



Declared Weight System at the Indiana State Fair 4-H Market Lamb and 4-H Meat Goat Wether Shows

Aaron Fisher and Colleen Brady • Department of Youth Development and Agricultural Education

Introduction

Estimates indicate that almost 90 percent of the population of the United States is at least two generations removed from the farm, with careers in farming, fishing, and forestry representing approximately 1 percent of today's total employment. Therefore, the average consumer has little to no knowledge of where their food comes from and, more importantly, what it takes to get the food on the table in a cost-efficient manner.

But animal welfare and humane handling of food and companion animals still concern many people beyond those directly involved in agriculture. People want to know that the animals they and others use are treated with the utmost care. Animal agriculturists must understand the views of those with little to no direct knowledge of animal agriculture and take the lead in educating the general public on this subject. In addition, animal producers and managers must police themselves and prove to the general public that animal abuse and misuse will not be tolerated.

Indiana 4-H firmly believes that educating youth on how to properly care for their animals will take an essential step toward bridging the widening gap between animal agriculturists and the general public. Even if youth are never directly involved in animal agriculture as a career or hobby, they will become educated animal advocates for the future.

Livestock exhibition, especially at the Indiana State Fair, is a very public affair. Youth have the opportunity to show off their livestock management skills and knowledge as well as prove that they have cared for their animals in a humane and appropriate manner. Conversely, it is also a time when

animal abuse and misuse can come to light. Therefore, it is extremely important to take every opportunity to reduce undue stress on the animal.

The days leading up to the show can be a very stressful time in an animal's life. Some people feel they get a competitive advantage by withholding feed and water in order to get the animal to weigh less at weigh-in. Then by getting the animal back to normal weight before the show, they may be able to exhibit a heavier animal in a lighter weight class. When feed and water have been withheld from animals, not only can the cooperation and health of the animal be compromised, but also animal handlers often become impatient, which leads to increased frustration levels of all those involved with the process.

In an attempt to promote animal welfare while maintaining an environment of education, fairness, and competition, Indiana 4-H has implemented the declared weight system at the Indiana State Fair 4-H Market Lamb and 4-H Meat Goat Wether Shows. The following procedure has been developed in an attempt to transition seamlessly from the traditional method of weigh-in to the new one for both market lambs and meat goat wethers. (For comparison of weigh-in systems, see figures at the end of this publication.)

How Will This Work?

Market Lambs

Arrival procedure for 4-H market lambs will be much the same as in recent years. Upon arrival, they will be weighed, sifted, and penned. The difference is that exhibitors will have until the time posted in the current Indiana State Fair 4-H Handbook/Premium List to turn in the entry ticket

with the declared weight. This is the weight that will be used as the show and sale weight. The weigh-in weight or any other weight that the exhibitor desires can be used. The top-placing animals in each class will then be reweighed, and the resulting weight must be no more than 6 pounds heavier than the declared weight. Animals whose show weight exceeds 6 pounds above the declared weight will be disqualified. Note that 4-H market lambs must weigh at least 70 pounds at weigh-in. Those below 70 pounds will be allowed one reweigh. Animals that do not meet the 70-pound threshold after the reweigh will be disqualified.

Meat Goat Wethers

Arrival procedure for 4-H meat goat wethers will be much the same as in recent years. Upon arrival, they will be weighed and penned. The difference is that exhibitors will have until the time posted in the current Indiana State Fair 4-H Handbook/Premium List to turn in the entry ticket with the declared weight. This is the weight that will be used as the show and sale weight. The weigh-in weight or any other weight that the exhibitor desires can be used. The top-placing animals in each class will then be reweighed, and the resulting weight must be no more than 5 pounds heavier than the declared weight. Animals whose show weight exceeds 5 pounds above the declared weight will be disqualified. Note that 4-H meat goat wethers must weigh at least 50 pounds at weigh-in. Those below 50 pounds will be allowed one reweigh. Animals that do not meet the 50-pound threshold after the reweigh will be disqualified.

Possible Scenarios for Declaring Show Weight

Below are some possible scenarios that may be encountered at the Indiana State Fair 4-H Market Lamb and 4-H Meat Goat Wether Shows. Keep in mind that these recommendations are to be used as guidelines to aid in maximizing the educational value of the program while also maintaining appropriate animal care. They are simply recommendations. Each exhibitor will be held responsible for declaring the show weight of his or her animals.

