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# 4-H 357 Guide for Evaluating Livestock Showmanship Contests : Beef, Sheep, Swine

Doyle R. Wolverton

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Nebraska Cooperative Extension 4-H 357

# GUIDE FOR EVALUATING LIVESTOCK SHOWMANSHIP CONTESTS

BEEF  
SHEEP  
SWINE

Revised by  
Doyle R. Wolverton  
Extension Animal Science Youth Specialist

## INTRODUCTION

Fitting and showing is the art of training, grooming and showing livestock to make them more presentable in competitive exhibitions.

Judging a showmanship contest is based on preparation of animals for show, their apparent training, and the appearance and behavior of the participating exhibitors. Animal confirmation should not be considered unless it affects the way an animal should be fitted and shown. Fine or technical points should not be overemphasized to the point they are given more weight than the effective presentation of a clean animal. Nor should minor infractions result in the disqualification of an exhibitor. Basic skills in both grooming and showing should not be confused with current fads and trends.

Following is an outline of desirable showmanship practices and the relative importance of each. The showmanship judge should make his/her placings according to the degree of excellence displayed in these practices. Exhibitors should use this guide in preparing for showmanship contests. This guide is approved for all 4-H Beef, Sheep and Swine Showmanship Contests in Nebraska and Iowa.

Showmanship contests at most state fairs and regional shows are conducted with separate judges evaluating exhibitors during the show and making final selections at the end of the show. At most county fairs, showmanship is evaluated by the live animal judge at either the beginning or end of the species show. Exhibitors should consult the premium list for the show in order to comply with show rules for grooming and exhibiting.

# EEF SHOWMANSHIP SCORE CARD

(100 points possible)

## APPEARANCE OF CALF Perfect Score 40 points

### 1. Cleanliness ..... 10

- a. Hair and switch clean, and free of stains.
- b. Hide clean, and free of dust and dandruff.
- c. Legs and hooves clean.
- d. Halter clean and properly adjusted.

### 2. Grooming ..... 20

- a. Hair handled in a manner best suited to the individual calf. Long hair may be curled or pulled forward and blocked. Short, stiff hair may be shown smooth. In some cases, some areas may be brushed smooth, while other areas such as the rounds may be fluffed or pulled up to emphasize thickness or perhaps minimize some deficiency. Short hair may be slick shorn (with the fall of the hair).
- b. Hooves trimmed and shaped so the animal can stand straight. Trimming done early enough so the animal has time to adjust and feet are not sore. Excessive trimming to cause excessive straightness is discouraged. Hooves should be oiled. The addition of unnatural color or other compounds should be discounted.
- c. Horns (if present) curved, shaped and polished.
- d. The switch may be left natural, fluffed, ratted or formed at twist height.
- e. The addition of natural or synthetic hair or hair-like materials should be discouraged and severely discounted in a showmanship contest. A complete tail switch may be added, if desired.

- f. Animals groomed with compounds where color rubs comes off should receive lowest possible ribbon placing.

### 3. Clipping ..... 10

- a. Major clipping done about one week before show.
- b. Head clipped on polled or dehorned market calf. Head never clipped on horned animal but may be trimmed and cleaned up if necessary. Head clipped from ears forward and over top of poll, if desired. Ears or eyelashes never clipped. Hair blended from clipped to unclipped part.
- c. Tail clipped from a point above the twist upward to the tailhead. Tailhead never clipped but long hairs trimmed, and hair blended from clipped to unclipped parts.

## B. SHOWING CALF

Perfect Score  
40 points

### 1. Parading and Changing

#### Positions ..... 10

- a. Calf led from left side; lead strap held in the right hand 1 to 2 feet from the head and at height of calf's poll. Extra length of lead strap balanced between left and right hands or carried in the form of several large folds in right hand. Extremely short lead straps may not require folds. Wrapping strap around hand should be severely discounted. Exhibitor never leads calf while walking backwards.
- b. Backward pressure should be applied with the lead strap and by pressing on the point of the shoulder to back calf out of line.
- c. Halter properly adjusted and show stick of suitable length.

- d. Calf also may be moved out of line by leading forward and then back through the line.
- e. Calf led in clockwise direction when necessary to parade it or move it to a different line.
- f. About 6 feet of space maintained between exhibitor's calf and the next calf in front.

