

# **Tools and Equipment**

**National Junior Swine Association  
Skillathon Resource**

# Learning Objectives

- This resource should teach you how to identify tools and equipment that are utilized in the swine industry.
- Upon completing this resource, you should be able to:
  - Identify the tool or equipment by its correct name
  - Understand the purpose for the tool and its use in the industry
  - Comprehend how to safely and effectively utilize the tool

# Ear Notcher

- The **ear notcher** tool is used to notch the ears of baby pigs.
- Ear notching is used to identify the pigs.
- Ear notching is typically done within 7 days of birth, and is often accompanied with iodine to prevent any infection from occurring.

\*\*You can learn more about how to ear notch and how to read ear notches in the section titled “Ear Notching”.



# Syringe/Needles

- **Syringes** are used to administer medications to animals.
- They are typically plastic and have measurements down the side to properly measure the correct dose of medicine.
- It is extremely important to replace the needle after using and to place old needles in a safe, puncture-proof **sharps container**.



**Sharps Container**



**Syringe**

# Dose Injector

- A **dose injector** is a safe way to ensure that each animal gets the proper dose.
- Since human error can lead to the use of both too much and too little medication, a dose injector can be programmed to allow a producer to use medications effectively.



# Scalpel

- A **scalpel** is a common tool that is used in castration.
- The scalpel is used to make either two vertical cuts or one horizontal cut to the scrotum followed by cutting the spermatic cord and removing the testes.



# Preg-Tone

- **Preg-tone** is an ultrasonic pregnancy detector.
- It uses ultrasound to detect amniotic fluid present during pregnancy.
- When this fluid is detected, the instrument produces a loud, continuous tone, indicating that the animal is pregnant.
- If the animal is not pregnant, it produces an intermittent (static) recurring tone.



# OB Snare and OB Forceps

- An **OB snare** and **OB forceps** are tools utilized during farrowing.
- If the sow is having trouble, these tools can provide assistance to remove piglets.
- **NOTE:** You should have practice using these before as you could harm the sow and/or the piglet if used improperly.





# Livestock Marking Crayons/Paint Stick

- In order to identify which pigs have been treated in a facility, farmers may use a **livestock marking crayon, or paint stick**, to identify the animals.



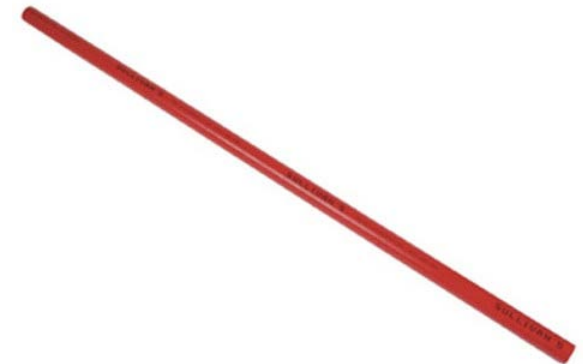
# Ear Tagger

- Some shows or events may require an ear tag as an additional form of identification.
- The **ear tagger** is shown below with some examples of ear tags.
- An Ear Tagger is used to put tags in pigs ears.
- Ear Tags are used to identify pigs.



# Show Tools: Pipe/Whip

- When showing in the ring, you want to use a driving utensil that is familiar to the pig.
- You want to have control of your animal.
- Some animals respond better to whips, and some respond better to pipes.
- The **pipe** and the **whip** are the most common types of driving utensils in the swine industry.



# Clippers

## Clippers



- You want to make sure your pig is presented properly on show day.
- By using **clippers** such as these in addition to various **head guards**, you can trim your pig's hair and make your project ready for the winner's circle.
- Be sure to check any hair length requirements before trimming your pigs for specific upcoming shows.



Clipper  
Blades



Head Guards

# Nipple Water

- Nipple waters are used as a way to provide continuous clean drinking water for pigs.
- Keeping your pigs hydrated is a key component to their growth and success in the show ring.



# Respiratory Mask

- These **respiratory masks** can be worn when entering swine facilities.
- These can prevent the transmission of zoonotic diseases and is a necessary precaution, especially in large swine operations.
- These masks can also prevent the inhalation of dust and other substances that could be harmful.



# Herder/Sorting Board

- **Herder boards (sorting boards)** can be used to help with stubborn or difficult pigs.
- They can help load pigs on the trailer or separate pigs from fighting in the ring.
- Many people who work the ring at shows carry a herder board to assist them in penning pigs, separating fights, and keeping pigs out of corners.



# Plastic Boots

- When entering swine facilities, it is important to wear these **plastic boots**.
- These help prevent the spread of disease from operation to operation.
- Wearing these boots is a good way to practice sound herd health management and biosecurity.





