

1978

EC78-101 Contest Guides for Range Judging

James T. Nichols

Peter N. Jensen

Ken Schmidt

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist>

Nichols, James T.; Jensen, Peter N.; and Schmidt, Ken, "EC78-101 Contest Guides for Range Judging" (1978). *Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension*. 4537.
<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist/4537>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Extension at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

AGRI
3
85
E7

#EC 78-101
C-1

Contest Guides For RANGE JUDGING



Cover Pictures

Top Contestants as a range judging contest identifying a range plant. In addition to naming the plant, contestants need to know the season of growth, life span and grazing response for each plant.

Bottom Contestants gathered around a designated area to determine: (1) name of the range site, (2) range condition, and (3) degree of grazing use.

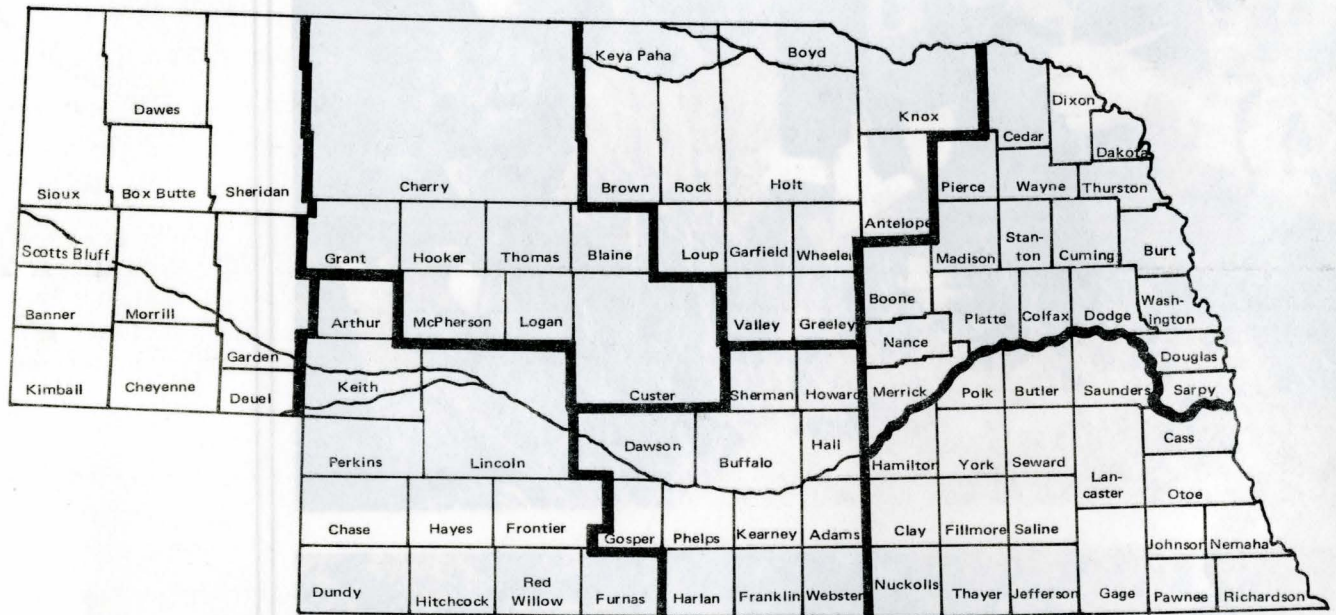


Figure 1. Range judging areas for Nebraska.

Contest Guides for Range Judging

James T. Nichols, District Extension Specialist (Range Management)

Peter N. Jensen, State Range Conservationist, SCS

Ken Schmidt, Extension 4-H Youth Development Specialist

This guide has been prepared for use by individuals responsible for planning, preparation, and conducting range judging and plant identification contests. Both area and state contests, sponsored cooperatively by the agencies listed below, should follow these guidelines.

