



2009 Livestock Judging Contest Leader's Guide

Introduction:

The Delaware 4-H Livestock Judging contest is held annually during the Delaware State Fair in conjunction with the Delaware FFA Livestock Judging Career Development event. The contest consists of judging and placing several classes and giving three sets of oral reasons. The contest is organized by officials from the Delaware 4-H and FFA Programs with assistance from many volunteers. Judging contests are utilized by the Delaware 4-H program to develop critical thinking skills such as comparing and contrasting, decision making, and oral communication as well as to enhance project knowledge.

Format:

The State 4-H Livestock Judging contest is held in the show ring of the Kent building. Participants are expected to report at least 10 minutes prior to the start of the contest in order to receive their judging cards and to hear any additional instructions. They also need to bring with them a clipboard, plain paper for taking oral reasons notes, and a pen or pencil. All participants compete against each other regardless of age or experience. *Participants may not use any type of electronic device (cell phone, pager, pda, etc.) during the contest and will be disqualified if they are caught doing so.*

The contest consists of judging six classes of livestock and giving three sets of oral reasons. The specific classes judged are dependant on the livestock that are being exhibited in the various livestock departments. Typically organizers tend to try and have one market class and one breeding type class for each livestock species (beef, sheep and swine). This year we will also be adding a class of market goats for practice purposes only. In addition, participants give one set of reasons from each species. Organizers select the best class out of the two (class with visible differences that can be discussed) for each species as the oral reasons class. No reasons will be given on the market goat class this year.

Youth are given approximately 12 minutes to judge non-reasons classes and 15 minutes to judge reasons classes and take notes. On classes that have handlers, youth are given several different views of the animal.

Hogs are judged loose and market lambs are always judged on a rail so that participants have the opportunity to handle the lambs. The lambs may only be handled once. Once time is up they must hand in their placing card to officials before the next class enters the ring. It is important that they note their class placing on their notes sheet for the oral reasons classes because once the placing card is handed in, they may not have it back.

Participants are expected to give three sets of oral reasons on the designated classes at the conclusion of the judging classes. Contestants are relocated to the Centre where it is quiet and

are given adequate time to prepare their reasons. Technically oral reasons should not exceed two minutes in length for each class. They are judged on criteria such as terminology, organization, accuracy, relevancy and presentation. A child will score higher if they can deliver their oral reasons without the use of notes. Sometimes after the delivery of oral reasons, the judge will ask the child a few specific questions to see how well they understood or observed the class.

Eligibility:

Participants must be current Delaware 4-H members. Each county is allowed 10 participants for no more than 30 contestants total. If a county does not fill all ten of its slots, then those unused slots become available for other counties to use. Individual counties determine the selection process to fill these slots. Attending county judging practices is usually a good way to ensure a child's participation. Project groups are welcomed and encouraged to conduct some of their own trainings as well.

Available Resources:

There are several resources available for use by 4-H Leaders, parents, and members to help prepare for the livestock judging contest. The Kansas Livestock Judging manual is available at your county office and gives more specifics on how to judge and place classes. It also gives instructions on the proper format, terms, and delivery of oral reasons. There are beef, sheep, and swine learning laboratory kits located in the Kent County office. These kits can be signed out to borrow for meetings and trainings. In the kit you will find lots of activities that support learning and preparing for the State 4-H Livestock Judging contest. In addition, the following judging videos can be borrowed from the Kent County office:

- Livestock Judging Fundamentals
- Oral Reasons
- Judging Bulls
- Practice Cattle Judging
- Market Steer Evaluation
- Breeding Heifer
- Practice Sheep Judging
- Breeding Sheep Evaluation
- Market Lambs
- Practice Swine Judging
- Breeding Swine Evaluation
- Market Hog Evaluation
- Breeding Gilt Evaluation

Please do not wait until the last minute to make arrangements to borrow these resources.