

NEBRASKA 4-H JUDGES RESOURCE

LIVESTOCK

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUTH

- How long have you been showing?
- What is favorite thing about showing?
- What do you feed your animal?
- How much feed do you give your animal per day?
- How many times a day do you feed your animal?
- What kind of daily care things do you do with your animal at home?
- How often do you work hair? How often do you rinse or wash your animal?
- Do you clip or shear your animal?
- Do you show any other species beside cattle (or whatever animal they are currently showing)?
- Do you plan on showing again next year?

POSITIVE FEEDBACK

- Provide feedback on how youth might better prepare to answer questions that judges may ask during showmanship.
- Let youth know of common questions they may be asked in the future. This will help them prepare to answer.
- Provide constructive feedback regarding things youth can do better next time when it comes to showing their animal. For example, this could include how they handle their animal or how they present their animal.
- Little things like teaching youth how to properly hold a halter, use a show stick or pig whip, set up their animal, or brace their animal can go a long way.
- Often after a showmanship class is over, a young person will come to the judge to ask what they might be able to do better next time. Always provide positive and constructive feedback so that the youth feel engaged and that they have something to work on at home.

CONFRONTATIONAL SITUATIONS

There is no doubt that show attendees are passionate about the activities in which youth participate. There are situations where a show attendee has an honest question and asks it in a polite manner. These situations are easy to handle and are quite common. As a judge, always be willing to give your reasoning for doing what you did in the showing. If a show attendee has a simple question, always give a prompt and accurate response.

As we know, not everyone can get a purple ribbon every single time. If a youth does not place where they think they should have, unfortunately this may lead to a conversation with the judge outside of the show. It is vital that a judge know how to handle these inevitable situations and ensure the situation does not end in conflict. Below are some example scenarios that a judge might come across and how to handle them.

Scenario 1

- Attendee: “How in the world did (exhibitor) just end up third in that class? He should’ve received a purple ribbon, hands down! You did a terrible job out there.”
- Judge: “I’m sorry you feel that way. Livestock judging is certainly an opinionated practice and if another judge was in there, they may have seen it just like you did. Today I though that’s where the animals needed to be placed.”

The biggest takeaway from a situation like this is to never return with a response that creates more negativity. The answer that livestock judging is based off of opinion is a great one because there really isn’t a way for them to argue against that. It’s important to always be as polite as possible, even if the person is not.

Scenario 2

- Attendee: “Are you blind? We had the best heifer out there today and you didn’t even use her. I can’t believe this nonsense. I’ll meet you out by your vehicle and we will take care of this!”
- Judge: “I just did what I thought was right.”

In an unlikely situation like there where a person makes some sort of “threat” to you, the best thing to do is keep your response short. Judge be short and to the point in your response. The best thing to do is go to whoever is running the show and inform them of this confrontation. Never take statements like this lightly. Notify show management in a discreet way. Discuss with them proper steps to ensure that your safety is well taken care of.

Scenario 3

- Attendee: “Honestly I just thought that we should’ve placed higher in that class. Can you explain to me again your reasoning for placing that class the way you did?”
- Judge: “Absolutely, no problem. I thought that the heifer that I placed above yours was a little bit more feminine up front and a notch sounder on the move. I’ll give it to you; your heifer is certainly bigger bodied and more powerful. Personally, I didn’t think that she moved well enough from a structural standpoint today. This was my opinion today; another judge may be had a different opinion.”