



GENERAL JUDGING INFORMATION

JUDGING PHILOSOPHY

County and community fairs in Maryland are open to all residents regardless of their expertise in any given area. While certain standards must be maintained, judges must also evaluate all that has been entered in good conscience and to award placings accordingly.

Judges will award only such prizes as they believe merits of the entry warrant. No prize will be awarded to any unworthy entry, even without competition; so, a truly unworthy exhibit may be disqualified from any award. (Example - an unclean garment or a soiled quilt.) Please remember that these are AMATEUR shows and that residents are ENCOURAGED to participate now and in the future.

Winners are selected at most fairs, although not always is a blue ribbon awarded; occasionally there is a class without winners.

Indoor exhibit judging standards have been developed by the University of Maryland Home Economics and other specialists to provide general judging guidance.

The awarding of two blue ribbons in a class is not permitted. Judges may provide a written explanation regarding award placement.

Rules and Guidelines for Participants of MAAFS Judging School

Purpose

To train and certify indoor exhibit judges for local fairs and shows.

Objectives

1. To provide training, using specific criteria, to perform critical analysis that will bring about uniformity and consistency in judging indoor exhibits.
2. To provide training and affirm competence for perspective judges consisting of an Association approved curriculum.
3. To develop a pool of certified judges.

Levels of Judges

Novice : In the process of completing program requirements in the prescribed curriculum.

Certified: Having successfully completed judges' training and field experience.

Instructor: Certified judge who has completed instructor training and conducted one or more judging school classes.

Steps to Attain and Retain Certification

Certified Judges:

1. Attend judges' training schools.
2. Complete three segments in the same subject area. Example - 3 separate classes of crafts.
3. Provide written permission to be placed on a judges list that is made public.

Novice Judges:

1. All of the above.
2. Judge at one (1) fair or show with a certified judge.

Recognition

Will receive a completion certificate and pin.

Re-certification

If you do not attend or teach a class within a three (3) year period, you must take 3 refresher classes of same subject that you are currently certified.

Responsibility

1. Keep a note book of handouts from each instructor as a future reference.
2. Keep a list of the classes you have taken.

Timeline for Judging School

Spring - before fairs and shows begin

Fall - after fairs and shows are over

Weekday - for those who do not want to come on weekends and in connection with MAAFS Convention

Saturday - for those who work and go to school

Why you should not judge at your own fair

It is recommended that you do not use your own judges, due to a conflict of interest.

JUDGING SCHOOL PARTICIPANTS GUIDELINES

PURPOSE: To train and certify judges for local fairs and shows.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To provide training, using specific criteria, to perform critical analysis that will bring about uniformity and consistency in judging
2. To provide training and affirm competence for perspective judges consisting of an Association approved curriculum
3. To develop a pool of certified judges

LEVELS OF JUDGES:

NOVICE: in the process of completing program requirements in the prescribed curriculum
CERTIFIED: having successfully completed judges' training and field experience
INSTRUCTOR: certified judge who has completed instructor training and educated one or more judging school classes

STEPS TO ATTAIN AND RETAIN CERTIFICATION:

CERTIFIED JUDGE:

attend judge training school
complete three segments in same subject area
agree to be placed on judge's list

NOVIS JUDGE:

all the above
judge at one (1) fair or show with a certified judge

RE-CERTIFICATION:

all certified judges must be re-certified every three years by taking one class in the same area of their certification

RECOGNITION:

receive a completion certificate, and a pin

JUDGING EXHIBITS

4-H RECOGNITION

The 4-H program provides opportunities for youth to develop basic life skills. Recognition can play an important role in encouraging youth to develop their skills and in seeking new experiences. Recognition can be offered to youth in a variety of settings and at the same time can allow for flexibility and adaptation to unique local situations.

Recognition can be provided in the 4-H program for the following:

1. Participation in Educational Experiences
2. Individual Progress Towards Goals
3. Achievement of Established Standards
4. Results From Peer Competition

Participation

Recognizing youth for participating in educational experiences emphasizes the importance of acknowledging their participation or involvement. Taking part and completing a learning experience can be an accomplishment. This type of recognition is most appropriate at the local level. Verbal encouragement can provide a very meaningful recognition. A sincere compliment that says "well done" or "I'm glad that you are here" may be sufficient and is important for many youths.

