's best attributes and understanding how to accentuate those features in the ring can either make it or break it for a showman. Being able to speed up or slow down and recognizing what angle to drive them at is also key.
- Preparation at home is also extremely important for success in the showing. Breaking your pig to drive with athleticism and speed will allow you to manipulate the speed at which you drive that pig in the ring. I am a big fan of getting pigs broke to drive early so that we can focus more on building their endurance and stamina.
- A common misconception is that pigs need to be driven with their heads held as high as possible. The natural height of a pig's head is actually where that pig looks its best while the pig is in motion. Don't hurt your performance or your hog's presentation by jacking their head up further than it needs to be.
- The quality of a pig's skin and hair are vital to showmanship success. Daily attention to the pig's hair and skin will separate the elite showmen from the average. A rice root brush is your best friend; it works best to train hair and exfoliate dead skin from the pig's hide.

For more tips on how to be successful in the show ring, please visit [www.showrite.com](http://www.showrite.com) or contact a Show-Rite representative.

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