

Declared Weight System at the Indiana State Fair 4-H Beef Show

Aaron E. Fisher¹ and Matt Claeys²

¹Extension Specialist, 4-H Youth Development

²Beef Extension Specialist, Department of Animal Sciences

Introduction

In an attempt to promote animal welfare while maintaining an environment of education, fairness, and competition, the declared weight system has been implemented at the Indiana State Fair 4-H Beef Show. The following procedure has been developed in an attempt to transition seamlessly from the traditional method of weigh-in to the new one for steers and commercial heifers.

How Will This Work?

The arrival procedure for 4-H beef cattle will be much the same as in recent years. During the normal check-in process, cattle will be processed and weighed. The difference is that exhibitors will have until the time posted in the current Indiana State Fair 4-H Entry Book to turn in the declared weight card. This is the weight that will be used as the show 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% heavier than the declared weight. Animals whose show weight exceeds 5% above the declared weight will be disqualified. Note that 4-H market steers must weigh at least 800 pounds and dairy feeder steers must weigh between 300-700 pounds at weigh-in. Those not meeting these requirements will be allowed one reweigh. Animals that do not meet the weight requirement 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 Beef Show. 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/her animals.

“My market steer weighed 1100 pounds at weigh-in. What are my options?”

Option 1

Accept and turn in 1100 pounds as the declared show weight.

- The maximum reweigh weight is now 1155 pounds.
- This is the easiest and simplest option.

Option 2

Subtract 10 pounds from the scale weight, resulting in a declared show weight of 1090 pounds.

- The maximum reweigh weight is now 1144 pounds.
 - If the animal was full when weighed, 10-pound reduction should result in a manageable show weight for the animal to meet reweigh guidelines and still receive appropriate care.
 - Declaring a lighter show weight can be very easy if it is approached with the mindset of simply subtracting a set weight, such as the 10 pounds in this example.
 - Reducing the show weight may prevent your project from being in a class with animals that are much heavier.

Option 3

Subtract 15-20 pounds from the scale weight, resulting in a declared show weight of 1080-1085 pounds.

- The maximum reweigh weight is now 1134-1139.
 - As long as the animal was full when weighed, 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 animal 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 animals that are much heavier, but drastic reductions may cause undue stress to the animal and to the exhibitor.

Option 4

Add 10 pounds to the scale weight, resulting in a declared show weight of 1110 pounds.

- The maximum reweigh weight is now 1165 pounds.
 - As long as the animal was full when weighed, a moderate increase in weight should be manageable without compromising animal welfare.
 - Declaring a heavier show weight can be very easy if it is approached with the mindset of simply subtracting a set weight, such as the 10 pounds in this example.
 - Increasing the show weight may allow an exhibitor’s project to be in a class with animals that are much heavier.

Option 5

Declare a heavier show weight by adding 15-20 pounds to the scale weight.

- The maximum reweigh weight is 5% 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 market steer weighed 790 pounds at weigh-in.” OR “My dairy feeder calf weighed 290 or 710 pounds at weigh-in. What are my options?”

- Exhibitors are allowed one reweigh attempt for their animals to reach the weight requirements. If your animal fails to meet these requirements, it will be disqualified.

Note on Dairy Feeder Steers

While the same scenarios above work for dairy feeder steers, it is important to remember that they weigh substantially less than market steers. The maximum reweigh weight for a 600-pound feeder steer would be 630 pounds. Thus, a safe reduction in the scale weight would be closer to 5 pounds.

More information about the 4-H Beef Show and other animal shows is in the Indiana State Fair 4-H Entry Book located at <http://www.indianastatefair.com>. For additional information regarding Indiana State Fair 4-H animal shows, please contact Aaron Fisher at aaronfisher@purdue.edu or 765-494-8435.

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