

Ear Notching in Swine



Animal Science

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Objectives

- ❑ Identify the reasons for ear notching
- ❑ Indicate the best age to ear notch swine
- ❑ Explain the equipment needed and the safety procedures to follow when ear notching swine
- ❑ Describe the principles of the ear notching
- ❑ Demonstrate the method of ear notching

Reasons for ear notching

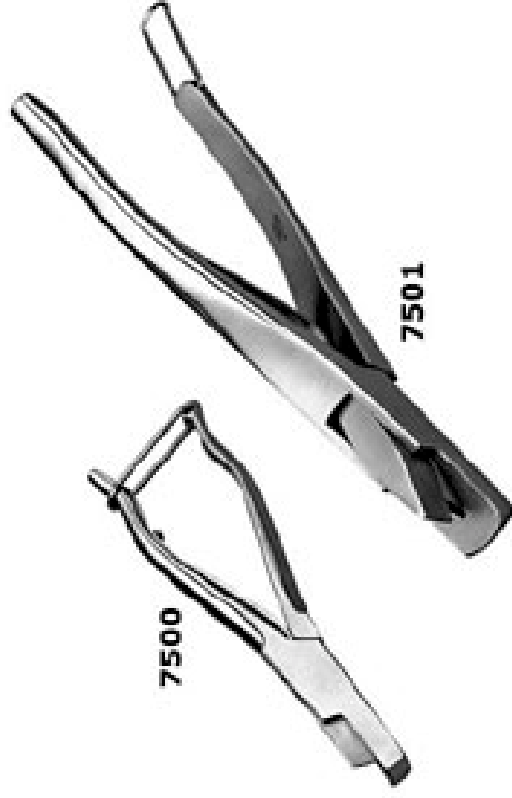
- A permanent ID system
- Individual identity for all animals
- Inexpensive means of identification
- Enables producers to keep an accurate set of records

When to ear notch

- ❑ Task is much easier if pigs can be notched when their tails are docked, or at 1-3 days old
- ❑ If you allow pigs to become large (100 lbs), the task can become considerably demanding mentally and physically.

Equipment needed

- ❑ Notchers
- ❑ Disinfectant to dip the notchers in
- ❑ Spraying larger pigs with a wound dressing can be helpful



Safety

- ❑ Notching equipment must be kept clean at all times
- ❑ Must be cleaned with a clean tooth brush between litters and then dipped in fresh surgical spirit or alcohol
- ❑ Fresh alcohol must be used each day the notching equipment is in operation

Safety

- ❑ After use the notching equipment should be cleaned in hot soapy water using the tooth brush to clean
- ❑ The notching equipment should then be placed in surgical spirit for 10 minutes
- ❑ Store dry within a plastic bag to stop any dust getting on them
- ❑ Do not sterilize by boiling as this will blunt the cutting surface

Safety

- If notching ears on older or larger pigs, it may be necessary to house them in separate pens until the notches heal.
- Pen mates not notched maybe attracted to the bloody notches and start ear biting.

Safety

- ❑ Avoid making notches too shallow, as they may become hard to read or possibly heal shut.
- ❑ Leave at least 1/4 inch between notches
- ❑ Avoid making notches too close to the head.
- ❑ Putting the notches in the right locations

Principles of the system

- Refer to right and left from the pig's perspective.
- Same as yours if you are standing in back of the pig
- Reversed if you face the pig
- The pig's right ear is called the litter ear.
- When a sow has a litter, all pigs in the litter receive identical notches on the right ear.

Principles of the system

- The left ear in pigs is like the first name for humans, every pig in the litter gets his own unique notch in the left ear.

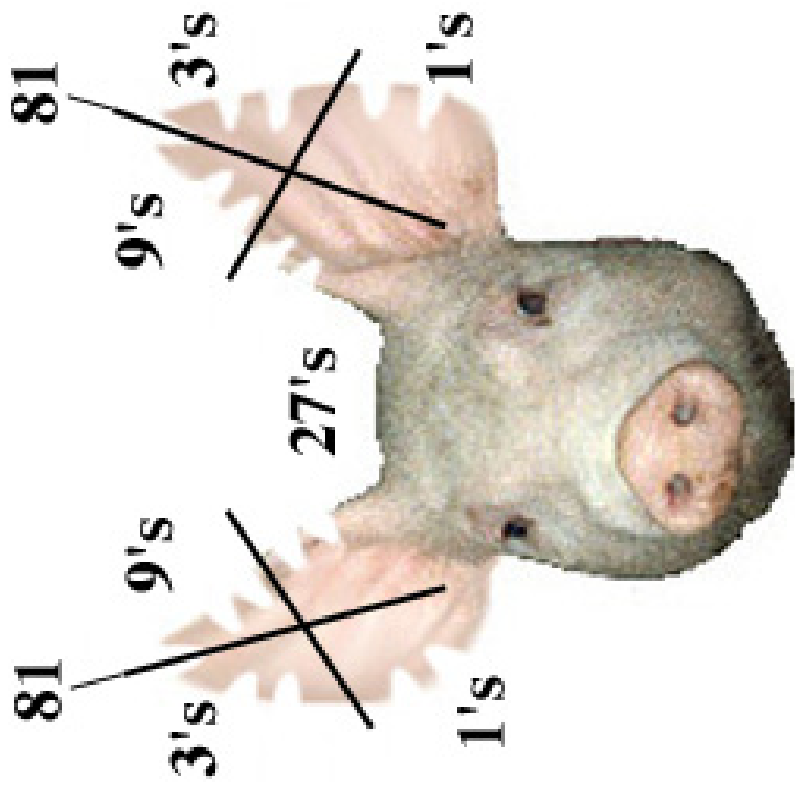
**The Pig's
Right Ear is
the Litter Ear**