Range judging in Nebraska was started in 1954 and has been conducted since that time as a joint effort of the following organizations and agencies:

1. Nebraska Cooperative Extension Service (4-H program).
2. Soil Conservation Service, USDA.
3. Nebraska Association of Natural Resources Districts.
4. State Department of Education, Vocational Education (FFA).
5. Nebraska Section, Society for Range Management.
6. Natural Resource Commission.

Purposes of range judging contests:

1. To help participants and others recognize the importance of rangeland as a natural resource and to learn how to care for it properly.
2. To encourage youth and adults to identify range plants, range sites, and learn range management practices.
3. To provide an opportunity for participants to become familiar with different types of rangeland in Nebraska and the midwest.
4. To recognize the achievement of youth and adults in range educational programs.
5. To provide an opportunity for communication among those in range conservation, particularly between youth and adults.

State Range Judging Committee

Members of the State Range Judging Committee will be designated representatives of the spon-

soring organizations and agencies listed. Committee responsibilities include:

1. Give leadership to the range judging program in Nebraska.
2. Approve all rules and regulations for range judging contests.
3. Select the host counties for state and area contests.
4. Set the date of the state contest.
5. Help the contest committee plan and conduct range contests, particularly the state contest.

At the annual meeting, the chairman-elect will be confirmed as chairman for the coming year. A new chairman-elect will be selected for the next year. Suggestions for contest improvement should be submitted to the State Contest Committee before the annual meeting which is held the evening before the state contest.

Organization and Function of Contest Committees

County Contest

A county contest is an effective way to inform local people of the benefits of good range management and provide training for those who want to take part in an area or state range judging contest.

A planning committee composed of the county Extension agent, the SCS district conservationist, a local vocational agriculture teacher, and a representative of the Natural Resources District should assume responsibility of organizing and planning a county contest. The County Extension Agent will normally serve as chairman, but any member of the committee can be elected to serve as chairman.

Area Contest

Seven areas within the state have been set up for holding range judging contests (see Figure 1).

The state range judging committee recommends host counties for area contests. Counties desiring to host an area contest are encouraged to contact a member of the state committee before its annual meeting.

The area contest committee will include the following representatives from the host county: (1) county Extension agent, (2) SCS district conservationist, (3) vocational agriculture teacher, and (4) a representative of the Natural Resources District. An invitation to hold an area contest will be extended to these individuals by the state range judging contest chairman and upon acceptance will comprise the area committee.

The County Extension Agent will initiate and call the first meeting at which time a committee chairman will be selected.

To host a range judging contest, the following steps are suggested:

1. Finalize the decision to hold a contest with the contest committee.
2. Establish the contest date as early as possible and no later than March 1.
3. Plan the details of the contest.
4. Publicize the event through schools, 4-H clubs, and mass media.
5. Conduct the contest as planned.
6. Evaluate procedures for the contest committees for the following year.

The county or area contest committees may add additional members as needed. Extension Range Management Specialists and SCS Range Conservationist may be available for help in site selection and official judging.

State Contest

The dates and places of the State Range Judging Contest for two succeeding years are set by the state range judging committee at its annual meeting. The state contest committee consists of the host county Extension agent, the Soil Conservation Service district conservationist, a vocational agriculture teacher, and a representative of the Natural Resources District. The County Extension Agent is normally the committee chairman, but other members *may be elected* to this position. The division of vocational education will designate

a vocational agriculture teacher if more than one is located in the host county. Other individuals may be selected for planning a contest if needed.

The Extension Range Management Specialist(s) and the Soil Conservation Service State Range Conservationist will help select and prepare the contest site and participate in the official judging.

Other Contests

Regional contests involving several states are held each year. The International Land, Pasture and Range Judging Contest is held each year at Oklahoma City. The Old West Regional Commission, which consists of Nebraska, Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota sponsors a regional range judging contest each year. The first two contests were hosted by South Dakota in 1976 and Nebraska in 1977. The contest will be rotated among the five states in a clockwise manner; Wyoming 1978, Montana 1979 and North Dakota 1980.