## **2. Posing in Ring ..... 15**

- a. When pulled into line, exhibitor keeps calf in position at least 3 feet from calf on the left.
- b. Exhibitor faces calf and holds lead strap in left hand while showing.
- c. Calf stands alert with head up, back level and legs placed squarely under the body.
- d. Show stick used to place calf's hind feet. Either show stick or exhibitor's foot used to place calf's front feet.
- e. Exhibitor keeps whereabouts of judge in mind and has calf in position when judge looks at him or her.
- f. Exhibitor is allowed to let calf relax, and to brush or comb calf when judge is at other end of ring.
- g. Exhibitor posing calves in a location to block judge's view of other animals should be severely discounted.

## **3. Cooperation with Judge ..... 15**

- a. Aware of judge's position without being obvious.
- b. Exhibitor does not obstruct view of judge.
- c. Calf maneuvered into improved position for benefit of judge's inspection before, but not during, inspection.

- d. Exhibitor steps aside if judge wants front view inspection.

## **C. APPEARANCE AND MERITS OF EXHIBITOR**

Perfect Score  
20 points

### **1. Appearance ..... 10**

- a. Exhibitor well-groomed and clothes reasonably clean and neat.
- b. Headwear is discouraged. However, the final decision on headwear is left to the individual show.
- c. Any color except white is appropriate for well-fitting trousers. Shorts are not considered appropriate. Extremes in colors and fit are not appropriate. Belts should be worn with trousers having carriers or loops.
- d. White shirt (or blouse) with the official 4-H chevron, a 4-H T-shirt or official shirt (or blouse) provided by show management are considered appropriate. Halter tops are inappropriate. However, the final decision on dress code is left to the individual show.
- e. Hard soled shoes or boots should be worn. Other footwear are not appropriate.

### **2. Merits ..... 10**

- a. Brings calf into ring promptly.
- b. Recognizes quickly and corrects faults of calf.
- c. Works quickly but not abruptly.
- d. Alert and responsive to judge's and ringmaster's requests.
- e. Not distracted by people and things outside ring.

- f. Shows calf, not himself or herself.
- g. Does not leave ring until released by ring official.
- h. Displays a courteous attitude and sense of fair play while at the show.
- i. Prepared to give prompt answers to questions related to the 4-H beef project, i.e. age, breed, nutrition, pregnancy status, performance and carcass value.

## SHEEP SHOWMANSHIP SCORE CARD

(100 points possible)

### APPEARANCE OF LAMB

Perfect Score  
40 points

#### 1. Cleanliness ..... 25

- a. Wool, clean, dry and free of foreign matter.
- b. Flanks, feet and legs clean.
- c. Ears and nose clean.
- d. Addition of color, or addition of natural or synthetic materials to any part of the animal, should be severely penalized.

#### 2. Trimming ..... 15

- a. Desirable that fleece of market lambs be trimmed to  $\frac{3}{8}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch. If an exhibitor tight-shears a lamb, all body and leg wool should be removed at the same length. Hair can be left on the legs.
- b. Fleece of breeding ewes trimmed to  $\frac{3}{8}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch or, in the case of a wool breed, a length which is appropriate for the breed standard.

- c. Feet trimmed so that lamb walks and stands naturally and correctly.

## **B. SHOWING LAMB**

Perfect Score  
40 points

### **1. Posing and Changing Positions..... 30**

- a. Lamb kept well-posed at all times but exhibitor not fussing or maneuvering unduly.
- b. Lamb shows evidence of training as indicated by responsiveness to handling.
- c. Lamb shown from front when judge is viewing it from rear or left side; otherwise lamb shown from left side only.
- d. Exhibitor shows while standing or squatting except when moving lamb to a new position.
- e. Lamb led from left side with left hand under jaw and right hand at the dock, if the lamb needs to be encouraged to move.
- f. Maintain reasonable distance from next animal at all times.
- g. Proper to let lamb relax, but not out of position, when judge is at other end of arena.
- h. Lamb held firmly for handling by holding chin with two hands and pressing back against the forward pressure of the lamb. Lifting feet off ground is discouraged at all times.
- i. Physical contacts with lambs that appear to be abusive, i.e. slapping, pinching, etc., should be severely penalized.

### **2. Cooperation with Judge ..... 10**

- a. Aware of judge's position without being obvious.
- b. Exhibitor not obstructing view of judge.

- c. Lamb maneuvered into position for benefit of judge's inspection before, but not during, inspection.
- d. Exhibitors posing animals to block view of other animals in class should be severely penalized.