Market Lambs

“My lamb weighed 145 pounds at weigh-in. What are my options?”

Option 1

Accept 145 pounds as the show weight.

- The maximum reweigh weight is now 151 pounds.
- This is the easiest and simplest option.

Option 2

Declare a lighter show weight by subtracting 2 pounds from the official scale weight, resulting in a declared show weight of 143 pounds.

- The maximum reweigh weight is now 149 pounds.
 - As long as the animal was full when weighed in, a reduction in 2 pounds should be a manageable show weight for the animal to meet the reweigh guidelines and still receive appropriate care.
 - Declaring a lighter show weight can be very easy or very difficult. If it is approached with the mindset of simply subtracting a set weight, such as the 2 pounds in this example, then this option is very easy and manageable.
 - Reducing the show weight may prevent your project from being in a class with lambs that are much heavier.

Option 3

Declare any lighter show weight between 130–144 pounds.

- The maximum reweigh weight is calculated to be 6 pounds heavier than the declared show weight.
 - As long as the animal was full when weighed in, a moderate reduction in weight should be manageable without compromising animal welfare.

- If a large reduction is declared, it is unlikely that a healthy modification to the feeding, watering, and exercising protocol for the lamb can take place prior to reweighing at the end of the showing. Indiana 4-H only supports the implementation of animal care methods that put the health and well-being of the animal as a top priority.
- Reducing the show weight may prevent your project from being in a class with lambs that are much heavier, but drastic reductions could cause undue stress to the lamb and to the exhibitor.

Option 4

Declare a heavier show weight by adding 2 pounds to the official scale weight, resulting in a declared show weight of 147 pounds.

- The maximum reweigh weight is now 153 pounds.
- As long as the animal was full when weighed in, a moderate increase in weight should be manageable without compromising animal welfare.
- Declaring a heavier show weight can be very easy or very difficult. If it is approached with the mindset of simply adding a set weight, such as the 2 pounds in the example, then this option is very easy and manageable.
- Increasing the show weight may allow an exhibitor's project to be in a class with lambs that are much heavier.

Option 5

Declare a heavier show weight between 146–160 pounds.

- The maximum reweigh weight is now 6 pounds heavier than the declared show weight.
- As long as the animal was full when weighed in, any increase in weight should not require feed and water restriction.

“My lamb weighed 67 pounds at weigh-in. What are my options?”

Option 1

- Exhibitors are allowed one reweigh attempt for their lambs to reach the 70-pound minimum to be allowed to declare a show weight. If your lamb does not reach the 70-pound threshold, it will be disqualified.

Meat Goat Wethers

“My meat goat wether weighed 85 pounds at weigh-in. What are my options?”

Option 1

Accept 85 pounds as the show weight.

- The maximum reweigh weight is now 90 pounds.
- This is the easiest and simplest option.

Option 2

Declare a lighter show weight by subtracting 2 pounds from the official scale weight, resulting in a declared show weight of 83 pounds.

- The maximum reweigh weight is now 88 pounds.
- As long as the animal was full when weighed in, a reduction in 2 pounds should be a manageable show weight for the animal to meet the reweigh guidelines and still receive appropriate care.
- Declaring a lighter show weight can be very easy or very difficult. If it is approached with the mindset of simply subtracting a set weight, such as the 2 pounds in this example, then this option is very easy and manageable.
- Reducing the show weight may prevent your project from being in a class with meat goat wethers that are much heavier.

Option 3

Declare any lighter show weight between 70–84 pounds.

- The maximum reweigh weight is calculated to be 5 pounds heavier than the declared show weight.
 - As long as the animal was full when weighed in, a moderate reduction in weight should be manageable without compromising animal welfare.
 - If a large reduction is declared, it is unlikely that a healthy modification to the feeding, watering, and exercising protocol for the meat goat wether can take place prior to reweighing at the end of the showing. Indiana 4-H only supports the implementation of animal care methods that put the health and well-being of the animal as a top priority.
 - Reducing the show weight may prevent your project from being in a class with meat goat wethers that are much heavier, but drastic reductions could cause undue stress to the animal and to the exhibitor.

Option 4

Declare a heavier show weight by adding 2 pounds to the official scale weight, resulting in a declared show weight of 87 pounds.

