



## Expectations: 4-H Judges and Staff

County fair can be a time  
For the depths of despair or the heights of sublime!  
Preparing ahead is important for you  
regardless of your role or what you do.  
Think ahead - play it smart  
Know what's expected right from the start.  
Anonymous

### What Staff Expects of Judges:

- Attend training for Judges.
- Let staff know you are interested and available, your preferences for age levels and subject matters. If you are new to the area, knowing your previous experiences and who you've worked with is helpful.
- Respond promptly when you are asked to judge. If you're not available staff appreciate hearing your suggestions for other judges.
- Read all material provided in advance. Become thoroughly familiar with local fair book.
- Communicate in advance or during the judging process if you have questions, problems or need clarification.
- Utilize superintendents and/or helpers as questions arise.
- Be assertive enough to handle difficult situations if necessary.
- Arrive on time with materials provided in advance.
- Be friendly and courteous to helpers and 4-H members.
- Use the guidelines on interview judging to involve members. Be sure to identify both good points and those which need improving. Offer suggestions for further improvement and exploration of the subject. Use the sandwich method by giving a positive comment, a building comment or two and then a positive comment. Avoid absolute criticisms. Never use the phrase, "You would have had a blue if . . ."
- Consider each youth individually. Encourage member evaluation of their own work. Offer constructive suggestions for improvement.
- Help other judges if necessary, if qualified.



- Keep state fair exhibits in mind throughout the judging process so selection can be done quickly and more easily at the end.
- Stay until all of your work is done.
- Check-out with Extension staff before you leave.
- Turn in mileage, bills, hours promptly.
- After the fair, take time to give Extension staff feedback on improvements needed for next year. It's nice to hear when things go well, too!

## **What Judges' Can Expect of Staff**

- Make at least three contacts with the judges:
  - Invitation to judge.
  - Sending the fair list/fair book and other information.
  - Briefing the judge before the evaluation begins.
- Notify judge of dates, arrival time, what to judge, how judging is done, what age categories, what ribbons/placing are used and what is expected for state fair exhibits.
- Be specific about pay - how much and what is included.
- Have supplies and materials on hand. Furnish adequate tools and/or equipment for judges' use (for example: a sharp knife, cutting board, etc.)
- Be as considerate as possible of the day's scheduling to optimize learning of youth.
- Determine eligibility and/or appropriate classes for exhibits if questions arise.
- Take care of interfering parents or leaders as problems arise. Support the judge.
- Provide as comfortable of a place to judge as possible.
- Maintain open communication. Don't be afraid to admit making a mistake.
- Be fair and consistent with judges. Smile!
- Give judges freedom to consult or share with others if necessary. They can't know everything.

Adapted from: Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa State University of Science and Technology for use during the 1999 4-H Judges' Training, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension.