



## Guidelines for 4-H Working Steer Show Judges

**4-H Philosophy** - Judges who judge 4-H shows should understand the major emphasis of the project should be on the member and secondarily on the animal. A judge should have thorough understanding that the objective of the 4-H working steer project is the knowledge and skills the member has gained through the training and care of project animal rather than the quality of the animal.

**Knowledge of Working Steers and Show Rules** - Judges need the ability to observe, compare, and evaluate, arriving at a decision within a reasonable length of time. This requires knowledge of working steers, show procedures and rules.

Judging 4-H shows can be a very rewarding experience. As a judge you have the opportunity to contribute in a positive way to the 4-H member's total project experience. By following a few simple guidelines you can maximize the positive impact on youth while minimizing the problems that might be encountered when judging.

### PRIOR TO THE SHOW

- Confirm your willingness to judge the show as soon as you can following your invitation to judge.
- Should you be unable to judge for any reason, contact the person who hired you as soon as possible. If it is close to the show date, some names of judges who could possibly take your place would probably be very much appreciated.
- Meet the superintendent ½ hour prior to the show for a briefing. At this time you can clarify any questions you may have regarding the rules you were sent prior to the show (If you didn't get these, ask). If the superintendent doesn't mention any special circumstances regarding any of the exhibitors, you should ask. It's important for you to know if you are judging children with any physical or mental challenges.
- Clarify with the superintendent the time frame for the show and pace yourself accordingly.
- Let the superintendent know your travel plans and mode of transportation; be sure they understand any special needs you might have for ground transportation, lodging, etc.

### DURING THE SHOW

- Cattle need to be in working condition; teamster should be attentive to judge and team; teamster, team, and equipment are expected to be clean.
- You place the classes to the best of your ability. You should be consistent throughout the judging process.
- Should you have any questions during a class regarding anything, including animal or youth eligibility of the class, it's your responsibility to discuss the question with the superintendent. The superintendent determines eligibility.
- Be alert to any situation that might give the impression of animal mishandling.
- **You should regard youth shows as educational experiences and yourself the teacher.** Maintaining a positive, supportive relationship with the exhibitors is important. Show persons need a supportive, encouraging environment.
- As a judge, you will want to place emphasis on those things over which the youth have the most control; this will vary with the age of the child.

- Be sure the exhibitors pay close attention to you and their team and do what you ask of them. They should keep their eye on you and never turn their back to you while in the ring.
- You may ask questions of the youth to find out the extent of their knowledge on their 4-H project. Some questions that may be asked are:
  - What breed is your team?*
  - How much does your team weigh?*
  - What is the expected mature weight of your team?*
  - Can you tell me what this part of the animal is called? (Point to body part)*
  - Can you tell me where (body part) is?*
  - How old is your team?*
  - What kind of wood is your yoke/bows made out of?*
  - What do you feed your team?*
- Constantly monitor the attitude and attentiveness of the exhibitor. Watch for the youth's ability to exhibit self-control even if their animals are acting out of control or poorly in the ring. Brute force should never be used in the showing ring to get the animals attention.
- A show person must remember that he or she is at a fair to present a team of working steers to the judge and also for the public. Teamsters should be on their best behavior at all times. (No horse play around the barns or cattle). This will help to prevent scaring the cattle and will present working steer 4-H members in a positive manner. Youth should encourage and congratulate their fellow teamsters on a job well done in cart, drag and other classes to exhibit good sportsmanship.
- The judge has the responsibility of speaking to each individual youth exhibitor personally. At that time, specific praise and constructive suggestions can be given. You should give each youth exhibitor some positive comments during this interaction. Leave each exhibitor with one parting compliment.
- You as the judge should give oral reasons for each class you place (depending upon the policy of the show) Reasons should be brief, meaningful, accurate and contain good terms delivered in a sincere, clear, manner.
- Positive statements for each animal should be given during the reasons process; constructive suggestions or criticism should be given individually during the class to each exhibitor rather than publicly through oral reasons. Speak clearly over the microphone.
- You will place the youth according to the Danish system. Exhibitors are individually scored on the basis of their performance. Participants don't compete against each other, rather they are judged as to how close they come to a perfect performance. Their animal is evaluated as to how close it comes to the ideal. Every child who meets the criteria for a blue award receives one. Every child meeting the criteria for a red award receives one and the same is true for a white award. You may have a class where every youth meets the blue award criteria; in that case each child would receive a blue ribbon. It is important to evaluate all youth in a consistent manner.
- In a situation where no youth achieves the criteria established for a blue ribbon, no blue ribbon is awarded. A blue ribbon indicates achievement of 90 - 100% of a perfect score, a red ribbon indicates achievement of 80-89% of a perfect score, and a white ribbon indicates achievement of 79% or less.
- Communicate clearly with ring clerks to assist them in properly recording placings.
- The judges should make themselves available to the exhibitors following the show for a short time to answer questions from the exhibitors.
- Above all, be friendly, talk to the exhibitors, smile and put them at ease. The outstanding 4-H judge has a sincere interest in helping youth and act like they care. This attitude is reflected by the judge's mannerism and communication style.

May, 2005