



4~H Judging Teams

2023

What is a 4~H Judging Team?

Have you ever attended a livestock show and wondered why the judge placed the animals in a certain order? One area of 4-H that teaches 4-H members about product selection and evaluation is 4-H Judging Teams. Judges you see at livestock and horse shows can often trace their beginnings in judging back to county 4-H judging programs. So, what is judging and how does it impact judging team members? If you ask any current or former judging team member, they could probably go on and on about the positive learning experiences and their opportunities to meet new people and travel to new places. On a basic level, judging consists of two primary components: 1) placing a group of animals/ products and 2) orally justifying your decision – or as it's commonly known, giving reasons. Each area requires judging team members to go through different steps and processes to arrive at their decisions. When a judging team member analyzes a class, he or she is not only comparing the individuals in the class, but also comparing each individual to the ideal product in that field. The judge must establish priority areas and develop

strategies to arrive at the final placing of that particular class. Once the judge arrives at his or her final placing, it's time for the second component of judging: giving oral reasons about the class. Judging team members learn to take notes on the classes they analyze, writing pros and cons for each individual. Then, relying on their memory of the class, the judging team members present their reasons to experts in the field. This is the judging member's opportunity to convince the expert that his or her placing was the correct placing of the class. Participating on judging teams offer many benefits to 4-H members. Team members are exposed to team work, effective communication skills and analytical thinking. Team members also build self-confidence as they become comfortable with both components of judging. Development of these skills benefits every area of the judger's life. An additional benefit from participating on a judging team is having the opportunity to travel to new places and meet and interact with livestock industry leaders. Many times these relationships will aid 4-H members in the future as they choose career paths in the livestock industry.

What teams are available?

There are several teams available through 4-H. Mountrail County 4-H offers opportunities for those interested in the Agronomy, Horse, Livestock, & Meat judging teams. All teams allow the members to travel and meet industry professionals all while learning about animals and animal products!



Agronomy Judging Team

Agronomy judging participants evaluate crops for seed and factors affecting market quality, and identify crop and weed seeds and plants. Becoming a proficient crop judge includes:

- Identification of crops grown in North Dakota and the region
- The correct identification of weed mounts and weed seeds, etc.



Hippology/Horse Judging Team



Horse Judging is a great opportunity for any horse enthusiast. If you would like to work in any sector of the equine industry, the horse judging team is a team that you need to be on. As a member of this team, you will learn all of the parts of the horse and different types of tack. You will learn how to evaluate a group of horses by comparing each horse to each other as well as comparing each horse to the ideal horse.

In addition to judging a horse on how that horse is built, you will also learn how to evaluate numerous equine riding events in both English and Western riding events. You will learn how to evaluate quality of movement, apply penalties, and assess handling and manners. Not only is this a great way to improve your horsemanship skills, but also your general knowledge in the industry.



Livestock Judging Team

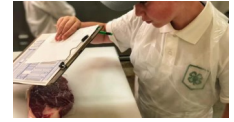
Livestock judging is one of the most diverse judging teams available. On this team, members will learn to evaluate and discuss all livestock species including lambs, goats, cattle, pigs and the occasional horse class. They will learn what to look for in both market (meat) animals and breeding animals. Further, if a member is interested in any field in livestock, this is the best opportunity to travel the state and the county and meet

successful industry professionals and see numerous livestock operations at work. This is an incredible opportunity that will be difficult to replicate in any other setting!



Meats Judging Team

Meat Judging provides an opportunity for youth enrolled in 4-H Livestock projects to enhance their carcass evaluation and retail identification skills. Meat judging programs are currently the most effective tool for the recruitment and development of future meat science technologists in existence today. Meat judging is more than the determination of the quality and lean meat yield of a carcass or wholesale cut that affect the safety and taste of the products we consume; the North Dakota 4-H meat science project serves as a training tool to develop young leaders in the meat and livestock industries.



What are “Reasons”?



At the completion of each judging contest, a judge is required to give a set of reasons to an official of the contest. This is essentially a short 1-2 minute speech that explains to that official why you placed the designated class the way you did. These can be the most daunting part of the judging experience, but it is an essential life skill, not only in the form of public speaking and writing skills, but also

in the sense of decision making. As a judging member, you will be required to sort classes based on facts that you are given and that you can see. Reasons are the way you support the decision you made with facts. This drastically improves leadership, communication, decision making, and reasoning skills. Once the reasons format is learned, giving reasons are simple and easy.

Participant & Family Expectations

Being a part of a 4-H Judging Team requires dedication on many levels for the youth & families involved.

A few expectations the Mountrail County 4-H families will have while being a part of the judging program include:

- **Practices will typically take place weekly and will be scheduled by your coach & other adult leaders.**
- Youth participants are expected to participate in practices in order to have the opportunity to participate in county, state, & national level contests. Arrangements may be made with your team coach if any practice cannot be attended.
- **Traveling & overnight stays will take place for several of the contests. Volunteers/Parents may have to work together to transport participants to & from contests.**
- Coaches will book rooms for contest stays prior to event. Please ask for state rate if possible.
- **Funding & Out of Pocket Costs:**
- Mountrail County 4-H Council covers contest fees for participants. Sometimes lunch is covered in contest fees, but not always.
- Fundraising will be completed by each Mountrail County 4-H Judging Teams (individually or as a group) to help cover expenses pertaining to contest such as hotels, fuel, & any attire the team (s) wish to acquire.
- Any expenses that are not covered by the Mountrail County 4-H Judging Teams and/or the Mountrail County 4-H Council will be responsibility of participating 4-H members/families. This includes, but not limited to: Hotel expenses, food, transportation, personal purchases, etc.
- **All parties involved are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner and adhere to all rules & guidelines that are set by the Judging Team coaches/leaders, NDSU Extension, & any parties that are involved in conducting practices, events & contests.**

Questions?

If you are interested in joining a judging team or still have some questions, please feel free to contact Lynnette Vachal, Mountrail County Extension Agent at 701-62-2835 Ext. 1 or Lynnette.vachal@ndsu.edu



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