



McLean County 4-H Show Judge's Packet

Below is your Fair Ticket!
Please remove and bring with
you to enter the fairgrounds.

Dear McLean County Fair Judge,

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a judge for the McLean County 4-H Show!

If you are a *first time judge* and would like to review the project manuals, please contact us at 309-663-8306 and we will make arrangements with you to review the manuals. They are not available at the fairgrounds.

Enclosed in this mailing you will find:

- Fairbook page(s). Check the section related to your judging area. These are the requirements we set for each 4-H member to meet. Please follow these requirements as you are judging.
- Scorecard sample used in judging process. (If available.)
- Your ticket into the fair.

This packet will help inform you about how we view the judging process and answer any of your questions. Thank you for helping to create a great fair experience for our 4-H members!

Sincerely,

Theresa Chambers
Kathy Schwoerer

Theresa Chambers
4-H Community Worker
McLean County

Kathy Schwoerer
4-H Program Support
McLean County

Serving as a 4-H judge is both an honor and a responsibility! It's a recognition of your expertise in a subject area and abilities in working with young people. At the same time, it's important to realize the significance of your responsibilities and to do the best job possible!

Evaluation and Recognition: An Important Part of the 4-H Educational Experience

Evaluation is important to help members know where they stand in knowledge, skills, and attitudes so they can build on their strengths and overcome their weaknesses. Recognition is a basic human need. 4-H members are recognized for many kinds of achievements including:

- participation in educational experiences
- individual progress towards goals
- achievement of standards of excellence
- results from peer competition

Conference judging in 4-H is important! It's the educational process by which evaluation and recognition can be accomplished. **Please remember, conference judging is a help to the 4-Her's project evaluation.** As a 4-H judge, you will:

- recognize members for participating in the interview
- evaluate and recognize how well each one met the standards set for their project

As a judge you will only be able to evaluate and recognize members "as they are" on judging day. You will not be able to evaluate their progress. Do not allow yourself to be put in the position of trying to decide who learned the most, who worked the hardest or other aspects of members' progress. Evaluation and recognition of such progress can best be done by 4-H advisors and others who work with the youth throughout the year and who know their background and resources. It cannot be done by a 4-H judge during an interview at the conclusion of a project!

Where are we located?

The Interstate Center is the home of the McLean County Fair. It is located just west of the junction of I74 and I55 West of Bloomington on Route 9, exit 160A. Turn North from Route 9 to enter the fairgrounds West of Bloomington. Blain's Farm & Fleet is .3 miles east of the Fairgrounds. You will see the official Interstate Center sign on the right at the main entrance.

As a judge, you want to conduct interviews that will be positive and educational experiences for members. The following tips will help you accomplish this:

Before Judging Day

Please become familiar with county rules and placing criteria. Not all counties are the same.

On Judging Day

- Dress comfortably but professionally.
- Arrive early to arrange your judging area and otherwise make sure you are prepared to interview your first member.
- Parents, advisors, other 4-Hers, siblings, and the general public should not be allowed in the judging area. If possible, sit beside the member during the interview. This usually makes the member less nervous than does sitting across a table and helps him or her talk with you more openly.
- Working with you will be a superintendent, secretary and assistant. As you judge each project, they will tell you the age of the exhibitor and the years in the project. *They are not to help make a decision in judging.* Comments may be recorded by you or a secretary on the evaluation sheet.

Payment

After judging is completed, please check at the 4-H office to see if your compensation check has been processed. If you have not yet turned in your judge's agreement, please mail it back to the Extension office at 402 N. Hershey Road, Bloomington, so we can get your check processed as soon as possible. Thanks for your help in making this process go smoothly!

Orientation

Most judging is completed on Wednesday, July 30th, however there are several projects that are judged throughout the week and may have a different schedule. Check your fair book page for details!

- On your day of judging, we would ask that you arrive at least 30-45 minutes ahead of your judging time to register. Please be sure to read your fairbook page(s) as some judging times have changed.
- **For Judges on Wednesday:**
 - Please check in and get nametags in the Timeless Clovers 4-H Alumni Booth in the large (Interstate Center) building in the main lobby.
 - A brief orientation will begin promptly at 8:30am for those projects judged on Wednesday in Cloverleaf Auditorium in the Interstate Center
 - A complimentary breakfast of doughnuts & juice is available
 - Specific orientations will be given by 4-H Show Committee directors in separate areas of Cloverleaf Auditorium
- **All other judging days:** please check in at the 4-H office in the north end (or back) of Cloverleaf Hall.

Conference Judging: Tips and Techniques

Step 1: Opening Questions

Open the interview with easy questions to set members at ease and to help them feel good about and take pride in their accomplishments. Have a friendly, smiling, open, helpful attitude with every individual. Helpful openers include:

- What is your name?
- Have you been a 4-H member very long?
- Tell me about what you learned in your project?
- What did you do or like best in your project?
- Why did you choose this project?

