

# **Showmanship**

The Poultry Show is about how a 4-Her's chickens, ducks, geese, quails, and various other birds met the Standard of Perfection as a judge sees it. Showmanship is the judging of the person rather than the animal involved. Showmanship is the time for the 4-Her to dazzle the judge with knowledge and to demonstrate their abilities as poultry stewards. Showmanship is determined by demonstration and oral questions from a judge.

## **Classes-**

There are four classes of showmanship in poultry:

Junior--Grades 4 to 6

Intermediate--Grades 7 to 8

Senior--Grades 9 to 12

Novice--Grades 7 to 12 for those who are showing for the first time.

## **Dress-**

Dress appropriately. Wear a clean Boone County 4-H shirt. Do not wear your club shirt. Jeans are appropriate or other pants, shorts are not.

## **Prepare-**

Showmanship begins months before Fair begins. It is important to work with the bird you will use for showmanship. Handling the bird regularly, opening its wings and moving around with the bird will help prepare it for the day of the show. Handling builds trust between you and your bird. You may use any bird you bring to Fair. It is in your best interest to choose a bird that is calm and easy to handle. Your most beautiful duck that won Best of Show may not be the best choice for showmanship. You may want to choose the Silver Polish that only won a red ribbon, but has a gentle, friendly manner.

## **Know your Bird-**

Know how to handle your bird well, hold them securely, put them into a cage headfirst, and remove them headfirst. Know their anatomy, their class and varieties, and how they compare to the American Standard of Perfection. Know their origin. Know their strengths and their faults. The judge will ask questions based on your age. The judge loves to ask the types of wing feathers and the types of combs chickens have. Other questions may have to do with your breed's egg color, ear color or purpose (meat, egg production or dual-purpose). As you move up in the ranks from Junior to Senior, the questions become harder. The judge may ask more about other body parts besides wing feathers or specific diseases.

### **How to Hold a Bird-**

Position your bird with its head facing the door of the cage. Put one hand under its body or breast, with your index finger between the legs. Your other fingers support one leg and your thumb supports the other. Your other hand is on the bird's back. Bring the head out first to keep the bird calm and help prevent wing and feather damage. The judge will be noticing how you handle all your birds throughout the show. Showmanship has been lost by 4-Hers that did not properly handle their birds.

### **Keep Talking-**

If a judge asks a question, don't just answer with a one word answer - share everything you can think of that you know about the topic (and then some more!) Judges like to see you have a wide base of knowledge about poultry.

### **Why do Showmanship-**

Talking with the judge can be an intimidating thing. Lately, a lot of 4-Hers who show poultry have decided not to participate in the showmanship division. I know it at the end of the show and if you aren't showing ducks, or market pen you are sitting around for a long time waiting for showmanship. When you show a chicken, sometimes you can not help that she lost a few feathers during fair; or your duck's beak is not as orange as the Standard should be. What your poultry looks like can have a lot to do with the breeder that it was bought from, sometimes it is luck. But showmanship is about you. You control how you present yourself and how knowledgeable you are. Winning showmanship is less to do with luck and more to do with preparedness. By the way, our judges are very nice and knowledgeable. It is the judge's goal to not just to award ribbons, but to teach.

### **The End-**

The most important thing about showmanship and just showing chickens is to enjoy yourself. Don't get stressed or frustrated or angry if you miss a question or your chicken doesn't have the right color of feet. Relax and have fun. Showmanship is a learning experience. Every year you learn more and know what the judge is looking for. Have a positive attitude and respect for the judge and your fellow participants.