Contest Assignments & Responsibility

The contest committee should designate responsibilities and make assignments to carry out the many details of the event. It is essential that each person clearly understands his or her duties and that coordination exists among everyone involved. Responsibilities may be assigned to anyone within or outside the committee. However, priorities are suggested for the following assignments to specific agencies and organizations. Questions on contest assignments and responsibilities should be referred to the chairman of the state range judging committee.

Assignment	Responsibility
Publicity, Registration, Finance and Refreshments	Contest Committee Chairman, County Extension Agent, FFA teacher, Natural Resources District Personnel
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notify 4-H members (through County Agent), vocational agriculture students, (through FFA teachers), SCS field offices and Natural Resources Districts about details of the contest. 2. Contact media (radio, TV, newspapers) to publicize contest. 3. Order scorecards and range condition guide for contestants. Two copies of scorecard "A" should be ordered for each contestant if the first card is to be picked up after Station 2 for scoring. 4. Record the name, address and contestant number for each participant. 5. Distribute the scorecards. 6. Collect registration fee to cover contest expenses (printing, postage, scorecards and awards). 7. Provide refreshments or lunch after contest while tabulations are being made. 	
Field Site Preparation	Soil Conservation Service-USDA and/or University of Nebraska Range Specialists.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Select field site for contest and obtain permission from the landowner or operator to hold contest. 2. Prepare field site for the contest: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify and number plants for identification. b. Enclose range site boundaries with lath and cord. Dig hole to indicate soil characteristics (depth, texture, water table, etc.). c. Prepare a ranch map, including improvement practices for Station 8. d. Prepare questions for Station 8. 3. Prepare official scorecards. 4. Explain contest rules and scorecards at the contest site and designate a field timer. 	
Field Operations	Natural Resources District personnel and individuals appointed to specific tasks by contest committee.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Transportation - Determine best route to contest site, arrange for transportation, supervise parking at contest site, guard safety of contestants and provide guide for latecomers to contest site. 2. Group leaders - Guide contestants from station to station at contest site and discourage talking and copying among contestants. One guide is required per group. 3. Runners - Collect scorecards at contest site and transport to scorers. Two or more runners are needed to bring cards in after half the plant identification; following remainder of plant identification and at the end of contest. 4. Station judges - One judge should be at each station for contest supervision, to explain ranch map problem, to give questions, and to provide post contest explanation. 	

Assignment	Responsibility
5. Timer and field contest official - Preside over the field contest activities and act as timer to coordinate moving of contestants from station to station. This individual should be located so the entire contest can be viewed and should be equipped with an amplifier so he can be heard.	
Scoring and Tabulation	State Department of Vocational Education, Vocational Agriculture Instructors and County Extension Agents.
1. Determine how many scorers and tabulators are needed and arrange for their help. The number of scorers will vary from 8-20 depending on time available and number of contestants.	
2. An official scorer should be designated to rule on questionable answers.	
3. Grade and score each contestant's paper and determine the winners in each division. Official scorecards are provided by field site preparation personnel.	
4. Prepare a summary of ratings.	
Awards	Nebraska Section, Society for Range Management; Natural Resources District; other organizations for special awards.
1. Provide ribbon awards for area and state contests.	
2. Arrange for special awards, i.e., plaques, books, etc.	
3. Arrange for presentation of awards after contest.	
4. Provide entertainment or educational program to occupy contestants after contest until awards are presented.	

Preparing and Conducting a Range Judging Contest

Range judging contests are to be based on information found in the "Range Judging Handbook."

Selecting the Contest Site

The exact contest site must be selected far enough in advance of the contest that it can be prepared before the contest. The SCS Range Conservationist on the contest committee normally will take the lead in selecting the contest site. He will be familiar with the different range sites used in range judging, their condition, and degree of use.

Select a site that is readily available on an all-weather road and reasonably close to facilities for registration, scoring, and tabulation. It should

include two or three common range sites in the area. If possible, select a site that has not been grazed by the time of the contest for the plant identification portion of the contest. The portion of the contest on range sites may include grazed range.