Step 2: Assessing and Teaching

Follow with detailed questions mixed with project teaching. This should relate to the member's project exhibit as well as specific aspects of the member's project plan. It may be helpful to have a few standard questions from the project book to ask all participants. This will provide a frame of reference when you compare them with each other for additional recognition like trophies, rosettes and state fair participation.

Step 3: Summary Comments and Recognition

Come back to the positive aspects of the project before you close the interview and let the members know they have much of which they can be proud! Summarize both the positive aspects and your suggestions as you close. Congratulate members for their work and interview performance. Be sure to explain how they matched up to standards for the project and areas for improvement.

After the Interviews Are Completed

Make your final decisions based on evidence of member performance against standards, as well as evidence of project mastery. Make sure you have valid reasons to support your assignment of outstanding ribbons, trophy winners and state fair participants.

Please be sure to review county fair guidelines and adhere to rules and guidelines in the fairbook and project manual! These are the requirements we set for each 4-H member to meet and ask that you follow the same guidelines as a judge!

- Check and double-check your selections to make sure that the right person is named for each selection. Having a different person than you expected receive an award is a nightmare no judge wants to face!
- Please give your suggestions for improving the event, enhancing project experiences, etc., to the event organizers. Do this in writing if possible on the surveys provided.

Choosing Award Placings

*Please use this guide when awarding placing to members.

You will have the opportunity to award specific projects the following awards:

Rating levels:

- A (Blue Rating) = meets standards, good exhibit
- B (Red Rating) = some improvement needed
- C (White Rating) = does not meet standards, much improvement necessary

Best of Class

- All projects must have received a blue rating to receive this award.

Reserve Best of Class

- This is the project that is the "runner up" to the Best of Class. All projects must have received a blue rating to receive this award.

Best of Show

- This is the project within a specified group of classes that represents the best of the best. This award is chosen from "Best of Class" winners only.

Reserve Best of Show

- This is the project that is the "runner up" to the Best of Show. A Reserve Best of Class, from the same class as the Best of Show, may be put in consideration **ONLY** if it is the Reserve Best of Class from the Best of Show winner.

State Fair

- Pages are "bright orange" – usually last page in blue book. If not in blue book, no classes are eligible for state fair.
- Make sure to check class numbers that are eligible for state fair
- Consult superintendent and or show director with questions – see description below.

Trophy/Plaque

- If it is awarded, the superintendents will provide guidance

Champion Showcase (Special prize awarded above regular class premium.)

- Youth chosen to receive Champion Showcase will receive as stated in the fair book (depending on project area):
 - Best of Show – \$20.00
 - Reserve Best of Show – \$10.00
 - Best of Class – \$15.00
 - Reserve Best of Class – \$5.00

Judge's Checklist at the End of the Day

- ✓ Select all award placings before leaving.
- ✓ Sign ALL Judge's Sheets in Blue Book – this verifies classes have been judged.
- ✓ Complete Evaluation to help make your judging experience better.
- ✓ Pick up judge's check, if available, at the 4-H office.

State Fair Selection

Only original work is considered for the State Fair. During the interview with the member, ask questions to establish the originality of the work.

Age Requirement: Member must be 10 years old by September 1st of previous year.

Kits: Precut kits assembled by the member are not acceptable for [any] state fair class.

Visual Arts ONLY: Original Work: Articles exhibited should be from an original design created by the exhibitor. Copyrighted or trademarked designs are not acceptable. Articles made using patterns or pictures from magazines as starting points for designs ARE NOT acceptable. Kits and preformed molds are not considered original and are not acceptable (for state fair consideration). Team or school logos are not original. Combining parts of different patterns with the member's own ideas can result in an original design, but simply changing the color, pattern and/or size of a pattern does NOT make the design original. (Exception: Heritage Arts items, they may follow a pattern.) *(From IL State Fair Book 2008)*

Roles of Secretaries and Assistants:

Secretary

- Do not allow judge to see name or club of exhibitor.
- Record comments and grade on judging sheet.
- Mark A, B, C or M (moved) or N/S (no show) to denote grade in rating column. Do not leave column blank.
- Record Showcase winners & State Fair delegates if pages are in blue book.
- Denote Best of Class, State Fair delegates and alternates as appropriate on judging sheet.
- *Duties per project area may vary slightly.

Assistant

- Attach placing sticker and ribbon(s) on judging sheet. (Be sure written information on tag is not covered, especially the exhibitor's name.)
- Unfold judging sheet to display exhibitor's name.
- Assist superintendent in arranging display.

Judge's decision and reasons are FINAL. Other opinions should remain silent.

From Start to Finish

Have fun! Although being a 4-H judge is sometimes tiring, it's also a most satisfying and inspiring experience! Almost all the 4-H members you interview will have worked hard on their projects and will have some exciting accomplishments to share.

Enjoy them and your 4-H judging experience!