4-H Judging Contests
(Livestock)

What?

Judging is a process where you look at different items (like animals, crafts, or foods) and decide how they rank in comparison to each other. You're not just picking your favorite; you're evaluating each item based on specific standards and giving reasons for your decision.

Why?

Judging is a valuable 4-H activity because it helps you develop important life skills:
- Boosts Confidence: You'll become more self-assured in your decisions.
- Improves Decision-Making: You'll learn how to analyze information and make choices.
- Develops Communication Skills: You'll practice expressing your thoughts clearly and persuasively.
- Enhances Critical Thinking: You'll learn to assess quality and identify strengths and weaknesses.
- Teaches Organization: You'll learn to organize your thoughts and present them in a logical manner.

How?

Here's a breakdown of the steps involved in judging:

1. Preparation:
- Bring paper and a pencil to take notes.
- Know that a 4-H judging class typically has four items.
- The items are usually numbered 1 to 4.
- Understand the class title (e.g., "Market Lambs," "Breeding Beef") and what you are supposed to be judging - Pay close attention to the question being asked.
- Learn the correct terms used for the items you're judging.

2. Initial Overview:
- Stand back and look at all the items in the class.
- Form a mental picture of the "ideal" item.
- Compare each item to the ideal and to the other items in the class.
- Consider the key characteristics or standards for the class.
- Identify the strong and weak points of each item.
- Make a preliminary placing of the class in your mind.

3. Detailed Inspection:
- Move closer to examine each item carefully.
- If allowed, handle, feel, or check confirmation of the animals.
- Look at each item from all angles.
- Refine your placings.
- Take detailed notes on each item, focusing on the important characteristics.

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4. Final Placing and Reasons:
- Make your final decision, focusing on the most important characteristics.
- Be practical when considering any faults or defects.
- Trust your own judgment.

5. Mark your Scorecard
- Each class should go in its' own column - write the class name in the box
- Have a clear mental picture of the class.
- Mark the box next to your preferred order of the items or animals
  - If you placed the class of items or animals best being Item 1, then item 4, item 3, and last item 2 you would select the sixth box down that says [1-4-3-2]
- Double-check your placings to ensure they match your notes and that you have the correct class in each column.

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Tips!

- Practice: The more you practice judging, the better you'll become.
- Know the Standards: Familiarize yourself with the specific standards for each class you judge.
- Be Objective: Focus on the facts and standards, not personal preferences.
- Manage Your Time: Work efficiently and don't spend too long on any one item.
- Stay Organized: Take clear and concise notes.
- Be Confident: Trust your judgment and present your reasons with confidence.

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Lambs
CLASS 1

1-2-3-4	
1-2-4-3	
1-3-2-4	
1-3-4-2	
1-4-2-3	
1-4-3-2	
2-1-3-4	
2-1-4-3	
2-3-1-4	
2-3-4-1	
2-4-1-3	
2-4-3-1	
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	
4-1-3-2	
4-2-1-3	
4-2-3-1	
4-3-1-2	
4-3-2-1	

Question - "Which of these lambs exhibits a more desirable balance of muscle and condition, considering both the visual appearance and how they feel when handled?"

- Given this question, we would look at the overall composition of the lambs and determine which exhibits the best muscling and condition.
- We would then look for which animal is our worst and place it at the bottom of the class.
- Finally, we would determine the order of the middle two, sometimes it is a minor difference or personal preference that can separate these.
- If the class was asking about a specific cut of lamb we would focus more attention and place more weight on that cut. It is very important to know what the question is asking you to evaluate.

Animal Class: Market Lambs

- Lamb #1:
  - Strengths: Long, level top; deep body.
  - Weaknesses: Slightly narrow stance.
- Lamb #2:
  - Strengths: Wide chest floor; heavy muscled.
  - Weaknesses: A bit short-bodied.
- Lamb #3:
  - Strengths: Balanced profile; correct structure.
  - Weaknesses: Not as much muscle as lamb #2.
- Lamb #4:
  - Strengths: Stylish; clean front.
  - Weaknesses: Lacks the depth of body of lamb #1.

Final Placing: 3-2-1-4