A range judging contest normally includes eight stations. The first four stations are used for plant identification and evaluation. At each of the next three stations, the range site will be identified, the range condition judged, and degree of use estimated. At the last station, the ranch map will be explained for which possible treatment on Scorecard B will be based. Questions will also be asked at Station 8. All stations must be close enough together to permit contestants to walk between locations within two or three minutes.

Choose range sites in any range condition class. Make sure, however, that they fall well within the middle of the condition class you wish the contestants to select.

Plant Identification Site Preparation (Stations 1-4)

At each of the four plant identification stations, six range plants must be present and suitable for contestants to identify. Each plant should be marked by a numbered tag or stake. A total of 24 plants are normally tagged. Clipping other plants from around the specimens to be identified may be necessary. A minimum distance of 10 feet between plants to be identified is suggested. One line of plants for identification will be needed for each 40 contestants. If more than one set of plants are used, lath and twine should be used to form "lanes" delineating the line of plants. Plants in each line should be in the same sequence. All plants included for identification and evaluation in range judging contests must be selected from the publication, "Range Judging Handbook."

It is desirable for the plants marked for identification to be growing naturally on the contest site. However, in some situations it may be necessary to transplant some individual plants to avoid scattering the contestants over too large an area. Grazing response is based on the kind of range site on which each contest plant is located.

Range Site Preparation (Stations 5-7)

At each location for determining range site, range condition, and degree of use, areas about 20 x 20 feet should be delineated with lath and twine. A hole should be dug on the plot boundary to indicate soil and site characteristics. An acid bottle (0.1% HCl solution) should be provided for contestants to check for soil lime. On ungrazed sites, degree of use can be manipulated by clipping vegetation to attain a desired degree of utilization. Only range sites described in the publication "Range Judging Handbook" can be used for a contest.

Ranch Plan and Questions (Station 8)

A ranch map which portrays different ranch features and conditions which can be viewed by contestants to determine what range improvement should be made can be sketched on a piece of paper or cardboard. The problem should include natural situations found common to the range area

where the contest is located, whenever possible. The problem may be supplemented with hypothetical additions. The correct answer for full use on Scorecard B will be based on degree of use, length of grazing season, stocking rate tables, or on other information given at the contest site.

Questions on range management for Scorecard B can be given orally or handed out on paper. All questions must be based on information contained in the "Range Judging Handbook."

Grading and Scoring

Grading scorecards is made easier by preparing cutout overlays that have been properly scored. Scorers should work in groups of two. One grades and scores the sheet while the other checks it to see that no errors were made. The number of pairs of scorers needed will depend upon the size of the contest. Scores for the contest should be based on the following:

Card A:

Part I — 5 points for each correct plant name, and one point for each of the three characteristics considered. Season of growth will be graded only for grass and grasslike plants.

Card B:

Part II — 20 points for selecting each correct range site.

Part III — 20 points for selecting each correct range condition.

Part IV — 10 points for selecting each correct degree of use.

Part V — 5 points for each correct practice selected.

Part VI — 5 points for each correct answer.

The total number of points will be flexible, depending upon the number of plants, range sites, and treatments required. Contest officials may give partial credit to borderline answers in Parts II, III, and IV, providing this is agreed upon before the contest and clearly marked on the scoring keys.

Conducting the Contest

Before the contest begins, an explanation of the scorecards and rules to be followed should be made. The general contest rules should be covered. Contest officials may provide practice judging

sessions or expanded discussion sessions for contestants before the contest.

Group leaders should be thoroughly instructed as to the order their groups will visit the various contest stations. A contest plan suitable for large contests including 8 stations and 4 groups is shown in Table 1. Stations should be numbered and clearly marked.

Contestants will complete the plant identification and evaluation section using Scorecard A before proceeding to the latter part of the contest. After all contestants have turned in Scorecard A to their group leaders, each contestant will be provided an appropriate range condition guide. This guide is to be used only in conjunction with Scorecard B.

The contest committee will be responsible for providing the range condition guides. On Scorecard B, kind of range site, range condition, and degree of use will be based on plots roped off for this purpose. Questions should be given to each group at the final station.