Goals

Each 4-H'er is unique. He or she has had different experiences and has different resources available to them. Recognition that acknowledges individual progress supports the basic extension philosophy "starting where the people are." Goal setting enables adults to help young people to set realistic goals and then recognizes them for reaching goals. Feedback is essential if youth are to learn from their experiences. Verbal feedback should be immediate and provide reinforcement for youth.

Standards

An important goal of the 4-H program is to teach skills to young people that they can use later in life. Established standards can be used for 4-H'ers to measure the skills they are learning. Youth can assess their skills and be recognized for their achievements towards reaching standards. Standards are established for products (for example an animal, dress or zucchini) and demonstrable skills (for example speaking, demonstrating or decision making, etc.) or when a 4-H'er has completed a predetermined set of activities. The standards are often expressed or written in terms of a scorecard.

Competition

Recognizing 4-H'ers for the results of peer competition is an integral and necessary part of the 4-H recognition program. Activities that involve peer competition provide youth with an opportunity to match their skills and abilities against their peers. Recognition is given to the winner or winners. This kind of recognition assumes the champion, top or top ten of the class, etc. can be identified. Winners are provided high visibility and opportunities for publicity. Not all youth are motivated by competition.

JUDGING 4-H EXHIBITS OR PRESENTATIONS

4-H achievement days or fairs provide an opportunity for youth to be recognized for their work and accomplishments.

The purpose of judging work completed in the 4-H program is threefold:

1. To provide an opportunity for the member to assess and evaluate their work using established standards.
2. To provide an opportunity to the public for the 4-H member to show or exhibit what they have learned in the 4-H program.
3. To provide a learning experience for youth to recognize quality work and help them to evaluate what could be improved or done differently.

Standards listed in this judging guide are derived from research or extensive experience. They are available to all people who work with or participate in the 4-H program.

When products are judged the 4-H'er can measure the products they have made, grown or presented against a standard. This provides the 4-H member an opportunity to assess their skills in the following directions, making a product and following recommended procedures.

METHODS OF JUDGING

4-H judging can be done at every level - the club or group, community, county, district and state. The most effective learning takes place when judging is done of a local level. On a one to one basis the leader can help the member to evaluate the work as it is completed.

Different methods are recommended depending on the situation. Each of the methods described can be an educational experience for the 4-H'er if the judge approaches the task with the member in mind.

The leader works with the member throughout the project in planning, accomplishing, and evaluating. The member has a good idea at the end of the project how successfully the plan has worked. Evaluation should be a continuous process that takes place all during the project as each step is accomplished. In this way, evaluation is a tool which helps the member learn as the project progresses. This is not true if the evaluation is done only after the project is completed.

Static Exhibit Judging

In many situations the 4-H members cannot be present when their 4-H projects are being evaluated. Product standards have been established for most 4-H projects. When static exhibits (product only) are judged, the evaluator compares the product to established standards. These standards, along with consideration of the exhibitor's age, experience and other information listed on the exhibit tag, determine the placing.

Check sheets and written comments help the member to know what they did well and how they could improve their exhibit. Comments can explain to a member why certain things may have happened to an exhibit.

Using check sheets takes time. Adequate help should be provided so judges have time to complete check sheets and make comments.

This manual contains a number of standards and check sheets to be used in various 4-H project areas.

Interview Judging

Interview judging at the local, club or county level is one method of helping 4-H'ers to evaluate their work.

Interview judging is done when the youth is present and can talk to the evaluator. This allows the judge to discover project goals, new skills learned and what was gained from the experience. Both the interview and standards for the exhibit need to be considered when determining the placing.

Evaluation is done by the 4-H member and judge together. They decide how much progress has been made and what ribbon the exhibit should receive. Each 4-H'er can explain their own starting point, take notes on progress they feel they have made and explain the direction they hope future growth will take.

Parents, adult leaders, older youth, extension staff and resource people can help 4-H'ers to evaluate their projects and exhibits at fairs and achievement days. Evaluators need to be understanding, empathetic, supportive and willing to listen as they involve themselves in dialogues with young people.

