



4-H Judging Teams

2016

What is a 4-H Judging Team?

Have you ever attended a livestock show and wondered why the judge placed the animals in a certain order? One area of 4-H that teaches 4-H members about product selection and evaluation is 4-H Judging Teams. Judges you see at livestock and horse shows can often trace their beginnings in judging programs back to county 4-H judging programs.

So, what is judging and how does it impact judging team members? If you ask any current or former judging team member, they could probably go on and on about the positive learning experiences and their opportunities to meet new people and travel to new places. On a basic level, judging consists of two primary components: 1) placing a group of animals/products and 2) orally justifying your decision – or as it's common-

ly known, giving reasons. Each area requires judging team members to go through different steps and processes to arrive at their decisions.

When a judging team member analyzes a class, he or she is not only comparing the individuals in the class, but also comparing each individual to the ideal product in that field. The judge must establish priority areas and develop strategies to arrive at the final placing of that particular class.

Once the judge arrives at his or her final placing, it's time for the second component of judging: giving oral reasons about the class. Judging team members learn to take notes on the classes they analyze, writing pros and cons for each individual. Then, relying on their memory of the class, the judging team members present

their reasons to experts in the field. This is the judging member's opportunity to convince the expert that his or her placing was the correct placing of the class.

Participating on judging teams offer many benefits to 4-H members. Team members are exposed to team work, effective communication skills and analytical thinking. Team members also build self-confidence as they become comfortable with both components of judging. Development of these skills benefits every area of the judger's life. An additional benefit from participating on a judging team is having the opportunity to travel to new places and meet and interact with livestock industry leaders. Many times these relationships will aid 4-H members in the future as they choose career paths in the livestock industry.

What teams are available?

There are several teams available through 4-H. Those include the Horse, Livestock, Wool, and Meats judging teams. There must be 4 members to create a complete team. All teams allow the members to travel and meet industry professionals all while learning about animals and animal products!



Livestock Judging Team

Livestock judging is one of the most diverse judging teams available. On this team, members will learn to evaluate and discuss all livestock species including lambs, goats, cattle, pigs and the occasional horse class. They will learn what to look for in both market (meat) animals and breeding animals. They will also learn how to read and use EPD's (Expected Progeny Differences). Further, if a member is interested in any field in livestock, this is the best opportunity to travel the

state and the county and meet successful industry professionals and see numerous livestock operations at work. This is an incredible opportunity that will be difficult to replicate in any other setting!



Wool Judging Team



As a member of the Wool Judging team, you will learn how to handle and evaluate fleeces. You will learn what an industry professional looks for when selecting fleeces for use in items such as clothing,

blankets, coats, and much more. This is an excellent beginner team where you can learn how the judging process works in general and graduate upward to more challenging teams such as the livestock and horse judging team!

Meats Team

This team in particular opens the door to many jobs within the food industry. On this team, members will learn how to grade, evaluate, and identify cuts of meat in beef, lamb, and pork production industries. This gives these kids hands on learning experience in the food industry. Not only do they

learn about carcass evaluation and grading, they will also learn about how meat animals are produced and handled. Further, they will learn about the importance and practicality of the practices used in the meat animal industry.

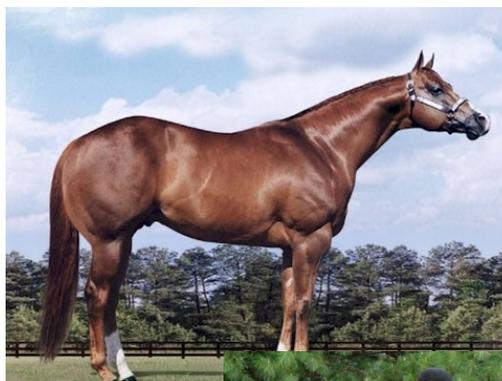


Horse Judging Team

Horse Judging is a great opportunity for any horse enthusiast. If you would like to work in any sector of the equine industry, the horse judging team is a team that you need to be on. As a member of this team, you will learn all of the parts of the horse and different types of tack. You will learn how to evaluate a group of horses by comparing each horse to each other as well as comparing each horse to the ideal horse.

In addition to judging a horse on how that horse is built, you will

also learn how to evaluate numerous equine riding events in both English and Western riding events. You will learn how to evaluate quality of movement, apply penalties, and assess handling and manners. Not only is this a great way to improve your horsemanship skills, but also your general knowledge in the industry.



What are “Reasons”?



At the completion of each judging contest, a judge is required to give a set of reasons to an official of the contest. This is essentially a short 1-2 minute speech that explains to that official why you placed the designated class the way you did. These can be the most daunting part of the judging experience, but it is an essential life skill, not only in the form of public speaking and

writing skills, but also in the sense of decision making. As a judging member, you will be required to sort classes based on facts that you are given and that you can see. Reasons are the way you support the decision you made with facts. This drastically improves leadership, communication, decision making, and reasoning skills. Once the reasons format is learned, giving reasons are simple and easy.

Questions?

If you are interested in joining a judging team or still have some questions, please feel free to contact Lyndi Bryant, Crane County Extension Agent at 558-3522 or lyndi.owensby@ag.tamu.edu. Or talk to Mrs. Fowler, Crane FFA Advisor.



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