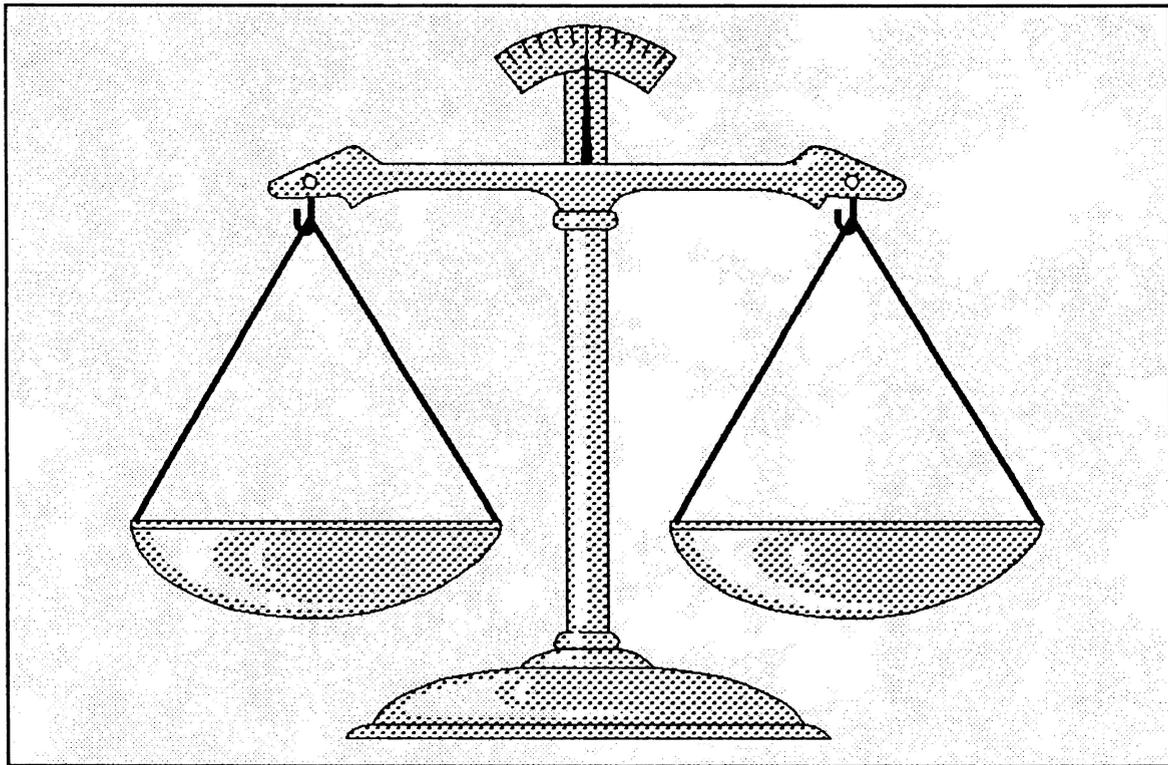


Learning Through Judging

4-H LEADER GUIDE



LEARNING THROUGH JUDGING

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The objective of judging in the 4-H program is to help 4-H members grow in their analytical, decision making and communication skills.

JUDGING TERMS

Items - the individual objects to be judged within a class.

Standard class - four items that make up a group to be compared and ranked.

Class placing - the rank of items from best to worst.

Oral reasons - verbal explanation of placings, sometimes limited to one or two classes.

Written reasons - written explanation of placings, sometimes limited to one or two classes.

Registration card - card filled out by participants of judging events.

Score card - card on which member marks placings.

Hormel scoring - a system of scoring judging classes developed by George Hormel Company.

Grants - a means of saying (when giving oral or written reasons) I "realize or recognize" that the second place item has some factors that are better than the first-place item.

"To Make the Best Better" is the 4-H motto. How do we know what is best? How can we learn to make something better unless we learn

standards and develop the ability to make wise decisions. Every experience which helps us make wise decisions enriches our lives. Good judgment is based on proper information and ability to make wise decisions.

To present a broad scope of judging, we will answer five big questions in the following sections.

WHAT IS JUDGING?

Judging is making a decision and telling why it was made. Seldom a day goes by that you do not have decisions to make. When you buy groceries you must constantly choose between brands while considering quality, size, end use, and cost. How carefully we select the apples from a grocery shelf! And also consider the many decisions involved in the selection of an automobile! In 4-H, judging is essentially a matter of comparing two or more items. If 4-H members know what factors make up an ideal animal, plant, or situation, they are more able to recognize top quality products, to know good standards, and to make wise decisions based on facts.

