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

http://www.neogen.com/7500-01.htm
Safety

- Notching equipment must be kept clean at all times.
- Must be cleaned with a clean toothbrush 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.

http://www.boarsemen.com/boarpen/earpart1.htm
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

http://www.boarsemen.com/boarpen/earpart1.htm
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.

http://www.boarsemen.com/boarpen/earpart1.htm
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.

http://www.boarsemen.com/boarpen/earpart1.htm
Example #1

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

http://www.boarsemen.com/boarpen/earpart1.htm
Example #2

4th pig in litter

The 30th litter

3 27 3 1

This pig is 30-4

http://www.boarsemen.com/boarpen/earpart2.htm
What are this pig’s numbers?

http://www.boarsemen.com/boarpen/earpart2.htm
Answers

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

http://www.boarsemen.com/boarpen/earpart2.htm