

Judging Showmanship

The job of judging showmanship is two-fold. You must make accurate placings based on performance and you must also help and encourage the development of finer showmanship by example, suggestion, and friendliness. Judging showmanship is not easy and takes time to do well. There are a number of procedures that may make this easier.

Starting off – If you feel it necessary, call the exhibitors together for a word of instruction before the competition begins. This is more likely to be needed with novice and beginner exhibitors. Then take your place in the center of the ring as the contestants lead in their goats.

- ❖ **Ring Procedure** – As exhibitors lead in, direct them in a circle, clockwise around the center of the ring. You may stop them as they circle in order to see how quickly they can set up their goat and if they maintain the proper spacing and control. You may want to change positions during this process to see if they properly switch sides. Then restart the circling, eventually bringing them into a side-by-side line-up. Examine each goat carefully, up and down the line. You may ask questions of the exhibitors at this time, but there is no value assigned to knowledge of the goat in the showmanship scorecard, so it should not be the determining factor in placings. Request that goats be led in lines or in circles, singly or as pairs or groups. Have the contestants about-face the animals and occasionally put them into head-to-tail sequence. You may request exhibitors to exchange animals for a few maneuvers, but be careful not to lose the order from which you started this process and be sure to change them back.
- ❖ **Scoring** – Judging the **Appearance of the Animal** requires thorough examination to determine cleanliness, condition, proper hoof trimming, and proper clipping. It is permissible to offer advice to the exhibitor at this time. In scoring **Appearance of the Exhibitor**, take into consideration how long they have been showing that day, the experience of the exhibitor, and possibly the resources they may have available to be in proper uniform. The **Showing the Animal in the Ring** portion of the scorecard clearly lays out the weight of each element of handling that you will observe. Be sure to provide enough maneuvers to properly evaluate leading, handling, posing, and showing. Over-showing and excessive maneuvering are objectionable and comments can be made to the exhibitor personally. Showing their animal to its best advantage, while remaining inconspicuous, is a key element to use in scoring.
- ❖ **Courtesy** – Expect a courteous attitude from each exhibitor for their animal, the other exhibitors and the judge. This portion of the scorecard requires poise and alertness in a way that shows that the exhibitor is aware of their animal, the position of the judge and other exhibitors. Persistence in showing their animal well goes a long way in evaluating this behavior.
- ❖ **Reasons** - Giving reasons for animal placings as they stand in front of you is relatively easy compared to having to give reasons for showmanship placings based on the performance of a variety of maneuvers by many different exhibitors that may have occurred over the past half hour. Work hard to remember the reasons for your placings and keep your reasons as positive as possible.

- ❖ **Remember** – The most important person in the ring is not you or the blue ribbon winner, but the one you can help the most.

Judging Grooming and Showmanship for Youth

Judging of youth showmanship and grooming demands more in many respects than open division judging. Nerves are on edge and self-esteem issues or emotions are more likely to surface as young exhibitors are on display in front of parents and other relatives. Your attitude and accuracy of reasons all gain in magnitude when working with youth. Right or wrong, your decisions can be far-reaching and affect the youth, their parents, their leader, and their group, not to mention the American Dairy Goat Association.

Rely heavily on the [Showmanship Scorecard](#) and refer to it in your reasons. This takes the notion of arbitrary decisions away from the discussion of your judging. Some of the Do's and Don'ts:

➤ **Don't** -

- Judge the conformation of the animal
- Overlook the importance of the white uniform
- Expect very young exhibitors to perform like experienced exhibitors
- Award a blue ribbon for any other reason than that it's well deserved

➤ **Do** –

- Remember to check the small details of grooming that are often overlooked, such as hooves, inside the ears, and under the tail
- Have exhibitors exchange animals with one another
- Ask questions scaled to the age and experience of the exhibitor (questions are not required but often expected)
- Provide reasons that are positive and upbeat

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