



"My Brother, I felt it," was all IchaHOG could muster after his PIGtucky Derby victory Sunday at Maris Farms

**Who:** Maris Farms, KMPS, St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital and 12 pigs

**What:** A re-cap of the PIGtucky Derby race weekend at Maris Farms.

**When:** This past Sunday at Maris Farms, 4 pm

**Where:** Maris Farms, 24713 Sumner-Buckley Highway in Buckley, WA 98321

**Why:** Raise money for St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital with a mock "betting" window where fans can place donations on the pigs they feel will win their respective races and all donations will go toward St. Jude's. If their pig wins the race, the fan is eligible to win a nice prize package.

IchaHOG left no doubt that he was the "King Pig" this season amongst his fellow competitors as he cruised to victory by a lengthy spread in the PIGtucky Derby Sunday at PIGlico Downs in Buckley. It was the first leg of the vaunted Triple "pig" Crown series, which continues this upcoming Sunday with the BOARmont Stakes and concludes in two weeks with The SQUEAKness.

The series and all associated pig races during the month of October are run to help raise money for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Last season, Maris Farms and its sponsors helped raise close to \$4000 for the cancer research facility. More than \$400 was raised this past weekend during the races and close to \$70 alone was wagered/donated on Sunday's PIGtucky Derby. For the first two weekends, the pig races have raised \$540.

IchaHOG came in the favorite at 2-to-1 odds and NASCAR representative Denny HAMlin was a 5-to-1 favorite. HAMlin had qualified for the derby with nine wins in 14 races leading up to the PIGtucky Derby.

"I have to give IchaHOG some credit," he said. "He has put in the off-season training. He has remained focused, and he knows how to turn it up a notch in the big races. He sizzled today!"

BOARbaro of the Thoroughbred group was third, while SOW Bisquit - a late race qualifier - placed fourth.

IchaHOG had not lost during 14 previous races, but had only competed against his fellow "fitness freaks" group during that span. Many expert pignosticators believed IchaHOG, who represents Seattle's most popular country music station's morning personality IchaHOG, might just be a "big pig in a little pen," but he proved them all wrong.

"My brothers, I felt it," said the Portly Pig. "I knew a lot of those experts didn't believe I was for real. I guess I proved them wrong. One down, two to go."

IchaHOG thrilled the crowd with some late-race heroics as the muscle-bound boar started backward in the chute, left the gate last and caught the field around the final turn of the 40-meter track.

As he rounded that last corner and headed down the home stretch, IchaHOG passed HAMlin and never looked back as he extended his margin of victory by nearly 4 pig lengths.

"I never felt uncomfortable," he snorted. "I started slow yeah, but I've put the work in this past off-season. It was a matter of who was going to be the most pig-headed about taking this race. I decided it would be me."

Many fans lined the track's outside railing and cheered the stout little pig to victory. He has become a fan favorite.

"I can't believe...what I just saw," said pig whisperer and long-time track announcer Dennis Riley. "IchaHOG ran like a pig-possessed. I won't doubt his abilities again. The crowd was definitely on his side."

There was a little bit of bad news following the Derby on Sunday as it was discovered that HAMlin may be a no-go for next weekend after suffering a pulled HAMMY. Preliminary tests are showing only a mild strain, but if the pig can't race, a replacement will have to be secured. Rumors have been flying that it might be local favorite Kasey CanOfHam.

"It's tough because he's been running so well, so tough and with a burn in his little pig heart," Pig Racing Commissioner Mike Meeks said. "But if he can't go, CanOfHam is a very worthy replacement. He's no stranger to big races."

Folks can donate at a mock "betting" window, and the entire amount goes to St. Jude. They then receive a raffle ticket and place it in the pig slot of the pig they feel will win. For their donation, folks are given a special pignostication pig nose, and are eligible (by drawing) for other prizes should their pig win.

In its second weekend, the pig races have raised a total of \$540. Close to 350 raffle tickets have been placed as wagers on the pigs. Expect those numbers to spike considerably as we head into the final two weeks of the series.

The pig races are one of the featured activities at the 40-acre farm, which has become one of Pierce County's favorite family fall destinations for its pumpkins, corn maze and haunted woods.

Maris Farms, in its 15th year of operation, is located in scenic east Pierce County about 3 miles west of Buckley, Washington, at 24713 Sumner-Buckley Highway.

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