

FAIR JUDGING – WHAT TO EXPECT

The fair is a great opportunity for youth to get feedback and evaluation on the projects on which they have chosen to work during the year. This experience can be both motivating and educational for 4-Hers. Critiques from judges can serve as a guide to further improvement. To plan, practice, and present a finished product is to learn by doing.



Types of Fair Judging

What is face-to-face judging?

Face-to-face judging is performed to help exhibitors learn the strengths and weaknesses of their project directly from the judge. Exhibitors report to the judge with all of their projects from one department at the designated time. Individually they meet face-to-face with the judge, who learns more about the work the exhibitor put into the entry while the judge evaluates it.

Exhibitors then receive a ribbon for the quality of the exhibit & knowledge of their project, as well as new information they can use to do better next year.

What is Danish judging?

In the Danish System, all of the entries in one premium number are judged together. The number of blue, red, white, and pink ribbons a judge hands out in any color group depends on the number in entries in the class. For example, if there are 8 entries in a class, up to 2 can receive a blue rating, up to 4 red ratings, up to 6 white ratings, and up to 8 pink ratings.

What is Conference Judging?

Conference judging is a combination of face-to-face and Danish judging. In conference style judging, the exhibits come before the judge by lot. Exhibitors are encouraged to be present for the judging.

The judge may ask youth questions about their project and use the knowledge as well as the quality of the exhibit to place the entries according to the Danish method of placing.

What is Regular Judging?

During regular judging, the judge may give only one first place, one second place, one third place and one fourth place award in each lot. All entries not receiving placement will receive participation ribbons.

Blue Ribbon Youth

It is important to recognize that judging is a personal opinion and that evaluation will vary among judges. Graciously accepting constructive criticism of one's work is a life skill.

Let's strive to recognize that 4-H YOUTH are more important than 4-H projects.

Some things to keep in mind about Judges and the Judging Process

If you've done your best work on your project, it's disappointing not to get the rating you were expecting. Just remember that the judge's opinion is one person's opinion. A different judge might have given you a different placing. But even if you don't agree with the judge, it's worth paying attention to what he or she has to say about your project. You could get some great ideas for how to do even better next time.

Here are some tips about feedback:

- Pay attention to what the judge *liked* instead of getting upset about what he or she didn't like. Even if there were some negative comments, there were probably just as many positive ones!

- Don't be nervous about face-to-face judging. The judge is truly interested in youth, otherwise he or she wouldn't be there. Relax so you can be your friendly, natural self when the judge meets with you. And if you don't understand something he or she says, be sure to say so.

- Think about how you can use the judge's feedback. What can you do differently if you intend to keep working on this kind of project? What will you want to do the same way?

What if you were the judge? What kind of rating would you give your project if you were judging it? *Be honest!*

Your opinion matters. Being able to have fun and learn how to do something worthwhile is just as important as what the judge thought about your work.