Ten minutes will normally be sufficient time to allow contestants at each station. Each group must stay together and move to a new location when instructed to do so. If questions are used at Station 8, additional time must be allowed for this activity.

A full explanation of the correct answers on both scorecards should be made following the contest, after the scorecards have been collected. Scorecards are not returned to contestants.

Table 1. Judging schedule for large contests. Letters refer to groups of contestants.

Time Period	Plants 1-6 STATION 1	Plants 7-12 STATION 2	Plants 13-18 STATION 3	Plants 19-24 STATION 4	Range Site Use Condition STATION 5	Range Site Use Condition STATION 6	Range Site Use Condition STATION 7	Treatment STATION 8
First	A	B	C	D				
Second	Bx	Ax	Dx	Cx				
Third	C	D	A	B				
Fourth	Dx	Cx	Bx	Ax				
Fifth					A	B	C	D
Sixth					B	C	D	A
Seventh					C	D	A	B
Eighth*					Dx	Ax	Bx	Cx

x Pick up score sheets.

* If questions (Section 9) are used, they should be given to each group simultaneously during the eighth period.

Contest Divisions

Whenever possible and feasible, each range judging contest should have separate divisions for 4-H, FFA, adults, and professional. However, where number of participants is limited, divisions may be grouped together. For example, youth, adult, and professional divisions can be used to include all contestants.

Contest Rules and Regulations

Teams may enter the 4-H or FFA division along with individual competition. A team will be composed of either three or four contestants with the high three individual scores used as the team score. Teams must be designated at time of registration.

Contestants from one area range judging contest may not compete for awards in another area unless approved by the State Range Judging Committee. Contestants should not make use of bulletins, notes, books, or drawings while judging. Talking, copying, or comparing scores during the contest is prohibited. Contestants can be disqualified for breaking contest rules.

Contestants may compete in only one division. Any number of teams or individuals may participate from a 4-H Club or FFA Chapter in the county, area, and state contest.

Training in range judging should be given before entering the teams or individuals in a contest. This will assure that the contest will be a worthwhile experience.

4-H Division

To be eligible to compete in the 4-H division, the individual must be currently enrolled in 4-H.

Only one 4-H team is eligible to compete in the Oklahoma Invitational Contest. If the first place team is ineligible or unable to attend, the next alternate team will receive the invitation to represent the state. To represent Nebraska in the Oklahoma Land, Pasture and Range Judging Contest, all members of the team must be at least 12 years of age and not over 19 on January 1 of the current year. To participate in the Old West Regional Judging Contest, all members of the team must be at least 14 years of age. Only one 4-H team from each county can enter.

Members of a team, including the alternate, who have represented the state in a regional or national contest may no longer compete in the 4-H division.

FFA Division

Graduation from high school eliminates FFA members from competition in the youth division. Thereafter, they must compete in the adult division. *Only one* FFA team may represent the state in the Oklahoma Land, Pasture and Range Judging Contest. If the first place team is unable to participate, the first alternate team becomes eligible. The alternate on the winning team whose score was not included in the team total is eligible for further competition in the FFA Division.

Adult Division

Contestants in the adult division will compete as individuals only. Men and women compete in the same division. In the adult division, an individual may win the top award in the state contest only once. Upon winning the top award, that person is eligible to participate in the professional division in subsequent county, area, or state contests. There is no limitation on the number of times an individual may win the professional division at any contest.

Professional Division

Men and women can compete in the professional division. Staff members of the Soil Conservation Service, University of Nebraska, Division of Vocational Education, Farmers Home Administration, Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Army Corps of Engineers, Federal Fish and Wildlife Service, Natural Resources Districts, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission, and other related agencies are considered eligible only for the professional division.

Awards

The Nebraska Section of the Society for Range Management will order and provide the ribbon awards for winners of the contest. The cost of ribbons will be covered from contest registration fees.

Ribbons are to be awarded on the following basis:

1. Purple ribbons to 1% of contestants.
2. Blue ribbons to 2% of contestants.
3. Red ribbons to 4% of contestants.
4. White ribbons to 10% of contestants.

