



RACTOPAMINE-FREE SWINE REQUIREMENT

Information for 2026 Benton Franklin Fair Exhibitors

IMPORTANT: The 2026 Benton Franklin Fair requires all exhibited hogs to be ractopamine-free.

This requirement ensures our hogs meet current market. All exhibitors must comply with this policy to participate in the fair.

What is Ractopamine?

Ractopamine Hydrochloride is a beta-adrenergic agonist that, when fed according to label directions, can improve pig growth rate, carcass composition, and feed conversion efficiency.

- Common product trade names include:
 - Paylean® (for swine)
 - Engain® (for swine)
 - Generic derivatives of the above products

Important Note: Ractopamine remains an FDA-approved product that can be legally fed in the United States. However, many U.S. pork packers no longer accept pork from ractopamine-fed hogs, including the packer used by the Fair.

Why is the Benton Franklin Fair Ractopamine-Free?

- **Market Access:** Many U.S. pork packers will not purchase ractopamine-fed pigs to meet market demands and maintain trade requirements
- **Industry Standards:** Ractopamine-free production is now a standard specification throughout much of the U.S. pork packing industry
- **Fair Market Viability:** This policy ensures the fair maintains viable markets for exhibitor hogs after the fair

What Does "Ractopamine-Free" Mean?

A ractopamine-free hog is one that has NEVER been fed or exposed to ractopamine sources from birth to harvest. This is often called a "Never Ever" approach.

This means:

- No ractopamine products fed at any point in the hog's life.
- No exposure to feed containing ractopamine residue.
- No cross-contamination from equipment, feeders, or facilities.

Your Responsibilities as an Exhibitor

Whether you purchase or raise your hog, you are responsible for ensuring it meets ractopamine-free specifications. Here's what you need to do:

1. When Purchasing Your Hog:

- Verify the hog's ractopamine-free status with your breeder.
- Obtain written documentation from the breeder confirming the hog has never been fed ractopamine.
- Understand the feeding history of any purchased hog.

2. Feed Selection and Storage:

- DO NOT purchase feed or top-dress products that contain ractopamine.
- Read ALL feed labels carefully.
- Work directly with your feed supplier to ensure feed is ractopamine-free.
- Be careful with leftover feed from previous groups that may contain ractopamine.
- Store your ractopamine-free feed separately from any other feed.

3. Equipment and Facility Management:

- Thoroughly clean all feeders, pans, and water containers before using for your project hog.
- Clean pens, gates, and facilities with detergent or soap and water.
- Disinfect and dry all equipment and facilities.
- Be aware that any porous materials, bedding, or manure residue can contain ractopamine.

4. Transportation:

- Use only trailers that have been thoroughly cleaned, disinfected, and dried.
- Use fresh shavings or sand as bedding (these materials are unlikely to have ractopamine exposure).
- Consider using Transport Quality Assurance (TQA) certified transporters.

Affidavit Requirement

The Benton Franklin Fair requires a signed affidavit from a parent or legal guardian stating that hogs under their control have never been offered ractopamine.

This affidavit will be collected at Weigh-In on August 24, 2026.

Testing and Compliance

Animals exhibited at the Benton Franklin Fair are subject to random testing for the presence of ractopamine.

Consequences of Non-Compliance:

- Animals testing positive for ractopamine will be disqualified from the Fair.
- Exhibitors may face suspension from future Fair participation.
- If discovered after sale, the exhibitor will be required to make the buyer whole for any losses incurred. The exhibitor will not be paid for their animal, as it did not qualify for sale.
- If discovered by the packer, the entire lot of Fair pigs may be rejected.

Best Practices for Success

- Start early - plan your ractopamine-free program from the day you acquire your hog.
- Communicate with your breeder about ractopamine-free requirements.
- Keep detailed records of all feed purchased and used.
- Save feed tags and labels for documentation.
- Clean and sanitize all equipment before first use with your project hog.
- Store your feed in clean, dedicated containers.
- Be vigilant about preventing cross-contamination.
- Consult your club leader or veterinarian if you have questions.

Common Questions:

Q: Is ractopamine harmful?

- A: No. Ractopamine is FDA-approved and safe when used according to label directions. The ractopamine-free requirement is about market access, not safety concerns.

Q: How do I know if my feed contains ractopamine?

- A: Read the feed label carefully. Ractopamine must be listed if present. Look for trade names like Paylean® or Engain®. When in doubt, ask your feed supplier.

Q: What if I accidentally used ractopamine?

- A: Contact fair officials immediately. The hog will not be eligible to show at the fair. Honesty and integrity are essential.

Q: Does ractopamine clear out of the hog's system?

- A: While ractopamine has a 0-day withdrawal time, the market specification is "Never Ever" - meaning no exposure at any point. Feeding it and then stopping does NOT make a hog ractopamine-free.

KEY TAKEAWAY:

Meeting the ractopamine-free specification is simple: Make an informed decision to consciously NOT feed or expose your hog to ractopamine from birth to harvest. With proper planning and attention to detail, you can easily meet this requirement and ensure your hog is eligible for all available markets.

DO THE RIGHT THING!

The success of our fair and the future of youth livestock exhibitions depends on the honesty and integrity of all exhibitors. Follow the established rules and help maintain market access for everyone.

Questions or Concerns?

Contact: Brian 509-948-6801

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Thank you for your commitment to ethical showing practices!

Adapted from University of Wisconsin Extension and Ohio State University Extension materials.