WHY HAVE JUDGING IN 4-H?

Judging is a valuable teaching technique for the 4-H leader. It provides another way for leaders to present project information to the 4-H members. Judging can be used by leaders to stimulate interest in a subject or as an incentive to motivate better work.

Judging teaches 4-H members to:

- Observe carefully
- Recognize good products, articles, animals
- Improve their own work
- Make wise decisions
- Express themselves clearly
- Appreciate opinions of others

FOUR STEPS IN JUDGING PROCESS

- Observe
- Examine within pairs, compare
- Decide how the class is to be placed.
- Tell why and justify class placing.

HOW TO BEGIN THE JUDGING EXPERIENCE

Judging training can start as soon as project meetings begin. Successful judging depends on knowledge of the product or animal to be judged. With this in mind, it is easy to see that the basis for judging starts when the leader begins teaching members about the products they are making or growing. Judging training needs to come at the beginning of the projects so members may use this knowledge in selecting materials or animals for their projects. It should be a continuous learning process used often during the year.

Before 4-H'ers can learn to evaluate or judge their products, they must know something about standards and quality. Members are ready to compare when they become familiar with the characteristics of a product, know the terms that describe it, and have some idea of what a good product really is.

Let's use pencils as an example. Before deciding whether one is better than another, we need to know what a good pencil looks like. Some might like brightly colored ones; others might like them pale. Some might like king size ones, others might like them very small. But all can agree on several basic characteristics, such as a good eraser, a sharp point and at least 7 inches in length. At this point a person can use a score card to select the best looking pencil.

Score cards or score sheets are available in most of the 4-H project materials so members can study characteristics of a good product.

Other ways 4-H'ers can study standards and quality are:

- Read project materials. Study and discuss facts in your project bulletins. List the important qualities mentioned.
- Study pictures. Use pictures from magazines to help members select desirable qualities. In some projects, like dairy cattle, you can get pictures made especially to teach judging.
- Discuss sample products. Have members bring samples of a predetermined item made or grown to a club meeting. Have them compare their items with the characteristics of a good product. Discuss ways they might improve their items the next time.
- Attend exhibit days. 4-H'ers may have an opportunity to watch a judge make his or her placing on exhibit days or at fairs and shows. Encourage members to listen to the comments so they can understand how exhibit placings are made.
- Take tours and trips. Visit farms, stores, and processing plants. Ask the people in charge what they consider when judging their products.

HOW DO WE TEACH JUDGING SKILLS?

Judging activities are teaching tools that can be used at 4-H meetings. For the younger member or for those inexperienced in evaluation, you might want to use the Voting Game or the Group Leader Method.

Voting Game

The voting game is a good way for you to begin judging quality. Two samples of an item, labeled 1 and 2, are placed on a table. The leader reads each characteristic from the score card and members vote for either 1 or 2. When each point on the score card has been voted upon, the scores are tallied and the

results announced.

Group Leader Method

Judging in a group is another good way to learn. By working in a group, you gain confidence in your opinions. The group chooses a leader but everyone works together. The group members discuss one article or a class of articles informally. The group decides how the article should be rated and discusses reasons for the choice. Members learn from each other, sharing in the success when the rating is correct and in the responsibility when it is wrong. The group leader makes notes and reports group decisions and reasons, emphasizing the important points and correcting any errors.

Individual Judging

When members have become more skilled in judging, have them try it on their own. Steps they would take include:

1. Study the score card. Before attempting to judge a product, study the score card that applies. Score cards have been developed for many 4-H projects. If a score card does not exist, discuss major characteristics and the importance of each. It is not necessary to memorize the score card. Rather it is important to know which characteristics to compare and which are the most significant. For example, the main headings on a vegetable score card are: quality, 35 points; condition, 35 points; size and uniformity, 30 points. Quality refers to factors occurring during growth of the vegetable.

Condition refers to factors occurring during or after harvest, and uniformity and size means specimens should be alike; oversized or undersized specimens are less desirable.

2. Judge one article. Use the information found on a score sheet and apply it to a product. Evaluating a single item or animal early in the project would be time well spent before setting up a full class.
3. Judge a class of four items. Remember that judging is a comparative process using a set of predetermined standards.

