

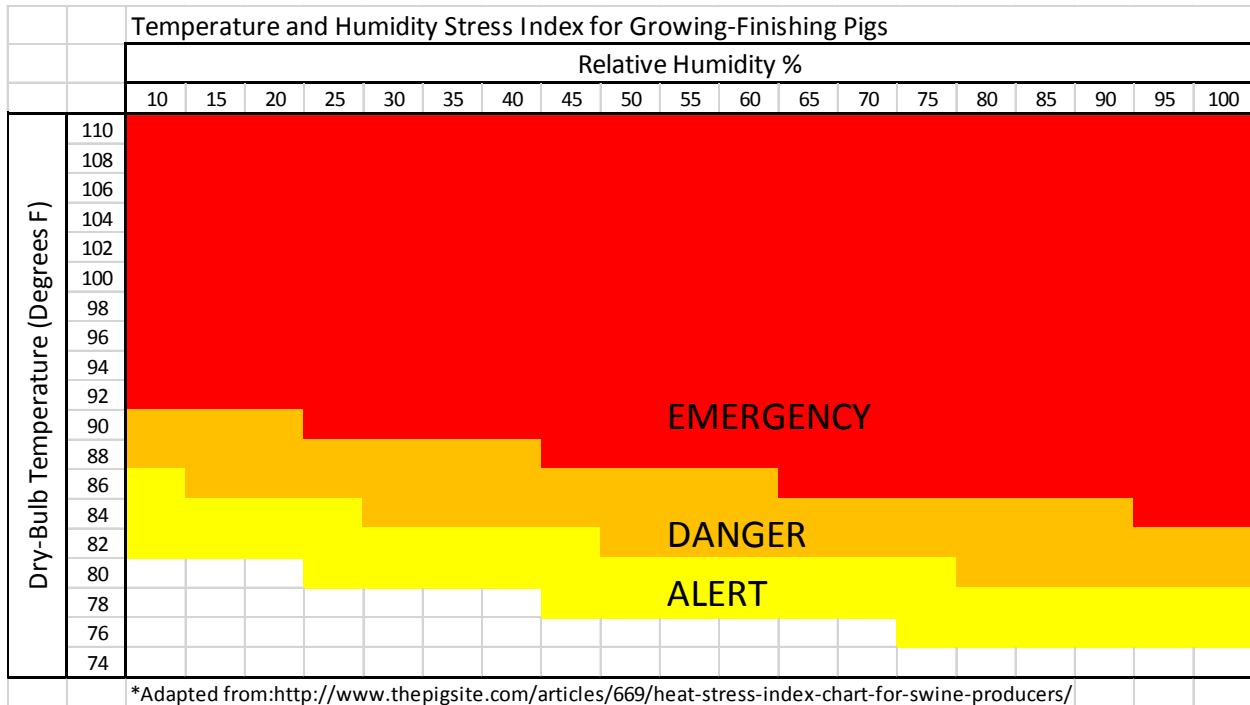
Swine Exhibitors,

As county fair season is fully upon us and 90+ degree weather in store, I wanted to remind you of the importance of water for pigs at the fairs. Water is the most important nutrient you provide your pig to keep them looking and performing their best. Barns at many fairs are warmer than your home facilities due in part to having more pigs/people around them generating heat. Because many exhibitors have automatic water systems set up at home but do not have the same setup at the fair, we must be vigilant that pigs are receiving adequate water. Pigs are creatures of habit, so be mindful of switching the type of waterer that pigs have at the fairs as we do not want them to get dehydrated/hot as they are learning a new watering system. Also, keep in mind and prepare for the fact that some pigs simply like the taste of water from home compared to that at the fair. If you feel your pig isn't drinking as much water as it did at home, bring fresh water from home for them to drink.

Fresh cool water is best as we all prefer a cool drink of water on a hot day. Pigs have been known to refuse to drink hot water even when they are dehydrated or heat stressed. There is no perfect way to water pigs at fairs as each has their benefits and drawbacks. If you hand water (either via a bucket or in their feed pan), be sure to offer water multiple times a day, especially when feeding them and during the heat of the day. If you use a tube type waterer, or even if the fair has nipple type waterers plumbed into the pens, be aware that the water will often warm up as the day gets hotter. If you use a tube type watering system, you can simply add ice to the water reservoir to keep the water cool. If your fair pen has water permanently plumbed to the pens, check the water temperature coming out of the nipple. If it is warm or hot to the touch, flush water lines to ensure pigs have access to cool water. For all nipple type water systems, be sure that the water nipple is not plugged and water is flowing at a sufficient rate. A water nipple should be able to produce a pint of water in 17 seconds. If a pig doesn't get enough water flow, they have been known to quit trying to drink out of frustration. We also don't want the water to be flowing at such a high rate (i.e. like drinking from a fire hose) that the pig also doesn't like to drink. Sufficient water intake also facilitates good feed intake.

While everyone watches their pigs more diligently before the show and are mindful of water and feed intake to ensure pigs are fresh looking with proper gut fill, the pig's need for water does not stop once the show is over. Ensuring pigs have water after the show is just as important and becomes easier to manage as we are no longer striving for a desired look. After the show is over through the time of load-out, we can and should provide full free access to water keeping in mind the above comments about keeping the water fresh and cool. Livestock buyers that support youth development programs are critical to the program and continuing adequate care for your pigs ensures buyers are purchasing well-watered and healthy animals that are ready for the food chain.

The below chart for temperature and humidity stress for pigs is a good reference as to when we need to be more alert and prepared to take action to keep animals as comfortable as possible during times of heat stress.



If your pig is showing signs of heat stress, offer fresh cool water and/or take them to the wash rack to slowly cool them off by spraying cool water on them. Spraying water on the nose and belly is most effective.

Remember that people from all backgrounds, many of which have no livestock experience, walk through our fairs and view our projects. We are the AgVocates for animal agriculture. Often, we are the only encounter the general public has with livestock; they see the care you are giving to the animals the same as the care livestock receive on commercial farms. When they enter our barns and view the attention and care we provide our pigs, it should leave absolutely no doubt that we provide the absolute best care possible for our pigs. Thank you for being role models for the program. If you have questions, do not hesitate to call me or talk to your local extension educator.

Sincerely,

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