



SHOW SOLUTIONS

7 steps for success at the majors

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Jackpots, county and local shows — you don't even break a sweat at these anymore. However, when it comes to your first time at a major stock show, your nerves can start to get the better of you. But don't panic; Show-Rite has got your back! Here are a few basic steps to follow toward stock show success!

Step 1: Success starts at home

Make sure you have EVERYTHING prepared before getting to the stock show. Make a checklist on a whiteboard, your phone or even just a piece of paper a week or so in advance. This way, you can ensure that you remember your whips, feeders, health papers — all the essentials.

Step 2: Prioritize comfort

Make sure your trailer is CLEAN and fresh, and the bedding is solid for the ride to the big show. It really helps keep these animals less stressed.

Step 3: Know the distance

Plot out your route and how long you'll be on the road. This way, you can make provisions to maximize your animals' comfort for the trip ahead, such as:

Water: Bring water from home and give yourself some extra time to allow for stops along the way to check in and water if you can. This is really only needed on long hauls to keep these animals hydrated and feeling good, but it is always good to check them, regardless of the distance. At the show, water as much as you can.

Feed: I like to wait to feed until I get to the show, and even at that, I wait a bit after unloading to let the animals' stomachs ease back down. At the show, feed accordingly. Don't make big changes to their regiment!

Step 4: Get organized

Get your things unloaded in a timely manner and set your pen or stall up before you get that animal off the trailer so they are comfortable when you unload and get them to their area.

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Step 5: Feed as usual

Ease into it — let your animal rest for a bit after unloading. Then give them a good drink and start back to feeding. Normally, I like to feed just a little less than I usually give at home, so I don't upset their stomachs and get them to eat it all up.

If you find that they are not eating, there are many approaches you can take, but small regiments of feed are always better than just filling that pan or feeder.

You should also keep it consistent. Don't worry about what everyone else is doing around you. Changes to diet are something to try at home and over time. For the best results, stick to what the animal knows.

Step 6: Protect against sudden changes

Keep them warm if it's cool and cool if it's warm. Don't make drastic changes, but try to keep them at a temperature they are used to.

Also, talk to your vet about a preventative shot that is within the show's rules that can stave off any potential sickness.

Of course, you can't prepare for every outcome and occurrence but try as much as possible to stick to your game plan. Stay around your animals as much as possible and keep doing everything you would at home. Pick stalls, clean pens, rinse, blow — whatever you do in your routine. Also, make sure to exercise your animal, even if you feel a bit awkward walking them around at a show.

Step 7: Be smart

Have a plan, don't overdo it, stay focused on the task and enjoy your time at the show!

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