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Livestock Judging; Extension Circular 0-16-2

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Why Do Judging Work:

Every 4-H club member who hopes to be a successful livestock breeder or feeder must first know what a good animal looks like. If you learn to be a good livestock judge while you are a 4-H Clubber, it will help you all through life.

There may have been a time when a cow was a cow and a sheep was a sheep, but that is not true now. There are many different kinds and qualities of animals and it is very important that the livestock farmer be able to recognize the difference in animals.

The ideal way of selecting breeding stock is from production records, but these records are seldom available. In a large measure, the value or usefulness of animals is indicated by their appearance.

To make livestock judging even more interesting for 4-H Club members, contests are arranged where members match their judging ability against the ability of other boys and girls. Suitable awards are given to the winners. Most counties are represented in the state contest by three 4-H livestock judges. The winning team in the state contest represents Nebraska in the International contest held at the time of the National Club Congress at Chicago.

When to Start to Learn Livestock Judging:

Start your study of livestock judging the very first year of your 4-H Club experience. This extension circular is sent to you so you can start right now. Start now, there is much to learn, and it takes lots of practice to develop a good judging ability. Don't expect to win a contest this first year you try, but try every chance you get and don't quit practicing and trying until you win. Livestock judging will improve your judgment in other things as well as of livestock. Don't miss an opportunity to improve your judging ability; it is a valuable asset to any man or woman.

How to Start:

Study the score cards for each kind of livestock, learn the names of the different parts of the animals and the values of each part. Learn the points that are good and the points that are bad about each part. You will gradually develop a picture in your mind's eye of an ideal animal of each breed and kind. Each type and breed of farm animal has been developed for a special purpose. Learn all you can about the purpose of each type and breed. Some parts of this study should be done at each club meeting. The best meeting place for a livestock club is where livestock is available for judging.
To Go About Judging:

The leader will talk over the good and bad points and quiz you on the names of the different parts of the animal. Then two animals will be placed side by side for you to compare with the picture in your mind's eye of the ideal animal of its kind. You will decide in your mind which of the two animals is most like your ideal.

Next a group of a similar kind of animals, usually four, will be considered as a class to be judged. For the first five or ten minutes stay back far enough so you can see the class as a whole. Compare each animal's general appearance to the picture of your ideal as to length of body, depth of body, length of legs and the size of the animals. Then compare each animal with the other animals in the class as to the same points. By this method you form an opinion of the body type of the animals in the class. The word type means shape of the body. Type is the most important consideration in livestock judging.

Now move up closer to the class and look each animal over carefully beginning with the head, then the neck, shoulders, fore-quarters, back, body, loin and hind-quarters, noting the good and bad points about each part of each animal. Examine the hide and the hair and notice size of bone and neatness of the head and joints as a method of judging quality. In breeding animal classes, look for the characteristics of the breed represented. Pay particular attention to sex character. The female should show femininity and have a motherly appearance throughout. And the male should have the more rugged and bold appearance that is spoken of as masculinity.

Back away from the animals and begin to balance up the good and bad points possessed by each animal and decide which one comes nearest to your ideal, then which one is next best and so on down to the bottom of the class.

Check up on your judgment by comparing the first animal with the second animal, part by part and point by point, then the second with the third and so on. As you do this you should make a list of the points that you consider are good reasons for placing the class as you do. This list is an outline from which you can write or give orally your reasons for placing the class as you did.

How to Give Your Reasons:

Begin your reasons by looking the judge, or person to whom you are talking, straight in the eye. Stand in an erect and confident manner but do not take on a cocky attitude. Talk in a straightforward convincing tone of voice. Don't orate. Remember you are talking man to man.

A Suggested Form to Use in Giving Reasons

I placed this class of Duroc boar pigs 2 - 4 - 1 - 3.