# Tooth Nippers

- When processing a litter of pigs, it is important to clip the needle teeth and clip the tail.
- By clipping the needle teeth, you are getting rid of four very sharp teeth that could cause the sow discomfort when nursing.
- Tails are also docked so that they are not too long and get stepped on by the mother or the other piglets.
- Tail docking is often accompanied with iodine as well to prevent infection.
- A pair of **tooth nippers** such as this will serve to clip the needle teeth and dock the tail.



# Pig Snare

- Sometimes, a snare is necessary to use in order to give a pig a shot or to trim difficult areas on your pig's body when clipping for a show.
- Pictured below is an example of a **snare** that could be used for such purposes.



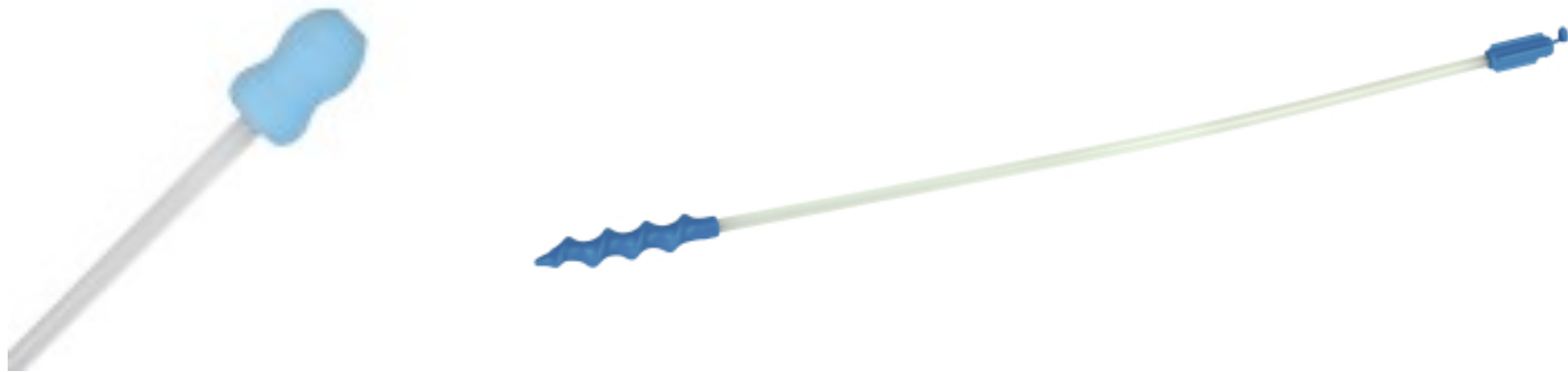
# Thermometer

- **Thermometers** such as this can be used to take your pig's temperature when it may seem to be sick.
- A normal temperature for a pig is between 101.5 and 102.5 degrees Fahrenheit.



# Artificial Insemination Breeding Rods

- **Artificial insemination rods, or spirettes**, are used to inseminate a gilt or sow with boar semen.
- When using the rod, it should be inserted at a slightly upward angle (45 degree angle) and be turned counterclockwise until it locks into the cervix. If using a foam tip rod, it does not need to be turned.
- Once the breeding rod is locked into place, the semen tube can be placed in the tip of the rod.



# Self Feeder

- This is an examples of a type of self-feeder for swine.
- Many hogs are put on a self-feeding diet, especially early in their life.
- Through this, they have unlimited access to food throughout the day.



# KNOWLEDGE CHECK!

Complete the following quiz to see what you learned about tools and equipment in the swine industry.

[Begin Quiz](#)

1. What tool is pictured below?



Thermometer

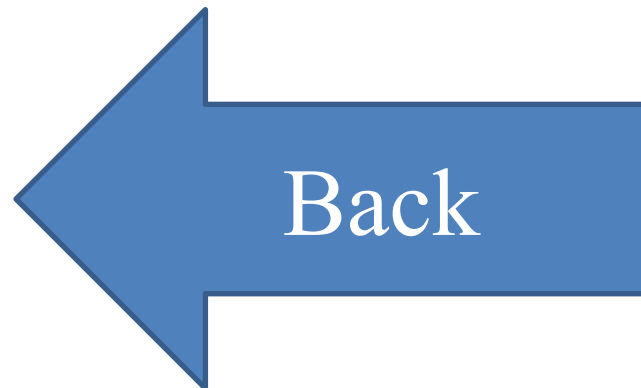
Syringe

Spirette

Scalpel

# TRY AGAIN!

Remember that this tool is used for artificial insemination. Which tool would be helpful in artificial insemination?





# CORRECT!



This is a spirette,  
otherwise known as an  
artificial insemination  
rod.