- *Observe.* Get an overall feeling of the class. Look for something that stands out—easy, top or bottom, or a class that divides itself clearly into a top and bottom pair. This helps narrow the class and gives a mental picture that will help as reasons are given.
- *Examine and compare.* Check each item individually. Placings may be confirmed or changed upon closer examination. Handle the products, if permitted, to help discover finer points or quality.
- *Decide.* Make a final decision on placing of the items.
- *Tell why.* Take notes to prepare for those classes that require oral reasons.

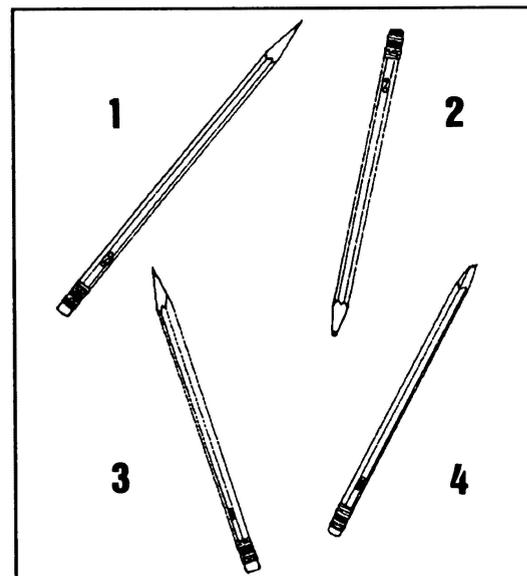


Figure 1. Ranking a class of four pencils on the placing card.

Now Let's Try It

The items within a class are designated by numbers 1-2-3-4. The members examine the items and decide which one they think is best, second best, third, and least satisfactory.

The articles in any class should vary enough in quality so that a definite placing is possible. However, there may not always be the same amount of difference between any two articles in the class.

When preparing a class, it is good to have a

fairly obvious top or bottom or a fairly wide division between them.

As an example, a member might judge a class of pencils (see Figure 1). The member compares the four and decides that No. 2 is best, 3 is second best, 1 is third, and 4 is least satisfactory. She or he ranks these 2-3-1-4 and marks the appropriate place on the placing card.

EXAMPLE OF 4-H JUDGING PLACING CARD

Mark your placing with an X



Judging

Breed

Class

Name or Number

Reason Score

				score
1	2	3	4	
1	2	4	3	
1	3	2	4	
1	4	2	3	
1	4	3	2	
2	1	3	4	
2	1	4	3	
2	3	1	4	
2	3	4	1	
3	1	2	4	
3	1	4	2	
3	2	1	4	
3	2	4	1	
3	4	1	2	
3	4	2	1	
4	1	2	3	
4	2	1	3	
4	2	3	1	
4	3	1	2	
4	3	2	1	

This is an example of a 4-H Judging placing card. Some project areas such as consumerama, forestry, and land appreciation use different scoring systems. This card is available in four colors to assist with the management of the contest. Contact your Extension office for more information and assistance.

WHAT SHOULD BE JUDGED?

Articles the members make in their projects are suitable items to judge. Choosing equipment for grooming a calf or for a sewing box, measuring flour by various methods, or selecting patterns or fabric are examples of judging activities for project meetings. You also might judge purchased items that were selected for a specific purpose. Consider the purpose and all the requirements needed. Then check each article to see how it meets these requirements. Check labels for information, compare costs, and consider time and other resources used. For other ideas, refer to project leader's guides for specific projects.

As you help 4-H'ers observe and compare articles, encourage them to use all five senses.

- *Feel* the back of a calf or the texture of a sponge cake.
- *Taste* pickles, cake, or cookies.
- *Listen* to a sewing machine, mower, or tractor.
- *Smell* a loaf of bread fresh from the oven.
- *See* the color of a hen's comb.

QUESTIONS ON CLASSES JUDGED

Questions (up to 10) may be asked of the contestants about the classes being judged. Questions should be made up by the official judges while observing the classes. Such things as which is the best (or worst) item in the class for a particular characteristic make good questions.

Questions may be typed on paper and handed to the contestants so that they look at the class while they answer questions. Questions can also be asked orally. When this is done, it is usually after all contestants have judged the class. They review notes taken in the class prior to answering the questions.

With either format, questions allow contestants to be scored on their ability to observe differences between items. It is a step between only ranking classes and giving oral reasons on these classes.

GIVING REASONS

Giving reasons (why a class was placed a certain way) is probably more important than the actual placing. Giving reasons separates the lucky guessers from the good judges. Reasons can be oral, written, or both. Members probably learn more by giving reasons orally. If there is a limiting factor (such as time), written reasons may be given.

