



2021-2022 Delaware 4-H Poultry Judging Contest Leader's Guide

For special accommodations in accessing this event please notify the extension office two weeks prior to the event.

Introduction:

The Delaware 4-H Poultry Judging contest is held annually during the Delaware State Fair in conjunction with the Delaware FFA Poultry Judging contest. The contest consists of several stations and includes topics such as grading eggs, grading carcasses, identifying parts and placing live birds. It also includes the presentation of at least one set of oral reasons. The contest is organized by officials from both the University of Delaware and Delaware State University.

Purpose:

Judging contests are utilized by the Delaware 4-H program to develop critical thinking skills, such as comparing and contrasting, decision making, and oral communication as well as to enhance project knowledge.

Eligibility of Participants:

Participants must be current Delaware 4-H members. Each county is allowed 10 participants for a total of 30 contestants statewide. If a county does not fill all ten of its slots, then those unused slots become available for other counties to use. Individual counties determine the selection process to fill these slots. Each county is required to hold some sort of qualifying event to be able to participate in a judging contest at the state level. Please check with your county agent if you would like more information on the county qualifying event. Project groups are welcome and encouraged to do some of their own training.

Contest Format:

The State 4-H Poultry Judging Contest is held in the 4-H and FFA Centre Ice Rink during the Delaware State Fair. Participants are expected to report at least 10 minutes prior to the start of the contest to receive their scorecards and any special instructions.

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Participants should come prepared with a clipboard; plain, unlined paper; and a pen or pencil. The clipboard, paper, and writing implement may not contain a measuring device of any type. Youth may not be permitted to participate in the contest if they are late. Judging and placing cards are provided. No additional material is permitted and may result in disqualification. All participants compete against each other regardless of age or experience. *Participants may not use any type of electronic device (cell phone, tablet etc.) during the contest and will be disqualified if they are caught doing so.* Contest participants are divided into groups and placed at stations. They rotate through the judging stations until all participants have completed all stations. Approximately 10 minutes is allowed per class.

The contest consists of judging the following classes:

- Live hens for past production
- Oral reasons on hen placing
- Judging ready to cook (RTC) market poultry (broilers, roasters and turkeys)
- Grading eggs on interior quality
- Grading eggs on exterior quality
- Grading eggs on broken out quality
- Identifying broiler parts

The National 4-H Poultry Judging Contest Manual gives a more thorough explanation of judging criteria for individual classes along with images. A link with ordering information is provided in the resources section at the end of this document. Below is a basic summary of how poultry judging contest classes are evaluated

Judging Live Hens for Past Production

Hens used in the past production classes are most often leghorn type hybrids. Birds may be handled. The bird that has laid the most eggs to date should be placed first, the next highest second, the next highest third, and the poorest layer should be placed fourth. This is placing by comparison. Hens are placed on the following criteria (in order of importance):

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Pigment loss | 3. Abdominal Capacity |
| 2. Handling Qualities | 4. Molt |

Sometimes, depending on the class, the bird can be placed on pigment loss alone. Birds remove yellow pigment from their bodies and place it in the yolk of the egg. If the

placing order cannot be determined on pigment alone, then the other criteria, in the aforementioned specific order, need to be used to make a decision.

Oral Reasons on Past Production Hens

Youth are expected to give a set of oral reasons on the past production hen class designated as the oral reasons class. Oral reasons are ideally delivered within two minutes without the use of notes. They are judged on criteria such as terminology, organization, accuracy, relevancy and presentation. An example of the recitation that is to be provided by the participant is provided within the 4-H Poultry Judging Contest Manual and it is highly recommended that participants adhere to the suggested format. A participant will score higher if they can deliver their oral reasons without the use of notes. Sometimes after the delivery of oral reasons, the judge will ask the participant a few specific questions to see how well they understood or observed the class.

Judging Ready to Cook (RTC) Market Poultry

In the Delaware State Contest, typically two classes of ready to cook poultry; broilers or roasters are judged. Each class consists of ten carcasses hanging from shanks so that all of the carcass can be observed. The birds cannot be touched or handled, however, the shackle may be touched so that the carcass can be observed from all angles. Grades (A, B or C) are assigned to the carcasses based on amounts of exposed flesh, broken or disjunct bones, protruding bones, and missing parts. Discoloration should be disregarded.

