An Introduction to Judging at Fairs

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Objectives of This Training

- Understand your role as a judge in creating a positive learning experience for youth
- Understand that youth development is the main focus, not the exhibit
- Understand the ribbon rating system

Objectives of Fair Participation for Youth

- Gain knowledge, support and encouragement
- Learn new and better methods
- Compare their work with a "standard"
- Provide youth an opportunity to share what they have learned and accomplished with 4-H audience and the public
- Promote 4-H Youth Development

Creating A Positive Experience

Role of a Fair Judge

- Part of the team for the project learning experience with project leaders, parents, and Extension Staff
- Link between 4-H project, the 4-H member and a standard of performance
- Be fair, firm, friendly and consistent
Creating A Positive Experience

Focus on Youth
- Youth development is the purpose of 4-H project work
- Judge the exhibit not the child
- Judge the exhibit as an illustration of the 4-H member’s achievements toward project goals and objectives

Prepare Yourself As a Judge

Review prior to judging day:
- Know what you are evaluating
- Locate judging site, plan travel time, parking...
- Prepare tools that will be needed
- Review standards or scorecards that will be used
- Read fair book including general and division rules
- Review 4-H Danish ribbon system, i.e. white, red and blue
- Once on site, clarify with superintendents

Judging - What are Standards?
- Ideally, standards are derived from research - primarily from land-grant universities - and are the same standards used by adults.
- The appropriate ribbon should be awarded to the exhibitor based on the evaluation of the exhibit using an accepted standard or scorecard.
- Standards should not be changed because of problems or situations with which the 4-H'er lives and works.

Judging Process

Best Management Practices
- Provide Consultation/Conference
- Judging, an opportunity for the judge and 4-H member to discuss exhibit
- Use a Scorecard/Standard
- In addition to the judging conversation, write comments on the scorecard

Consultative Judging Process

- Sit beside or across from 4-H member
- Introduce yourself, ask member their name, put the member at ease
- Provide written comments and markings on the scorecard/standard to help member apply suggestions in the future
- Use Sandwich Method to provide feedback

Sandwich Method of Providing Feedback

- Start with two positives
- Discuss one way to improve
- Add another positive
- End with a one or two word descriptor which defines the 4-H member’s capabilities
Suggested Positive Comments

- I like how....
- I can tell you enjoyed this because....
- You handled_____ very well
- I can tell you learned a new skill by how.....
- You should feel proud because.....
- You did a great job of following the project standards by.....

Suggested Constructive Comments

- The next time you might try....
- Some other ideas to try....
- It would be helpful if….
- It may be helpful to practice ___ before you make/bake this again....
- As you work on ____ an important thing to remember is.....

Suggested Questions to Ask

- Tell me about how you selected this particular exhibit to compete this year for fair.
- What was your favorite part of making this exhibit?
- What was the most important thing you learned?
- If you had a chance to do this again, what would you do differently?
- What part was the most difficult?
- How will you use what you learned next time?
- How have you shared what you learned with others?

Judging Process - Parent Role

- The judging conversation is between the 4-H member and the judge.
- Find a way for parents to be close enough to hear the judging conversation, but not intervene
- Written comments and markings are important on the scorecard/standard to help members apply suggestions in the future, and for 4-H members not present at judging

Award the Ribbon Earned

Danish System – Most often used in 4-H static exhibits
- All exhibits receive a ribbon
- Exhibits are judged in comparison with an ideal standard, not to each other
- Exhibits are placed in 4 ribbon groups Purple, Blue, Red, or White

Modified Danish System – Often used in Livestock Shows
- Exhibits are compared to a standard, placed in four-color ribbon groups, but are ranked top to bottom within each ribbon group.

American System – Most often used in Open Class Exhibits
- Not all exhibits receive a ribbon. Exhibits are ranked 1-2-3, etc. with a different colored ribbon for each placing. Exhibits are compared to each other.

Judging Process - Ribbons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>Outstanding on all standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>Exceeds the minimum standard; may have minor flaws where improvements can be made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Meets all minimum standards; may be visible signs of needed improvements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Fails to meet minimum standards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Judging Process - Ribbons

Participation Ribbons
- Participation Ribbons are awarded to those exhibits that do not meet requirements. Participation ribbons indicate to the 4-Her that the exhibit was not necessarily poor in quality, only that it did not meet the project requirements as indicated in the fair book.
- Participation Ribbons are also awarded to Clover Buds or other "participation" only classes.

Champions
- Reserve Champion - Reserve champions is awarded to the second highest quality exhibit in a single division if there is a worthy exhibit.
- Champion - Champion is awarded to the highest quality exhibit in a single division if there is a worthy exhibit.
- Reserve Grand Champion - Reserve grand champion is awarded to the second highest quality exhibit in one project area, if it's quality merits this award.
- Grand Champion - Grand champion is awarded to the highest quality exhibit in one project area, if it's quality merits this award.

Special Awards
- Nearly every fair has them
- Fair premium book should specify how the exhibits/recipients will be selected
- Ask superintendent for guidance
- Exhibit quality should merit the award

Questions

Next Sessions

April 23, 7 p.m. How to Judge Food: The Basics
April 30, 7 p.m. How to Judge Food: Food Preservation

See you then!