Giving reasons helps members to:

- Organize their thoughts.
- Learn to express themselves in a logical, convincing manner.
- Speak effectively
- Develop a system for analyzing a situation.
- Think more clearly on their feet.
- Improve their voices.
- Develop their memories.
- Develop poise and self-confidence.

Judging is comparing. When giving reasons, divide the class into three sets of pairs for comparison. For example, if the placing for the pencil class is 2-3-1-4, the pairing would look like figure 2.

How to Give Oral Reasons

Oral reasons are a way of telling someone why and how a class was placed. They include comparing the good points and the faults of a product. Beginning judges often may use a few notes, but more experienced members will want to talk from a mental image to logically and accurately defend the placing.

top pair	middle pair	bottom pair	
2	3	1	4

Figure 2. Pairing pencils by quality

1. Taking notes. It is impossible for anyone to remember all the details of a class; therefore, it is important to have members practice taking notes. Notes will help members recall

the visual image of the product or animal. A class of four divides itself into three pairs: a top pair, a middle pair, and a bottom pair. Members should use a note-taking system that is simplest for them.

Members need to look for big things first, then judge the whole product and not just a particular part--keeping the score card in mind. Notes should be brief. Remind members to use them only during rehearsal time while they wait to give reasons.

The ability to effectively express oneself is an important quality. How well thoughts are organized largely influences how well the thoughts are understood by the listener. A system of presenting reasons that is logical, clear, and easy to follow should be used. Since the class divides itself into a top, middle, and a bottom pair, the same basic procedure should be used to present each pair.

2. Style and form. Have members introduce the class--"I placed this class of pencils 2-3-1-4."

Top pair. General statement--have members start with the most important general points for placing this pair. For example, "In the top pair I placed 2 over 3 because it is a more perfect pencil with a full eraser and sharper lead."

Compare - Have members continue to add details which will aid in their comparisons. For example, "2 was a longer pencil than 3 and had a full eraser."

Grants - If the second place is superior in some respects, indicate the most important first. For example, "I will grant that 3 has a brighter color."

Middle pair. General statement -- "In my middle pair, I placed 3 over 1 because it has more eraser and a sharper lead."

Compare - "Pencil 3 is more functional."

Grants - "I will grant that 1 has softer lead than 3, but I criticize the large diameter of 1."

Bottom pair. General statement -- "I placed 1 over 4 because it is longer and more useful

than 4." I placed 4 last and at the bottom of the class because it has no eraser and is shorter and less useful. Therefore, I placed this class of pencils 2-3-1-4.

3. **Delivery.** Members should remember to speak clearly and convincingly when giving reasons. Avoid meaningless words such as "better," "I like," "that," "it," "for being," "kind of," and other words or phrases which add little to the reasoning. Use precise descriptions in telling the judge why one item is better than another. A summary or conclusion is not necessary. If members need one to let the judge know they are finished, they may simply state the placing. "The class was placed 2-3-1-4." The form for giving reasons can be easily acquired by practicing in the project meeting and at home. See judging guides for various project areas for details on reasons.

When presenting reasons to a judge, members should look at the judge at all times, talk at a rate of speed which is easily understood, and adjust their voice volume to the room or setting. A set of oral reasons in a judging contest should not exceed two minutes in length.

POINTS TO CONSIDER WHEN JUDGING REASONS

The following are points to be considered by the persons hearing oral reasons or reading written reasons. The percentage and breakdown are approximations and are intended to be used as guideposts.

1. **Accuracy and Thoroughness (60%)**
Recognized important differences, saw major strengths and weaknesses (the ability to determine the differences between pairs.)
2. **Use of Appropriate Terms (20%)**
Correct names and parts of idea or animal, proper comparative adjectives (differences between pairs).
3. **Presentation (10%)**
Oral: Clear, distinct voice, good language skills, poise and confidence, eye contact with judge, posture, grooming (hair combed or

brushed and neatly dressed)

Written: Legible, correct grammar and spelling.

4. **Organization of Reasons (10%)**
Introduction (important statements first, minor points at the end), logical order (comparison of classes or pairs), conclusion.

Score Reasons

The person scoring reasons (judge) listens to each member and decides how well the reasons have been explained. This judge puts the score on the placing card in the blank marked "Reasons." The total possible points for reasons is 50.

Members may use their placing cards, but not notes, when giving reasons to the judge.