Interview judging gives 4-H'ers a sense of personal involvement and makes project work more educational.

STEPS IN INTERVIEW JUDGING OF ARTICLES MADE FOR EXHIBIT AT COUNTY ACHIEVEMENT DAYS OR FAIRS

Leaders should prepare 4-H members by explaining what interview judging is, what its advantages are, and what part the 4-H'ers will play in the judging process. This will help put them in a receptive and cooperative frame of mind, enabling them to receive greater benefits, and making the work of the judge easier.

1. THE 4-H'ER TAKES HIS OR HER OWN EXHIBIT TO THE JUDGE AT COUNTY FAIR OR ACHIEVEMENT DAY

The 4-H'er should be responsible for taking the exhibit to the judge. (To eliminate long waits at the judging place, a schedule may be set up so that each club or group will have a specific time for their interviews.)

2. THE 4-H'ER AND JUDGE SIT DOWN TOGETHER TO DISCUSS THE ARTICLE

Arrangements should be made for the judge and 4-H'er to meet where they can talk freely without interference from others. The success of the conference depends on the judge's ability to relate to the 4-H'er.

- Standards are set but will be variable according to 4-H'ers age, experience, ability, etc. Guard against everything being successful. If you think the member could have improved the work, tell them, and suggestions may be helpful.
- Help the member feel pride and accomplishment in work done.
- Try to inspire the member for future work. Help the member learn to analyze his/her own work and plan so that each successive project will be a more successful experience.
- Remember that the development and growth of the member as a result of working with the project are more important than the methods used or the results achieved.
- Try not to be concerned as much with small details as you are with the project as a whole in relation to each individual member
- Remember to end on a positive note. Offer encouragement and try to inspire for future growth.
- Allow time during the discussion for the member to ask you questions.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW JUDGING

Every 4-H'er who is interviewed judged should be asked several questions. The interview may last for only a couple minutes for more simple exhibits or for several minutes for more advanced work.

All interviews should consist of questions that serve as an opening, pursue in-depth knowledge, and look ahead to future 4-H work.

Not all judges need ask all the sample questions listed below. Include other questions appropriate for the situation.

Introduction

1. What did you like best about this project?
2. Have you taken this project before?
3. What other things did you make in this project during the year?
4. How will you use this project item?
5. What other projects are you taking?
6. Who helped you decide what your project would be?

Detailed Learning

7. What was the most difficult part of your exhibit?
8. What did you learn from this project?
9. What would you do differently if you made this project again?
10. How will you take care of this item?
11. Approximately how much did it cost you to make it?
12. Did you receive any help making your project?
13. What are some characteristics that make this a good exhibit?
14. What areas do you think you could improve?
15. What activities did you do while making this item?

Continued Learning

16. What are some other things you could learn in this project?
17. If you took this project again, what could you make for an exhibit that would be a challenge to you?
18. If you would not take this project again, what new project would you try?

Livestock Interview Judging

Interview judging of livestock projects can be a good learning experience for 4-H'ers. Some questions are listed below. They may trigger other questions. Remember to keep the age of the member being interviewed in mind when you select the question.

Sample Questions for Livestock Interview Judging

1. What is the age of the animal?
2. What is the breed of the animal?
3. How long have you owned the animal?
4. What do you feed the animal?
5. How much do you feed the animal?
6. What do you like about this project?
7. Will you carry this project again? Why?

RIBBON SYSTEM

DANISH SYSTEM:

There is no special formula about the number of blue, red or white ribbons to be given. Quality, measured against product standards, and fulfillment of exhibit requirements determine the ranking. An accepted standard for ribbons are as follows;

Blue	meets or exceeds product standards and meet exhibit requirements; overall, the work is of high quality.
Red	meets minimum product standards and exhibit requirements; overall the work is of average quality.
White	Serious or considerable deficiencies in meeting product standards and/or exhibit requirements.

AMERICAN SYSTEM:

This is a rank order system in which exhibits are place first-to-infinity. There may also be a special categories such as top of class, best of show, grand champion, etc. While the American system uses product standards and fulfillment of exhibit requirements, it also uses the idea of competition among exhibitors to establish the ranking. Check with the county prior to judging to clarify their interpretation of this system, as well as all placings to be made.

PARTICIPATION SYSTEM:

This system recognizes the exhibitor's participation in a category, usually without regards to the quality of the exhibit or competition among the exhibitors.

Combinations and modifications of these systems are used often. If there are questions or something is not clear, always check with the department superintendent.

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TYPES OF JUDGING

PLACE JUDGING

This method of judging uses product standards and fulfillment of exhibit requirements. Exhibits are placed in ranking order from first to infinity. There may also be special categories such as top of class, best of show, grand champion, etc.

DANISH SYSTEM

In the Danish System, each exhibit is initially judged on its own merit; then all individual exhibits of similar quality (i.e. Blue, Red or White) are placed in the same general group. All "excellent" quality exhibits receive a blue ribbon, all "good" quality exhibits receive a red ribbon, and all "fair" quality exhibits receive a white ribbon. The selections of 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc. placing are usually taken from the blue quality exhibits, should there be enough exhibits from which to select. In the case where there are not enough blue quality from which to select, 2nd, 3rd, etc. placings would be selected from the red or white quality exhibits.

INTERVIEW JUDGING

Interview judging is the judging process used when the judge and the exhibitor are alone for a one-on-one judging experience. Sometimes it is called "conference judging" or "face-to-face judging." Both the interview and standards for the exhibit are considered when determining the results of the judging.

ETHICS OF FAIR JUDGING

Ethical standards is a critical part of the judging process for evaluating exhibits at local, county or state fairs. An ethical standard requires that each exhibit be given a fair and equal evaluation. An evaluation based on a standard of excellence that is preset for the class of exhibits. The goals of an ethical judging process for exhibitors are educational growth,, exhibit evaluation and encouragement (positive reinforcement).

- Use standards of excellence in judging exhibit. Follow the guidelines provided by the department superintendent.
- Be consistent and fair with all exhibits equal regardless of economic, social, political or class status of the exhibitor.
- Keep personal bias from entering your opinion of an exhibit. Eliminate yourself from the judging process when you cannot control your feelings.
- If you are confident that the work is not the exhibitors, be very careful of what you say and do. You can put in jeopardy, yourself, the department, and fair management.
- Eliminate yourself if you are too involved with the exhibit or exhibitor. The public always knows - again that puts fair management and everyone connected in a bad light.
- It is always better to judge away from home, if possible. Be that expert for another area, county or state, etc.
- Do not judge that which you have no knowledge or limited knowledge.
- It is a good idea to judge with a partner, this allows for discussion and a shared opinion.
- Choose your words carefully when speaking to the exhibitor, sometimes statements are taken as personal attacks.

TIPS FOR NEW JUDGES

1. The development of young people is our first consideration in 4-H work. Projects are a means to an end - not an end in themselves. No exhibit is so poorly done that it is not worthy of an encouraging comment. No exhibit is so well done that some improvement may not be made.
2. Judging is done according to quality. Quality should be high but attainable, appropriate to different age levels, and known by the 4-H members.
3. When making your determinations keep in mind that age, experience and skill of the individual and not just the rules of the department. Don't give top placings if exhibits are unworthy. Don't rule out unfamiliar ways of doing things if the results obtained are satisfactory. Judge the results you see rather than what might have been done. Be consistent. Make comments appropriate to the situation which: encourage the member, are said kindly, help member see what to continue to learn and to improve. Be ready to explain placings to the superintendent if requested.
4. In face to face (or interview) judging it is very important to help the 4-H'er feel comfortable talking to you.
 - A. A pleasant greeting and brief general conversation to begin the session will get you off to a relaxed start.
 - B. A few questions to help better understand the child such as:
Do you like working with "project"?
What do you like best about 4-H?
(This might lead to another question or two.)
 - C. Begin your judging comments with the good about the 4-H'ers exhibit.
 - D. Continue with ideas to help them have a better product. Refer them to 4-H project books if that will help them understand.
 - E. Encourage them to try new things and work to accomplish improvements. This might mean suggestions for correcting oven temperatures, correct baking pans, proper measuring tools and learning how to use them for the best products.