Next Question

2. You would primarily use a scalpel during

\_\_\_\_\_.

Farrowing

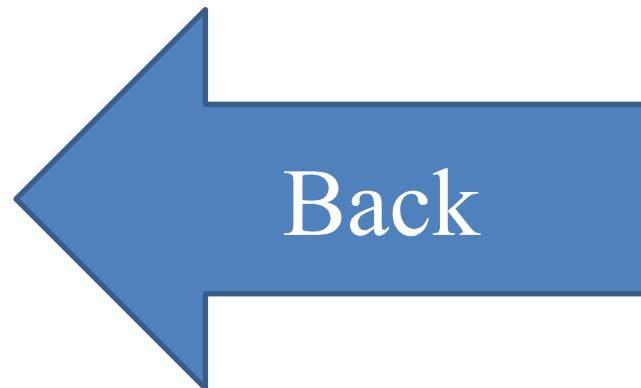
Castrating

Weaning

Ear Notching

# TRY AGAIN!

Think about what each of these tools would be used for. Remember a scalpel is like a small surgical knife.



# CORRECT!

A scalpel would be used in castration.  
Good work!



Next Question

### 3. What should be placed in the image below?

Used Plastic  
Boots

Old Feed

Used Needles

Trash



# CORRECT!

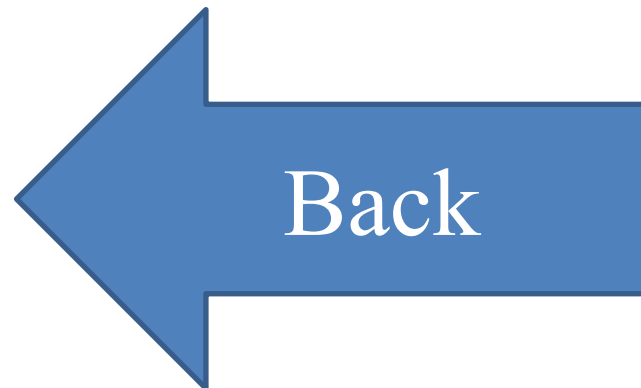
Used needles should be placed in a puncture-proof sharps container. This prevents the spread of disease and infection and prevents injury from needles.



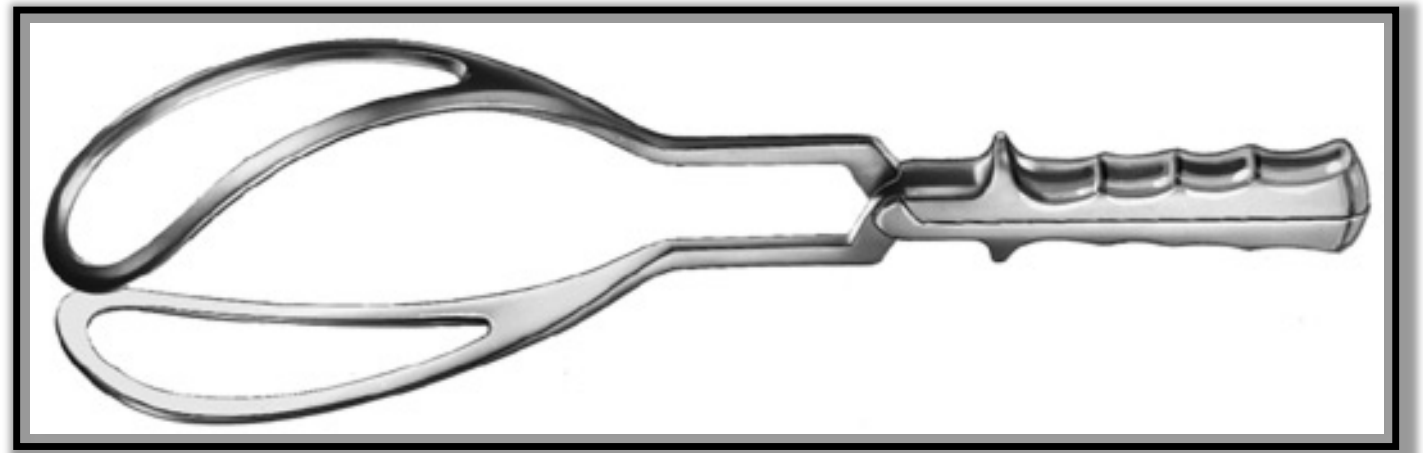
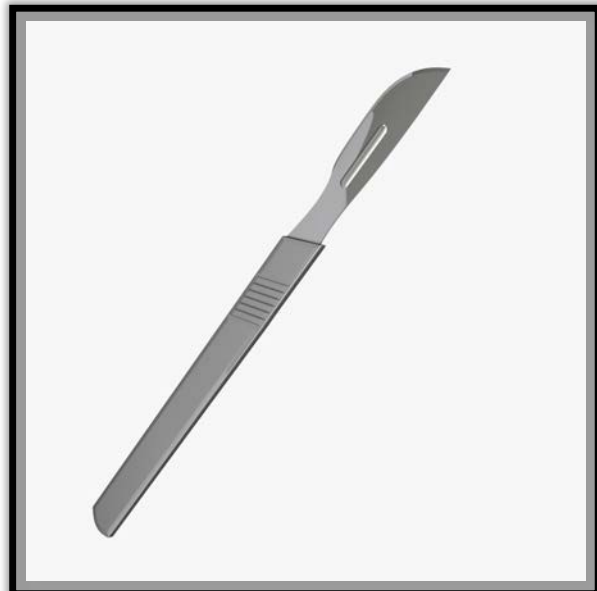
Next Question