- The maximum reweigh weight is now 92 pounds.
 - As long as the animal was full when weighed in, a moderate increase in weight should be manageable without compromising animal welfare.
 - Declaring a heavier show weight can be very easy or very difficult. If it is approached with the mindset of simply adding a set weight, such as the 2 pounds in the example, then this option is very easy and manageable.
 - Increasing the show weight may allow an exhibitor's project to be in a class with meat goat wethers that are much heavier.

Option 5

Declare a heavier show weight between 86–100 pounds.

- The maximum reweigh weight is now 5 pounds heavier than the declared show weight.
 - As long as the animal was full when weighed in, any increase in weight should not require feed and water restriction.

“My meat goat wether weighed 47 pounds at weigh-in. What are my options?”

Option 1

Exhibitors are allowed one reweigh attempt for their meat goat wethers to reach the 50-pound minimum to be allowed to declare a show weight. If your meat goat wether does not reach the 50-pound threshold, it will be disqualified.

More information about the 4-H Market Lamb Show and the 4-H Meat Goat Wether Show as well as all other animal shows is in the Indiana State Fair 4-H Handbook/Premium List, which can be found at http://www.in.gov/statefair/fair/contests/4H_premium.html.

For additional information regarding Indiana State Fair 4-H animal shows, please contact Aaron Fisher at aaronfisher@purdue.edu or 765-494-8433.

*This publication replaces
Declaring Weights at the Indiana State Fair
4-H Market Lamb Show
by Aaron Fisher and Colleen Brady.*

