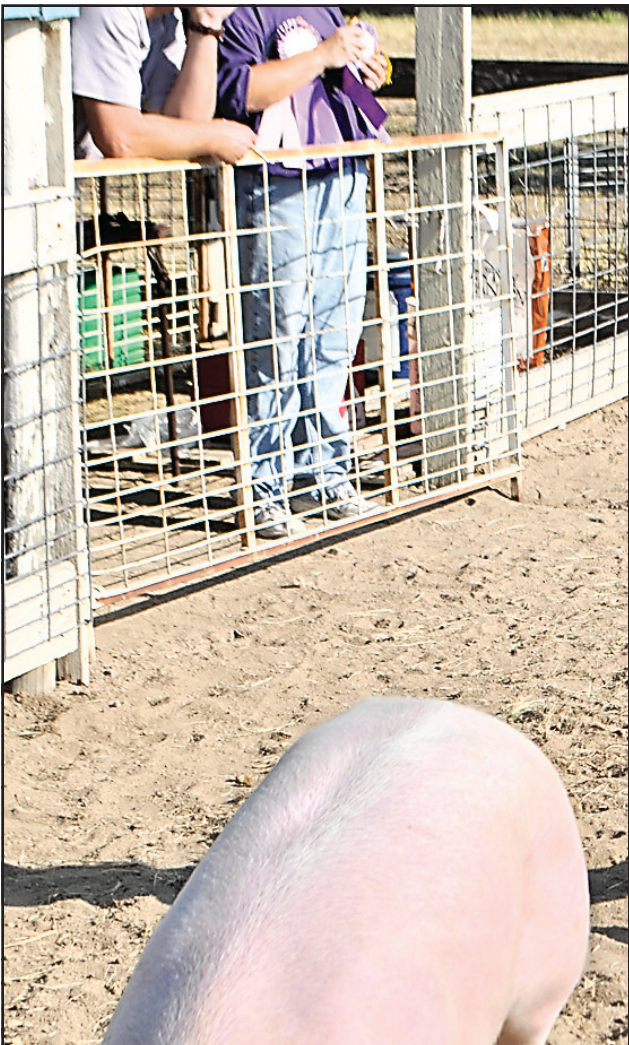




PICKING PIGS is hard to do! Especially when they're walked her blue-butt gilt around the ring. Skylar Brown (left) paraded with such skill. Here, Miki Dorshorst (above) proudly prodded her pig along for the judges to see.



NOT EVERYONE felt like cooperating for the judges at Thursday's swine show. Whitney Witt (above) attempted to corral her sow and piglets back into the pens while KeLynn Jacobs (right) went after her pig, which was busy trying to butt heads.



Pigs take center stage at annual swine show

Pigs, it turns out, are very ornery creatures.

It was a beautiful, brisk summer morning when the 4-H swine show went on at the Decatur County Fair, and the pigs were happy as, well, piglets to be out in the fresh air, and that didn't make for easy showing. They stubbornly roared and dove at each other, overcoming their trainers by varying degrees, and clearly loving every minute of it. Until it got hot, that is.

"Part of the reason they act so ornery," said Senior Showmanship Champ Miki Dorshorst, "is they get too hot and tired, and they can't just lay and be dormant. They really like mud holes because pigs don't sweat."

Miss Dorshorst also won the Round Robin showmanship event, which she explained is like a final tournament for all the senior showmanship champs, where they have to display

all the champion animals, and display their knowledge of the animals and their market for the judges. This year they had all four, she said — a pig, cow, sheep and horse.

"I loved the round robin," she said. "It's like the championship of showmanship."

"Some people raise them from piglets," she added, explaining the swine competition, "but I don't; we buy them when they're about 2 or 3 months old. They're called feeder pigs, and you just feed them until fair. Market weight is around 230 pounds, but you like them to be around 250 or 260."

Miss Dorshorst competed in the breeding gilts, which are mature pigs that haven't had piglets and become sows yet.

"It was my 10th or 11th year showing them," she said. "I think after next year, I'll call it good. Once I get to college, I don't think I'll have time."

Story and photos by Stephanie DeCamp