

*This is Devon -  
come and be part of it!*

# Pigs & goats



WANDER through the giant showground and you'll find pens of neatly groomed pigs waiting for their chance to shine in the ring.

Twelve breeds will be on show in the Tesco pig ring including the endangered British Lop — a white pig with floppy ears — alongside many other native classics.

With the price of pork going down, and the price of cereals rising, pig farmers are finding it increasingly difficult to make ends meet. So this year, it is more important than ever before to support the pig exhibition and the farmers who work so hard in the face of economic hardship.

Chief pig steward Arthur Uglow is a practiced hand at pig showing and judging and has developed an eye for spotting potential prize winning animals.

"If they're going to be show pigs, they shine all through all their lives - I knew one breeder who swore he could see it from about three days old!" said Arthur.

Among the exhibitors this year is Ian Todd, of Small-

combe Farm, a small traditional rare breed and pedigree holding near Colyton. He will be showing his prized Berkshires and Middle Whites.

"Middle Whites are one of the rarest and most endangered breeds in the country," he said.

"All of the traditional breeds are rare because they have been over taken and made redundant by the commercial pigs because they are old fashioned, slower growing and smaller carcassed animals."

When you show a pig, you can't just throw it in ring and hope for the best — producing prize-winning porkers takes time and commitment.

"We prepare the pig one week before the show and then on the day we give it its final wash and brush," explained Ian. "The black pigs will be oiled to soften the skin and bring out the colour, while with white pigs we wash them and then brush them with a commercial sawdust as fine as talcum powder.

"We always look forward to the Devon County Show. You never know what the competition will be like!"

Purely Pynes sausage producer Deborah Custance Baker will be showing the best specimens from her herd of Large Blacks, but as head steward of the sausage competition, which is in its fifth year, she is also responsible for making sure that the highest quality bangers make it to the show.

"We started the sausage competition because we thought as there are pigs at the county show it would be great to see an end product of the animals too!" she said. "It is amazing how few children know where a sausage comes from! We hope the competition will really catch people's attention."

The sausages will be judged in three classes: plain pork, pork and flavour and pedigree pig pork. Although points can be earned for appearance and cooking quality, the greatest number of points can be awarded for the most important criterion: taste!



Deborah Custance Baker of Purely Pynes sausages  
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Chief pig steward Arthur Uglow

"The judges look at the raw sausage and make sure it is mixed properly with no air pockets," explained Deborah.

"They note the shrinkage changes after they cook and then taste them. You want a sausage that cooks nicely, looks good and tastes good. Last year we had 50 entries so the poor judges were eating 50 sausages in one day!"

The judges this year will be butcher Dave Hoggett along with a secret food celebrity.

"The whole idea of the sausage competition is to make people aware that the majority of pigs at the county show are the traditional breed and if you don't eat them they will die out. We also want to highlight the huge difference between a store-bought sausage and a naturally made local sausage," said Deborah.

The sausage competition will begin on the Friday, at 9am, and prizes will be awarded at lunchtime. "We will also be making sausages in the tent," said Deborah. "We have a butcher who comes down and does two demos a day, boning the meat, mincing it and cooking it for people to try."

"I absolutely love the Devon County Show. It's got the most wonderful atmosphere. Everyone is incredibly friendly and supportive. There is such an abundance of good food down here and to win the best sausage at the show is great publicity for the sausage makers."

As well as organising the sausage competition, Deborah has been preparing her pigs to compete in many of the show classes.

"You've got to practice a bit at home, but all sorts of

things can go wrong," she said. "If you have a boar you have to have two people looking after it. You show it with a stick and a board guiding it around the ring. I think it takes guts rather than skill!"

## Goats

While dairy goats are kept for their milk, Angora goats are famous for their soft fleeces. Richard and Mary Yong, of Yealmpton, breed these beautiful animals for their soft white mohair and have been doing so for 20 years. This year they plan to compete in each of the five goat classes and six fleece classes.

"Competition is very stiff in Devon because some of the best Angora goat breeders are down here and we will also have contestants from all over the UK," said Mary.

The goats have to be cleaned and washed and their hoofs need trimming, so preparation is hard work.

"You have to shampoo the hair very lightly and you don't comb or brush them like you do with sheep because it will spoil the mohair and make it fluffy, it's sup-

posed to be in ringlets," explained Mary.

Mary added that there will be lots of other things going on at the Angora goats exhibition: "We will be doing spinning demonstrations, we will have fleece displays, and there will be livestock there to look at and touch," she said.



Richard and Mary Yong with their angora goats



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