The judge takes the following things into consideration when scoring reasons:

1. The member's ability to give accurate, clear cut comparisons which justify the placings.
2. The member's knowledge of the essential qualities and standards required in the class.
3. The member's organization of ideas and ability to state them in a clear-cut, brief manner.
4. The member's use of a varied, descriptive vocabulary and correct grammar.
5. General poise and confidence exhibited by the member.

An incorrect placing does *not* mean reasons will automatically be scored lower than if the placing was correct. If a member saw the class accurately and gave sound reasons for the placing, the member should not be penalized for giving importance to a different aspect of the item than the judge does.

THE HORMEL SCORING SYSTEM

The Hormel system is the most widely accepted system of scoring in the nation. It is the official system in Virginia and at national levels. Hormel is fair to the member, seldom has zero scores (less than 10 out of more than 4,000 scoring combinations), and is easy for the official judge to make more than one high or low "cut."

To use the system, first you read the brief instructions. The judge may make assessments of the seriousness of a wrong decision in placing each pair. The total assessment for wrong decisions or "cuts" between pairs can be as little as 3 or as much as 15.

The official judge assigns "cuts" to each class which are used for scoring purposes. Cuts are the degree of difficulty in making decisions about placing each pair of items. A cut is used to determine a member's score. There are three cuts given on each class. Depending on the difficulty of placings between pairs, cuts may run from 1 or 2 for a difficult placing to as high as 6 or 7 for an easy placing. Again, using pencils as an example, the placing is 2-3-1-4; the cuts are 3-3-6. These cuts would indicate that the top and middle pair of pencils are fairly close. The cut of 6 between the bottom pair of pencils 1 and 4 would indicate an easy placing that was very obvious.

If a member placed the class 2-3-1-4, a score of 50 would be given. However, if the member placed them 2-1-3-4, the score would be 47 based on the Hormel computing slide.

The Hormel computing slide can be purchased from George A. Hormel & Co., Corporate Offices, Austin, MN. 55912, for a cost of \$8 to \$10 each. Hormel computing slides can also be purchased from NASCO, 901 Janesville, Ave., Fort Atkinson, WI 53538.

ORGANIZING A 4-H JUDGING EVENT

Advanced Preparation

- Get ready to judge ahead of time.
- Establish a committee to handle the details of the event. The size of the committee will vary

depending upon how large your judging contest will be.

Committee Composition

Chairperson. Appoint a person to take charge of the event. This may be a leader or a teen leader. The person should have the ability to organize and guide others.

Publicity. Inform all clubs of the event several weeks in advance. Put the notice in your local county 4-H newsletter, local papers, and contact the local radio stations, cable and commercial TV stations.

Class selection and development. Organize a group of leaders and teens to develop and select classes and identify people (resources to be used for official judges, leaders, parents, or teens) who could prepare the classes. This group sets up the classes with four items. Make the differences fairly obvious. The items in each class should be marked by numbers, 1, 2, 3, 4. The numbers should be fastened to each item securely. For example, a teen leader could prepare a class of (1) breads with four differing degrees of quality, or (2) a member in an automotive project could bring together four different screwdrivers--again, of varying degrees of quality.

Another responsibility for this group is official placings in all the classes. These placings should be on the day of the event at the same time the contestants are judging the classes.

Make up the official card (complete with cuts) and give to the tabulating committee. The official judge may be a leader, a teen leader, a program leader, or an outside resource person, and should be prepared to fully explain all placings, answer any questions asked, and help with the oral reasons class.

Facilities. Prepare ample room in the judging area and free it of as many distractions as possible. If you have more than one judging contest going on at the same time, you may wish to use rooms, buildings, and judging rings. For example, place Home Economics, Engineering, and Plant Science in a building and arrange a large outside area for a Livestock or Horse contest. Don't forget to plan parking, restroom facilities, drinking water, and lunches

restroom facilities, drinking water, and lunches (if the contest is more than a morning or afternoon event). Be sure the area is cleaned up following the event.

Day of the Event

Oral reasons and evaluation. The group is responsible for judging reasons classes. One or more classes can be designated by the official judge as an oral or written reasons class. As an example, the following system could be used for oral reasons. The official judge should also hear and score oral reasons. The physical set-up for oral reasons could be a classroom. Each evaluator should be in a quiet room or office. Contestants come to the evaluator one at a time to give their reasons. The contestants need to be in the classroom in the order in which they give their reasons.

Group leaders (leaders, parents, and teens). Plan to divide the members into groups. Have one group leader for every 10 to 15 members. It is easiest to divide the members into as many groups as you have classes for them to judge. Each group can then rotate from one class to another. The class can be designated by a sign at each class; for example: Class I - Sheep, Class II - Beef, Class III - Swine, Class IV - Vegetables, Class V - Tools, Class VI - Feeds.