**The Pig's
Left Ear is the
Individual Ear**



Principles of the system

- ❑ Instead of names though, pigs are identified by numbers.
- ❑ 1, 3, 9, 27 quadrants, and an 81 may be notched at the very tip of the ear
- ❑ Two notches are allowed in each quadrant

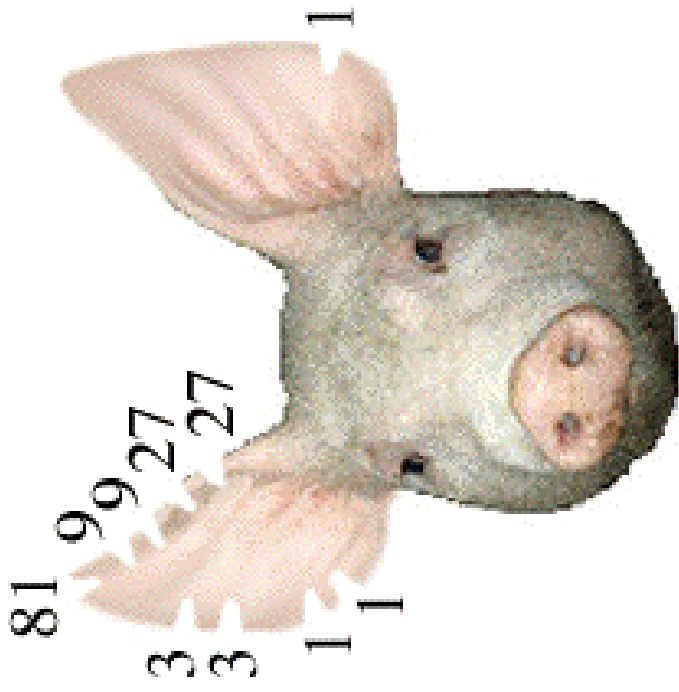


Principles of the system

- All the numbers in the left ear are added to identify the individual pig within that litter.
- All numbers in the right ear are added to make the litter number.
- With this system every number from 1 through 161 can be created on each ear.

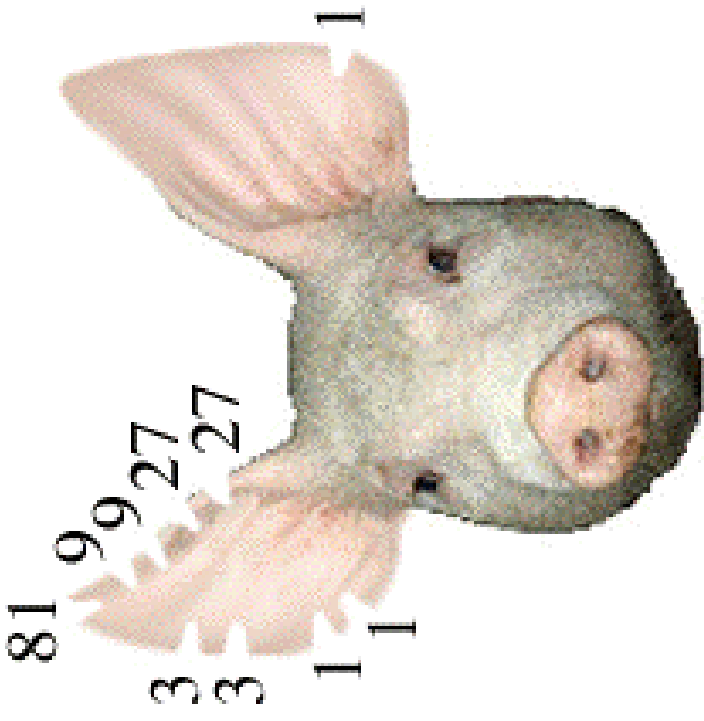
Principles of the System

- Minimum of one notch on each ear
- Maximum of 9 notches on an ear
- This shows a pig with the maximum on the litter ear and the minimum on the pig ear.