Figure 1 -

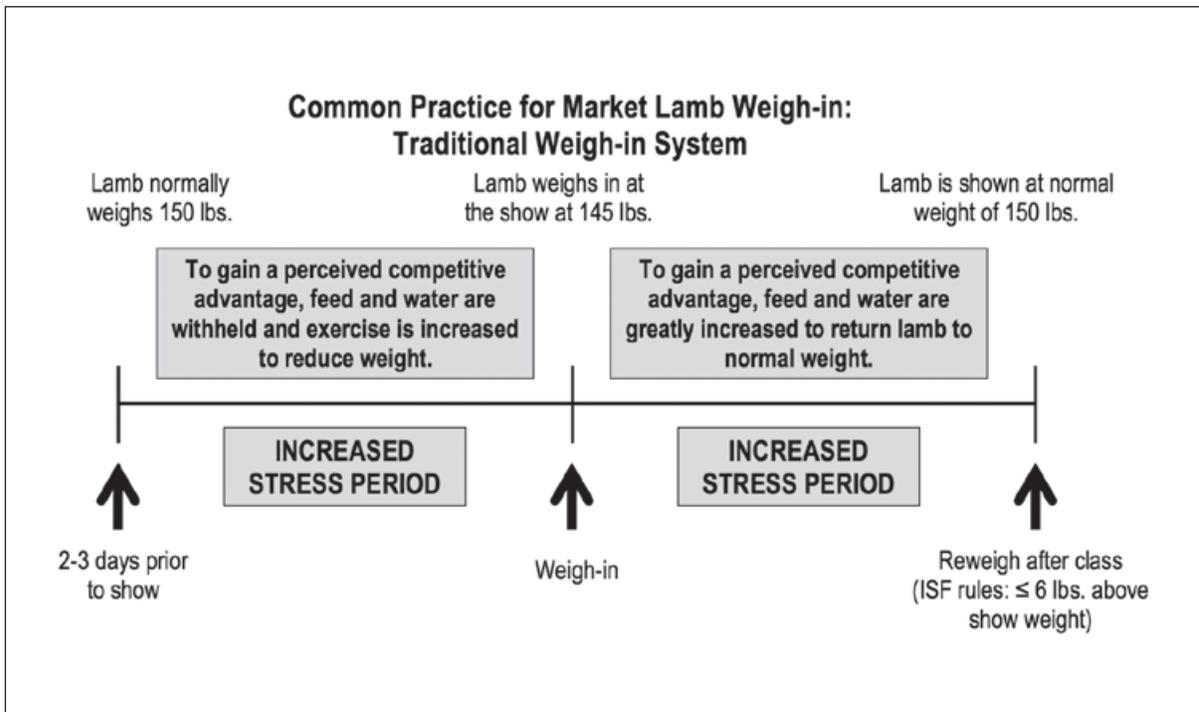


Figure 2 -

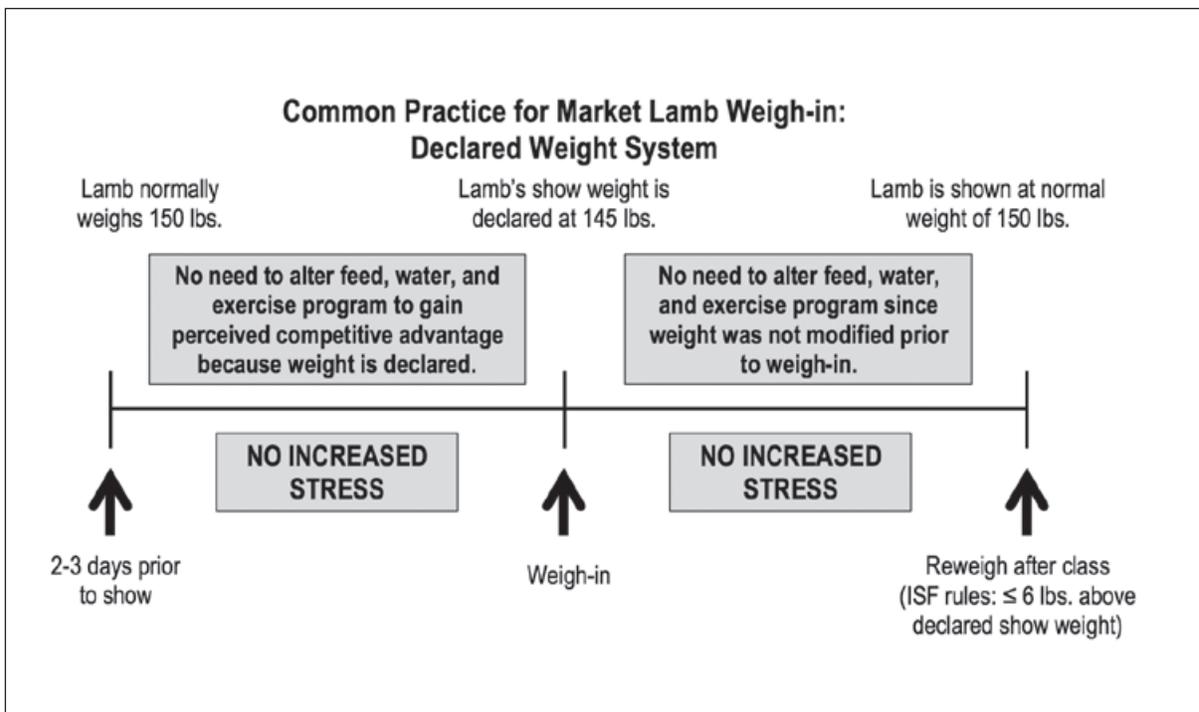


Figure 3 -

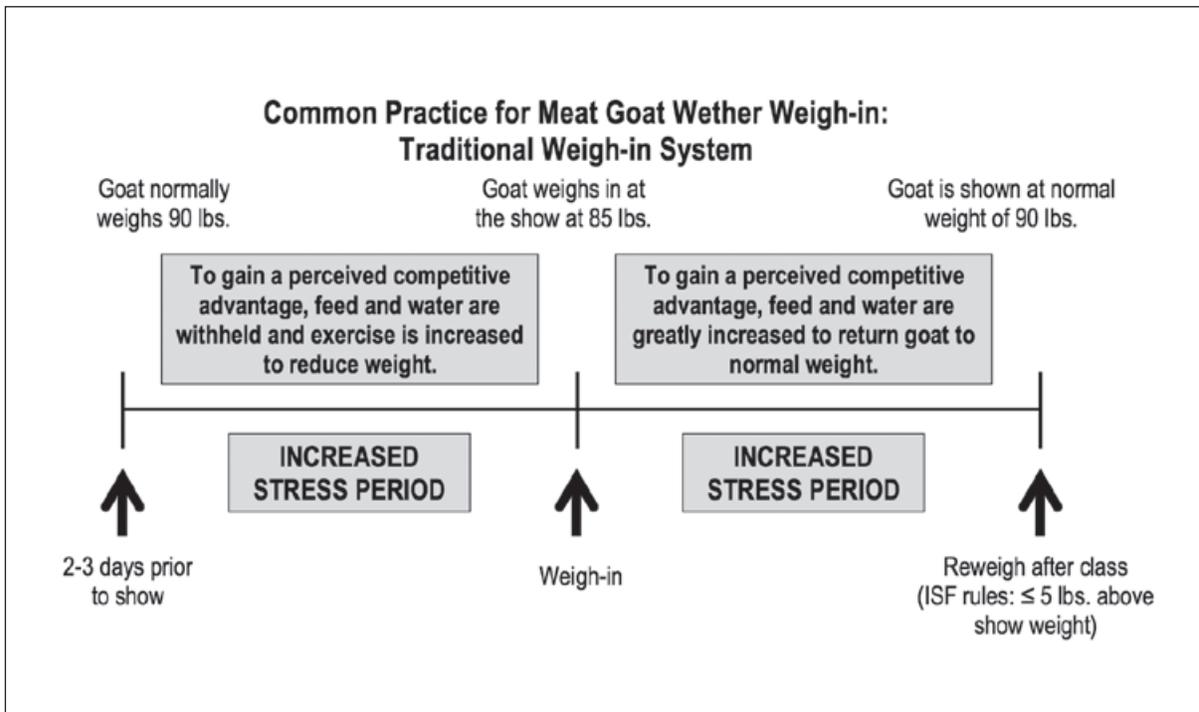
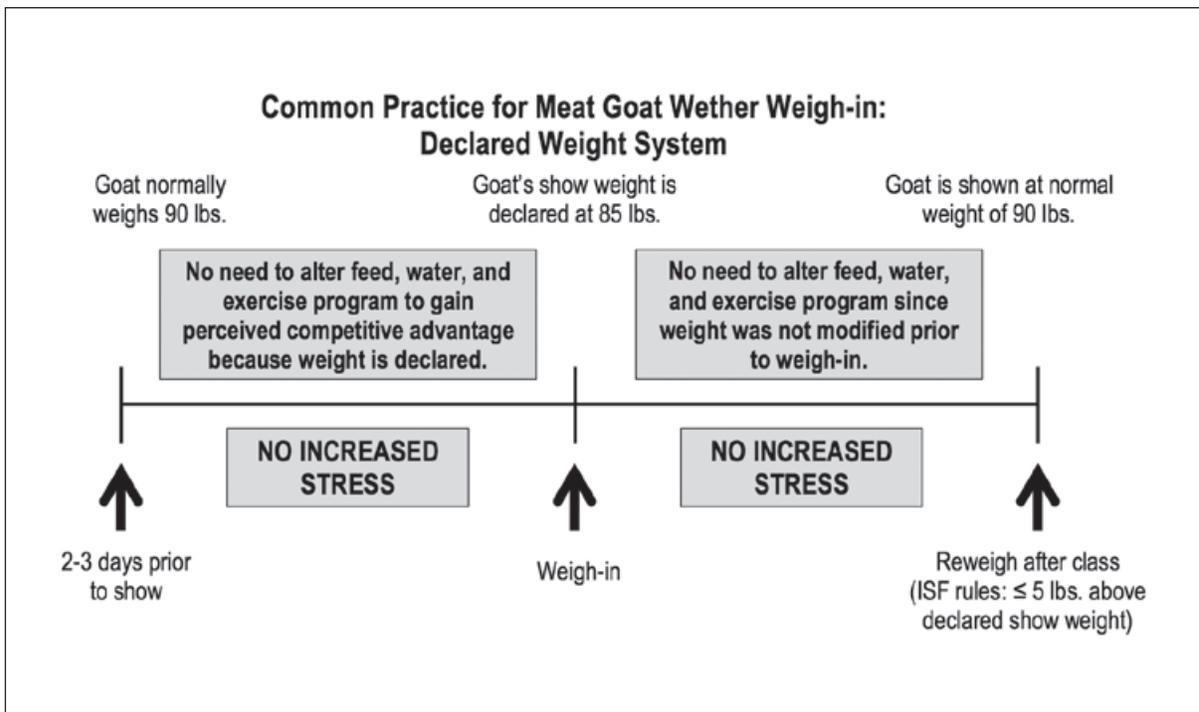


Figure 4 -



PURDUE AGRICULTURE

New 05/12

It is the policy of the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service that all persons have equal opportunity and access to its educational programs, services, activities, and facilities without regard to race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, disability or status as a veteran. Purdue University is an Affirmative Action institution. This material may be available in alternative formats.