Additional awards (plaques, books, etc.) may be presented by organizations such as the Old West Regional Range Program, Natural Resources Districts or other groups who want to recognize winning teams and individuals.

The entire contest should be planned and organized so that contestants will not only gain valuable knowledge about rangeland, but also enjoy the experience.

NEBRASKA RANGE JUDGING

Contestant Number _____

Score Station 1 & 2 _____

Score Station 3 & 4 _____

Part 1 Plant Identification and Evaluation

Score Part I _____

Station 1 Write name of plant

Check one in each division

	NAME OF PLANT	Life Span		Season of Growth		Grazing Response		
		Perennial	Annual	Cool	Warm	Decreaser	Increaser	Invader
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								

Station 2

7								
8								
9								
10								
11								
12								

Station 3 Write name of plant

Check one in each division

	NAME OF PLANT	Life Span		Season of Growth		Grazing Response		
		Perennial	Annual	Cool	Warm	Decreaser	Increaser	Invader
13								
14								
15								
16								
17								
18								

Station 4

19								
20								
21								
22								
23								
24								

Score	_____
Score II, III, IV	_____
Score V, VI	_____
Total	_____
Station	_____

Section II, Range Sites	5	6	7
1. WET LAND—Poorly drained, Water table within 36 inches of soil surface.			
2. SUBIRRIGATED—Water table within 10-60 inches of surface during major part of growing season.			
3. SALINE SUBIRRIGATED—Subirrigated lands affected by salt accumulations.			
4. SILTY OVERFLOW—Receive additional water from stream overflow or run-in.			
5. SANDS—Loamy sands and sands on nearly level to rolling slopes.			
6. SANDY—Fine sandy loams to loamy sands on nearly level to gently rolling slopes.			
7. SILTY—Loams, silt loams, and silts on nearly level to rolling slopes.			
8. CLAYEY—Clay loams, silty clay loams, and clays.			
9. CHOPPY SANDS—Sands on steep, irregular slopes.			
10. LIMY UPLAND—Sandy loams, silt loams, loams, and silty clay loams. Calcareous (Limy) in the surface soil.			
11. SHALLOW—All soils 0-20 inches deep over rock, shale, or coarse gravel.			
12. THIN LOESS—Silt loams on very steep, rough broken slopes.			

1. EXCELLENT—76% - 100% climax vegetation, mostly decreaser plants.			
2. GOOD—51 - 75% climax vegetation, some decreaser plants with increaser plants more common.			
3. FAIR—26-50% climax vegetation, mostly increaser plants, some invaders.			
4. POOR—0 - 25% climax vegetation, mostly low growing plants and invaders.			

1. UNUSED—No livestock use.			
2. SLIGHT—1 to 20% of primary forage plants grazed. Practically undisturbed.			
3. MODERATE—21 - 40% use of primary forage plants. Most of the range being grazed. Little or no use of poor plants.			
4. FULL—41-60% use of primary forage plants. All of the range being grazed. Little or no use of poor plants.			
5. CLOSE—61-80% use of primary forage plants. All of the range shows use and major sections are closely grazed. Some use of low value plants.			
6. SEVERE—81 - 100% use of primary forage plants. Low value plants carrying the grazing load.			
7. EXTREME—Appears stripped of all vegetation.			

Station 8

1. For full use (check one):
 - (a) Decrease stocking rate
 - (b) Increase stocking rate
 - (c) Keeping stocking rate the same.
2. For more uniform use and range improvement (Check as many as apply).
 - (a) Install or relocate well
 - (b) Build livestock dam or dugout
 - (c) Relocate fence
 - (d) Divide pasture (cross fence)
 - (e) Change salting locations
 - (f) Reseed specific areas
 - (g) Control blowouts
 - (h) Control brush or weeds
 - (i) Contour furrowing or pitting
3. For help in range improvement (Match the correct deferment to practices above under part 2).
 - (a) Defer part of growing season
 - (b) Defer one growing season
 - (c) Defer two or more growing seasons

Indicate answer by placing correct letter in space below the question number.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----