I placed 2 over 4 easily because of his type and quality. He has a stronger, more evenly arched back, and is a stretchier pig. He excels 4 in quality, being cleaner-boned and smoother-shouldered. He also has a stronger, more masculine head. Number 4 excels 2 somewhat in Duroc character, as 2 is too straight in the ear in which respect 4 is superior.
I placed 4 over 1 because of his stronger feet and legs. He has larger bones and is shorter and straighter on his pasterns. He is wider in the chest and straighter on the front legs; number 1 is too close at the knees. Four excels one in constitution, having more width and depth in the chest and being a more active, rugged-appearing boar.

I placed 1 over 3 because of his great advantage in masculinity. Number 3 is very weak and plain in the head. One is a more rugged boar throughout, having a deeper body, wider chest, and larger bone. Three does have an advantage in being a growthier, smoother pig.

I placed 3 at the bottom of this class because of his lack of masculinity and ruggedness.

Answer any questions the judge may ask you in a courteous, straightforward manner to the best of your ability and judgment. If you do not know, say so.

A Few Reason Do's and Don'ts

1. Know you know; don't "lie."
2. Always compare. Because No. 2 is "deep" is no reason to place him over No. 1; No. 1 may be deep too. You must say he is deeper than No. 1.
3. Use the livestock terms that apply to the class of animals. It's the "ham" in hogs, the "quarter" in horses, the "round" in steers, and the "leg of lamb" in lambs. It takes time to get used to these terms but you are not talking livestock until the right term comes naturally.
4. Spend your time talking about important things. Don't spend much time on horns, hair, color, ears, tail, etc.
5. Don't use the words "better," "best," or "good." "Deeper," "wider," "stronger," "lager," "typier," and similar words put your meaning much more clearly.
6. Don't claim too much for the animal you put up. Mention the important advantage (if any) of the lower animal of a pair.
7. Don't mix numbers.

How a Judging Contest is Run:

In a judging contest there are generally two classes of each kind of livestock, that is, one class each of the following: fat hogs, breeding hogs, fat cattle, beef breeding cattle, fat sheep, breeding sheep, draft geldings and breeding horses.

All classes are judged and oral reasons follow. Fifteen minutes are allowed for the judging of a class of four animals. Two minutes are allowed for giving a set of reasons on a class of four animals. Oral reasons are usually required on one-half of the classes judged. Reasons are graded on a basis of 50 points for a perfect set of reasons. Placings are graded on the same basis with 50 points for a correct class placing.

This makes a possible individual score on an eight-class contest, reasons on four classes, of 600 points, and 1800 a perfect team score when the team is composed of three contestants.
This is the general plan of conducting 4-H club contests. The plan is sometimes varied to fit conditions under which a contest is held.

Placing cards are always furnished to each contestant at the beginning of the contest and handed in to the group leader one by one as you finish judging a class. You should always have a notebook and pencil to write down your placings and make such notes as you wish about the individuals in each class that you are told you will give reasons on. Reasons are never given from notes. The notebook should be in your pocket when giving your reasons. Use it to refresh your memory of each class a few minutes before you are called to give your reasons.

Important:
Do your own judging --- Form your own reasons and neither listen to nor talk to anyone else while you are in a judging contest. This is a rule in all judging contests; anyone caught talking is disqualified and thrown out of the contest. It is a good plan to make this your own rule in practice judging work and you will do better judging.

Big and Important Things to Consider in Judging Cattle and Hogs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breeding Animals</th>
<th>Fat Animals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Type</td>
<td>1. Type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Quality</td>
<td>2. Fatness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Constitution &amp; Size for Age</td>
<td>3. Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Sex Character</td>
<td>5. Trimness of Middle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reasons for your placing of a class of animals should be justified by the differences in these factors as they are possessed by each animal in the class.

In the judging of sheep the above table of factors apply with one added factor, that of fleece.

In the judging of breeding horses there is another important factor to be considered, that is action. In the judging of draft horses the important judging factors are type, quality, size, action and soundness.

(Approved by the Animal Husbandry Department.)

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