## **PEARANCE AND MERITS F EXHIBITOR**

Perfect Score  
20 points

### **Appearance ..... 10**

- a. Exhibitor well-groomed, and clothes clean and neat.
- b. Headwear is discouraged. However, the final decision on headwear is left to the individual show.
- c. Footwear should be comfortable, neat, substantial enough to provide protection and should not detract from exhibit.
- d. Any color except white is appropriate for well-fitting trousers. Shorts are not considered appropriate. Extremes in colors and fit are not appropriate. A belt should be worn with trousers having carriers or loops.
- e. White shirt (or blouse) with the official 4-H chevron, a 4-H T-shirt or official shirt (or blouse) provided by show management are considered appropriate. Halter tops are inappropriate. However, the final decision on dress code is left to the individual show.

### **Merits ..... 10**

- a. Brings lamb into ring promptly.
- b. Responsive to judge's and ringmaster's requests.
- c. Works quickly but not abruptly.

- d. Recognizes quickly and corrects faults of lamb.
- e. Not distracted by people and things outside ring. (Ring-side coaching is considered a distraction.)
- f. Shows animal, not himself or herself.
- g. Does not leave ring until released by ring official.
- h. Displays a courteous attitude and sense of fair play while at the show.
- i. Prepared to give prompt answers to questions related to the 4-H sheep project, i.e. breed, sex, age, nutrition, stage of pregnancy, carcass value and growth performance.

## SWINE SHOWMANSHIP SCORE CARD

(100 points possible)

### A. APPEARANCE OF PIG

Perfect Score  
40 points

#### 1. Cleanliness ..... 15

- a. Hair and hide clean, and free of dandruff.
- b. Feet and legs clean, and hooves scraped.

#### 2. Grooming ..... 15

- a. Hair brushed in direction that it grows.
- b. Pig should be shown without hair dressing.
- c. Pig sprinkled with water on warm days is appropriate.

**Clipping ..... 10**

- a. Tail clipped from switch to tail setting or left unclipped.
- b. Ears clipped (inside and outside) or left unclipped.

**HOWING PIG**

Perfect Score  
40 points

**. Presenting Pig to Judge ..... 30**

- a. Small whip, bat or short cane used to direct pig around arena. Pig should be gently prompted in correct places. Pig should not be touched with hands.
- b. Pig shown at slow walk except when judge directs exhibitor to halt for closer observation.
- c. Pig never allowed to assume an awkward position when standing still. No attempts to place pigs feet by handling then.
- d. Pig not forced to make abrupt turns in show ring or permitted to walk into a spot from which it must back out.
- e. Exhibitor should never block judge's view.
- f. Do not punish a pig for lying down. Gently encourage pig to stand and continue to show.

**. Cooperation with Judge ..... 10**

- a. Aware of judge's position without being obvious.
- b. Pig kept within clear view of judge at all times.
- c. Pig kept in open area about 10 to 20 feet from judge, never in crowded area within a few feet of judge.
- d. Pig brought to immediate halt if judge indicates a desire to inspect it standing.

**C. APPEARANCE AND MERITS  
OF EXHIBITOR**

Perfect Score  
20 points

**1. Appearance ..... 10**

- a. Exhibitor well-groomed, and clothes clean and neat.
- b. Headwear is discouraged. However, the final decision on headwear is left to the individual show.
- c. Any color except white is appropriate for well-fitting trousers. Shorts are not considered appropriate. Extremes in colors and fit are not appropriate. A belt should be worn with trousers having carriers or loops.
- d. White shirt (or blouse) with the official 4-H chevron, a 4-H T-shirt or official shirt (or blouse) provided by show management are considered appropriate. Halter tops are inappropriate. However, the final decision on dress code is left to the individual show.
- e. Shoes or boots providing adequate protection and comfort for exhibitor are preferred.
- f. Exhibitor may carry and use a small brush, if needed.

**2. Merits ..... 10**

- a. Brings pig into ring promptly.
- b. Responsive to judge's and ringmaster's requests.
- c. Works quickly but not abruptly.
- d. Recognizes quickly and corrects faults of pig.
- e. Not distracted by people and things outside ring.

- f. Shows animal, not himself or herself.
- g. Does not leave ring until released by ring official.
- h. Displays a courteous attitude and sense of fair play while at the show.
- i. Prepared to give prompt answers to questions related to the 4-H swine project, i.e. age, breed, sex, growth performance, reproductive performance, ear notches, and carcass value.

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