Broiler Parts ID

Contestants are expected to identify 10 broiler parts. There can be up to 17 different types of parts obtained from a carcass, however, the contest will only include 10 of them. Each part will be displayed on a plate and may not be handled. Potential parts include: whole breast, split breast, breast with ribs, boneless breast, breast quarter, breast tenderloin, whole leg, boneless thigh, leg quarter, drumstick, thigh, wing, giblets (heart, gizzard, liver), neck, back, drumette, and flat.

Grading Eggs on Interior Quality

In this class, white shelled eggs are candled for interior quality and are classified as AA, A, B, or Inedible. The eggs must be handled carefully to preserve them for others that are still to judge the class. A candler shines a strong beam of light into the egg so that you can see inside. Factors such as the size of the air cell, quality of the egg white and yolk, and meat or blood spots are taken into account when grading eggs for interior quality.

Grading Eggs on Exterior Quality

In the exterior quality class, eggs are judged based on visual appraisal. Eggs may not be handled. Grades used are A, B or Dirty. Participants should look for factors such as stains, adhering dirt or foreign matter, shell texture, ridges, shell thickness, and overall shape of the egg. It is recommended that participants with long hair restrain their hair into a ponytail to avoid contact with the eggs during this particular examination.

Judging Eggs on Broken Out Quality

The broken out egg class is typically done at the beginning of the contest or at the end of the contest so that all contestants can look at the eggs together. Broken out eggs degrade rapidly, especially in the heat of the summer at the Delaware State Fair. Over the time it takes to run the contest, this could mean a change in grade. To combat this problem, contest officials have all participants do this part at the same time. Ten eggs are broken out on a flat surface and are graded as AA, A, B, or Inedible. Neither the eggs nor the containers can be touched by contestants. The quality of the yolk, thickness of the albumen, shape of the broken out egg, and spots are all taken into account. It is recommended that participants with long hair restrain their hair into a ponytail to avoid contact with the eggs during this particular examination.

Available Resources:

There are several resources available for use by 4-H Leaders, parents and members to help prepare for the poultry judging contest.

Here is a link to a digital version of the newly revised (Dec 2020) National 4-H Poultry Judging Manual. This most current version is only available in a digital format.

[NATIONAL 4-H POULTRY JUDGING CONTEST MANUAL | National 4-H Poultry and Egg Conference \(uky.edu\)](https://www2.ca.uky.edu/national4hpoultry/PoultryJudging.html)

The Poultry Learning Laboratory Kit is also available to be borrowed from the Kent County Extension Office and has some activities in it related to poultry judging.

The web address for the National 4-H Poultry Judging Contest is:

<http://www2.ca.uky.edu/national4hpoultry/PoultryJudging.html>

Poultry judging “cheat sheets”, diagrams, practice exercises

<http://georgia4h.org/programs/focus-areas/agriculture-stem/agriculture/livestock-and-animal-projects/judging-teams/poultry/>

4-H Poultry Judging YouTube Videos on each 4-H poultry judging contest class produced by the University of Georgia

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CaexZ3NRzJs&playnext=1&list=PL8EF4EA2FBD2AC88A&feature=results_main

Egg grading fact sheet:

<http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agcomm/pubs/4AJ/4AJ05PO/4AJ05PO.pdf>

Evaluating egg laying hens fact sheet:

<http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agcomm/pubs/4aj/4aj07po/4aj07po.PDF>

Grading RTC poultry fact sheet:

<http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agcomm/pubs/4aj/4aj06po/4aj06po.PDF>

Practice contest slides Kansas State University:

<https://www.asi.k-state.edu/research-and-extension/poultry/avian-influenza/judging.html>

Poultry judging contest practice guide with images

<http://poul.auburn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2016/03/2016-Poultry-Judging-Practice-Guide-Auburn-University.pdf>

University of Georgia PowerPoint presentations on judging the different types of classes in the contest:

<https://extension.uga.edu/county-offices/fayette/4-h-youth-development/competitionjudgingteams/poultryjudging.html>

University of Tennessee PowerPoint on judging the various classes:

<https://extension.tennessee.edu/cannon/Documents/4-H/Poultry%20Judging%20Slides.pdf>