Group leaders should wear a large number or letter or colored arm band. They should answer the questions of the members, take the placing cards, give the cards to a runner, and help keep the members on schedule and prevent talking.

Runners. Leaders, parents, teens, or members can fulfill this role. Their responsibility is to take the individual placing cards to the tabulating committee.

Tabulating and awards. This subcommittee is responsible for designing and making judging packets, and tabulating the end results. To keep track of all participants, the committee should use a score sheet made ahead of time, to record the scores for individuals, to total individual and team scores, and record team and individual rankings. If the contest is small, fewer people are needed. Experience is helpful,

but a person who is accurate and can handle figures can be trained quickly. For very large contests, computer scoring for contests is possible.

Supplies. Plan to provide scoring cards as needed, as well as a number of adding machines (tape machine is preferred), pens, pencils, and erasers. **Double-check all work.** Mistakes can cause hard feelings. Plan to present awards following the event or at some other appropriate time. If possible take pictures of the winners and send them along with a complete list of all winners to local newspapers, radio stations, and TV stations. Don't forget to promote 4-H!

Complete results should be posted following the contest, or you may wish to send a copy of the results to all those who participated, or hand the results out to each club after the awards assembly.

Timer. One person is needed to time the classes and let the group know when they are to move. A public address system is helpful, especially in a large contest. Another means of moving people is a loud noise, such as a car horn, a whistle, or other loud noise. A member should have between 5 and 10 minutes to judge each class. Classes with reasons should be given more time (up to 15 minutes). If a group is small, members need not be on a time schedule. When finished with one class, a member could move to another. At a large event, members should be given some time at the end to finish writing their reasons.

Explanation of classes. These results should be discussed with all of the members. The judge should not reveal the official placings until the discussion of the class is complete. The judge may help the members arrive at a correct group placing by facilitating a discussion of each class.

After the Contest

Don't forget to say thanks to everyone who helped. This should be done the day of the contest, and you may wish to send follow-up letters to everyone who helped make the event successful.

JUDGING ETIQUETTE

1. Personal appearance counts!
 - Clean hands.
 - Tidy hair.
 - Clean clothing.
2. Remind members to handle all items or animals with care and leave each class as they found it.
3. Whispering or talking to other contestants is not allowed. Questions can be directed to the person in charge.
4. Give a signal to start judging.
5. Remind members to keep their eyes on their own judging card.
6. If a group of articles is judged, remind members to put each item back in the proper group after looking at it.

ROLE OF PARENTS

Parents can help their sons and daughters:

- Select better stock, seed, feed, or fabrics.
- See why certain products and methods are best.
- Go on tours, trips, participate in judging events.
- Have chances to make decisions and abide by them.
- Learn to choose what will give lasting satisfaction.

Parents can see that their sons and daughters are suitably dressed when going out with the club or entering a contest. Most important, they can support and accept the member's performance, whatever it may be.

4-H COMPETITION SPORTSMAN'S MOTTO

"Keep your head when you win and your heart when you lose."

Sometimes leaders and members may dislike the way a committee handles a judging event or disagree with the judge's decision. It is important to try to be fair and reasonable. See if you can state reasons why you disagree. Keep in mind judging is not like scientific testing:

- Even experts sometimes disagree.
- Standards change as research helps us get improved practices and products.

4-H Club members should:

- Play fair
- Respect others' rights to their opinions.
- Keep an open mind.
- Be willing to try again.

We have high standards for our products. As we judge, and in our other 4-H activities: *We need to work for high standards in how we get along with others.*

For a listing of score cards and additional resources, contact your county Extension office.

JUDGING is selecting by comparing.
JUDGING is a daily experience.
JUDGING is a way of learning.
JUDGING is a way of teaching.

JUDGING CAN BE FUN AND CHALLENGING.

This publication has been adapted from Washington State University Publication EM4647 and consultation with appropriate Virginia Tech faculty: Jinx Baney, Phillip Clauer, Paul Graham, Dennis Hartman, Irene Leech, Ruth Lytton, Bill Murphy, Tom Simpson, and Mark Wahlberg.

NOTES

NOTES

*This 4-H publication was printed
with the support of the
Virginia Cattle Industry Board*

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Virginia State University, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating. James F. Johnson, Director, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg; Clinton V. Turner, Administrator, 1890 Extension Program, Virginia State, Petersburg.