



RESPONSIBILITIES: EXTENSION STAFF AND 4-H JUDGES

Listed below are some responsibilities of staff and judges. Hopefully these points can facilitate discussion and make your job easier!

Extension Staff Responsibilities

- A. The invitation to judge
 1. Send a letter of request including dates, time schedule, department to judge, age of exhibitors, and how judging is done. Indicate if judging responsibilities will include other youth, FFA, etc. exhibits.
 2. Be specific about pay and expenses -- how much and what's included.
 3. Indicate judging philosophy and judging criteria in *Evaluating 4-H Exhibits Notebook* will be used.
 4. Include any unusual information that relates to judging.
- B. Communicating specifics prior to fair
 1. Send the fair list/fair book and other information such as the conference judging piece and class evaluation forms if needed by the judge. Remind them of other project resource material, training videos, etc. that are applicable.
 2. Communicate expectations and specific responsibilities of judges.
 3. Share information emphasized in leader training or programs during the year, e.g., decision making, goal setting, buymanship, etc.
 4. Communicate judging process to be used, e.g., conference judging and/or written comments.
 5. Include directions to fairgrounds, parking, and exhibits building location, car pass and gate admission if needed.
 6. Reconfirm dates and time schedule. Include fairgrounds and staff home telephone number in case of emergency.
 7. If applicable, include list of other judges for possible carpooling.
 8. Send any information about judging facility that would be helpful, such as air conditioning.
- C. Briefing the judge before evaluation begins at the fair
 1. Communicate procedure used for awards, ribbons and traditions in the county.
 2. Indicate who the judge should contact for help/questions/support, i.e., department superintendent, staff and helpers. Clarify roles of each.
 3. Give judges freedom to consult or share with other judges if necessary.
 4. Provide overview of the day(s) schedule, workplace, meal arrangements, etc.
 5. Review all general exhibit rules: emphasize safety, copyright, size, exhibitor age, etc.
 6. Determine eligibility and/or appropriate classes for exhibits if questions arise.
 7. Handle concerns raised by parents or leaders if problems arise. Support the judge appropriately.
- D. Organizational mechanics
 1. Have supplies and materials on hand. Furnish adequate tools and/or equipment for judges to use, e.g., a sharp knife, cutting board, etc.
 2. Provide competent volunteer adult and/or teen help for each judge.
 3. Plan the day's scheduling to optimize learning of youth.
 4. Provide as comfortable a place to judge as possible.

5. Check periodically with judges for questions or problems.
 6. Be fair in your expectations in assigning judging responsibilities.
 7. Be sure State Fair selections meet all eligibility requirements.
- E. Communication following the fair
1. Provide constructive and supportive feedback on their judging performance.
 2. Be sure payment is sent promptly.
 3. Communicate results from State Fair if judges indicate interest in this feedback.

Judges Responsibilities

It is appropriate to let staff know you're interested, when you are available, preferences for age level or project/subject matter. If you're new in the area, include previous experiences and references.

- A. Response to invitation letter.
1. Respond promptly when asked to judge. Confirm your understanding of details, dates, time, etc. If you aren't available, staff appreciate your suggestions of other judges.
 2. Attend judges training if at all possible or be sure you have current information. Check with your county Extension office or the State Youth and 4-H Office.
- B. Preparation for judging.
1. **Read all material provided in advance.** Become thoroughly familiar with local fair book and information on conference judging emphasis and procedures.
 2. Communicate in advance if you have any questions, problems or even suggestions.
- C. Judging at the county fair.
1. Arrive on time at the fair, with advance materials provided by the county.
 2. Communicate at the judges orientation or anytime during the day as you have questions, problems or need clarification.
 3. Be friendly and courteous to volunteers and 4-H'ers.
 4. Utilize superintendents and/or volunteers at the fair as questions or problems arise. Be assertive enough to handle difficult situations if necessary.
 5. Consider each youth individually. Encourage 4-H'er to evaluate their own work. Make supportive and corrective feedback.
 6. Ask for additional help if an exhibit includes information outside your area of expertise.
 7. Help other judges if asked and if qualified.
 8. If applicable to your assigned responsibilities, keep state fair exhibits in mind throughout the judging using process outlined in the county so selection can be done more easily at the end.
 9. Stay until judging is over and State Fair selections have been made. Be sure State Fair selections meet eligibility requirements and all General Exhibit Rules that can be found in this handbook. (Joint responsibility with Extension staff.)
 10. **Check out** with staff before you leave. Turn in mileage, bills, hours, etc., promptly.
 11. After the fair, take time to give staff feedback on improvements needed for the next year. It's nice to hear when things go well, too!

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