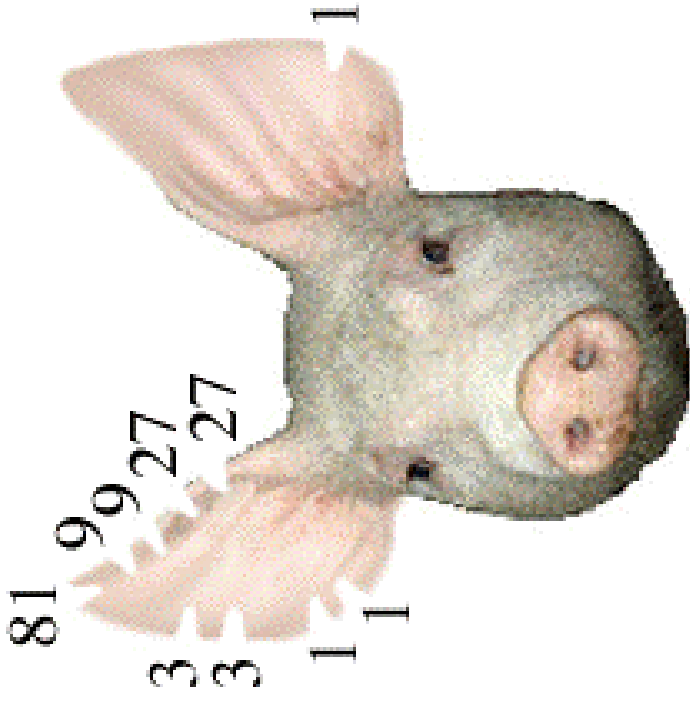
Example #1

- The right ear is $1+1+3+3+9+9+27+27+81$ which equals 161.
- This pig came from litter #161 on your farm.
- The left ear adds up to 1.
- This was the first pig notched in that litter.



Example #1

- This pig's notch is written "161-1"
- This pig's notch is pronounced "one sixty one dash one"



Example #2

**The 30th
litter**

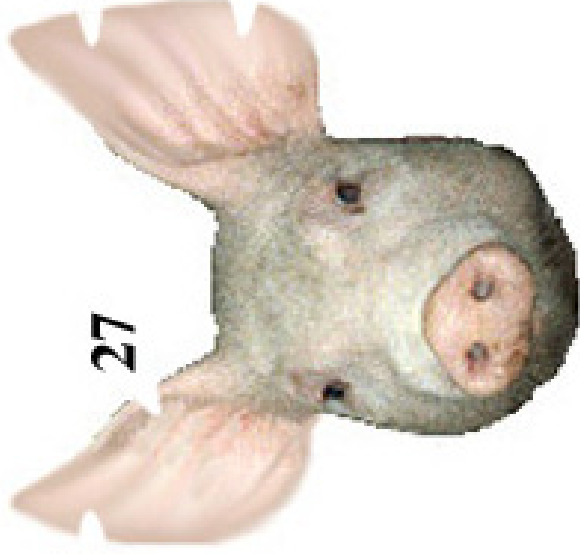
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27

**4th pig
in litter**

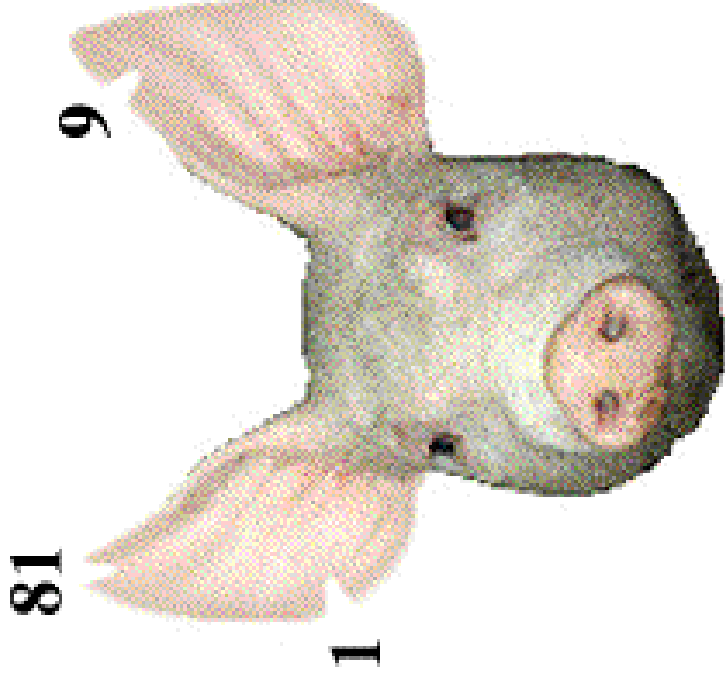
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1



This pig is 30-4

What are this pig's numbers?



Answers

- 82-9
- The litter ear adds up to 82
- Individual, or pig ear, is 9

