

## Universal ear notching system for pigs

John C. Rea  
Department of Animal Science  
College of Agriculture

Purebred swine breeders are required to ear notch pigs to be eligible for registration in their respective swine breed associations. There are several different ear notching systems in use which tend to be confusing not only to breeders, but also to testing stations, extension workers, vocational agriculture instructors, and others who work with swine exhibitions and improvement and selection programs.

It is generally believed throughout the swine industry that a standard or universal identification system should be adopted.

Several different groups have gone on record as favoring or recommending that the 1,3,9,27 or the Universal System be adopted and put into use by the swine industry. This system is required by major breed associations.

This system can be used by commercial producers. It is particularly helpful in keeping records on performances and identifying prospective replacements. Some producers have modified the system to identify pigs born by week in the year. Ear notches are made from 1 to 52 to provide a quick check of age of pigs in any pen.

The adoption of this Universal System has reduced the confusion producers have had in the past with several identification systems. Where good techniques are used in notching, one can quickly and accurately obtain each pig's number. Care must be taken in adding the values of the individual notches to obtain the litter number.

The only equipment needed to do a good job of notching is a pair of ear notchers, which can be purchased in some local stores that carry a line of veterinary supplies. Or they may be ordered from various breeder supply companies.

There are two things that need to be carefully watched:

- Make sure that the notch is deep enough. It should be read easily without having to catch the pig.
- Be sure the notches are in the correct position in the ear. For example, do not get the one or three



The above notches are clear. The right ear is the litter number and in this case is Litter 10. The number in the left ear is 7. This pig's number, therefore, is 10-7.



Notches in the lower part of the right ear are not deep enough and are too close to the middle part of the ear. Is this number 11 or 13?



The above notches in the lower part of the left ear are in the proper place and are deep enough to be legible. The above number is 7. Refer to the chart.

notch(es) too close to the middle of the lower right or left ear.

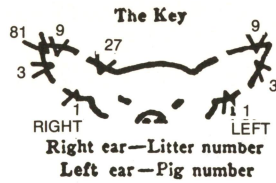
A system or plan that some breeders use is to notch boars and barrows with even numbers and gilts in each litter with odd numbers, or vice versa. This applies to the individual notches placed in the left ear.

Study the chart on the back page carefully, and keep it handy for reference.



# Ear Notching System

## To Identify Litters And Pigs In Litter



**Litter Mark:** Right ear is used for litter mark and all pigs in same litter must have the same ear notches in this ear. Right ear is on pigs own right.

**Individual Pig Marks:** Left ear is used for notches to show individual pig number in the litter. Each pig will have different notches in this ear.

Notches are shown on this page for 149 litters. You can mark up to 161 litters with this system. Litter number and notches for that number are shown in each square.

96		114		132	
97		115		133	
98		116		134	
99		117		135	
100		118		136	

1		20		39		58		77		101		119		137	
2		21		40		59		78		102		120		138	
3		22		41		60		79		103		121		139	
4		23		42		61		80		104		122		140	
5		24		43		62		81		105		123		141	
6		25		44		63		82		106		124		142	
7		26		45		64		83		107		125		143	
8		27		46		65		84		108		126		144	
9		28		47		66		85		109		127		145	
10		29		48		67		86		110		128		146	
11		30		49		68		87		111		129		147	
12		31		50		69		88		112		130		148	
13		32		51		70		89		113		131		149	

Individual Pig Notches					
1		6		11	
2		7		12	
3		8		13	
4		9		14	
5		10		15	

■ Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914 in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. James C. Summers, Acting Director, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Missouri and Lincoln University, Columbia, Missouri 65211. ■ An equal opportunity institution.