# TRY AGAIN!

Think about what you would place in these  
containers!



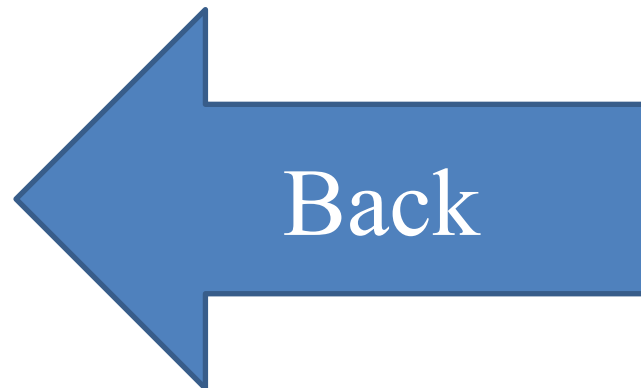
4. Which tool is an ear notcher?





# TRY AGAIN!

Go back and review the tools and equipment if needed!



# CORRECT!

Great Job!

You correctly selected the ear notcher!



Next Question

5. Which of the following helps prevent the spread of disease and/or infection?

Wearing plastic boots

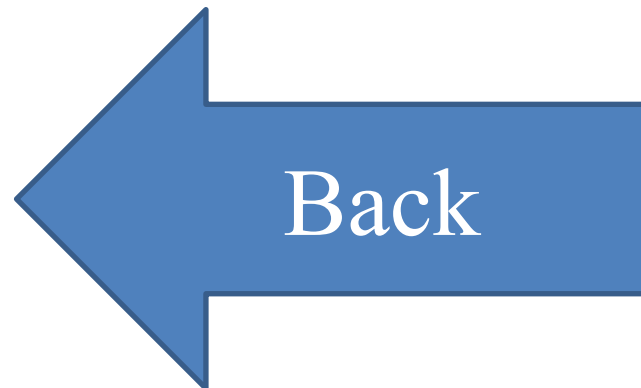
Using a respiratory mask

Spraying iodine on docked tails

All of these options help with prevention.

# TRY AGAIN!

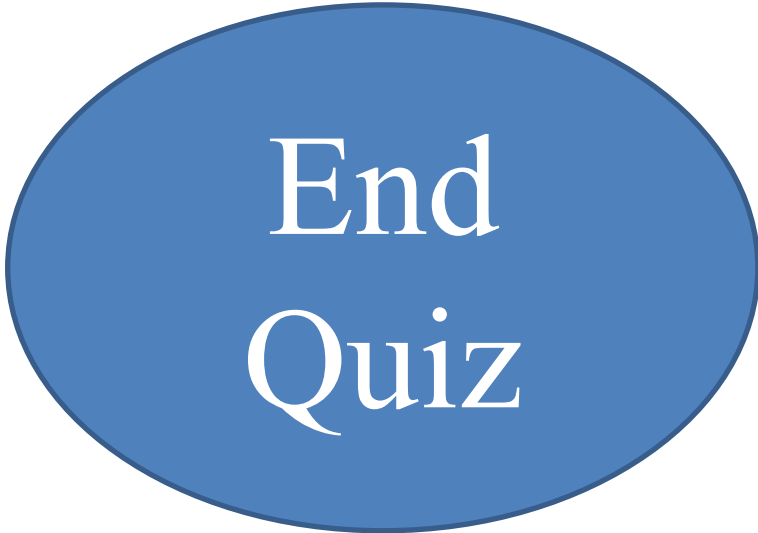
This may be true...but read all of the choices!



# CORRECT!

Very Good!

All of these actions will help prevent  
disease and infection!



End  
Quiz

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

You completed the “Tools and  
Equipment”

Skillathon Resource!

Keep working hard to learn about the  
Industry!