



UNIVERSITY OF
FLORIDA

IFAS EXTENSION

Guidelines for the Florida 4-H Poultry Judging Event ¹

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A. Introduction

It is the intent of these Guidelines to explain how the classes of the State 4-H Poultry Judging Event are prepared and how the Event is conducted. They are not meant to replace current resource material used in training contestants for the Event (see section J, Resources) but rather supplement such material. These Guidelines will enable all coaches to have similar information about the Event.

The approach used in preparing the classes for the Event is to make them adequately difficult to evaluate contestant knowledge, but to avoid "tricks" or controversial grades and placings. Contestants with knowledge and training should do well.

There are some differences in the State and National Events. We will help the State winner with these differences as the team prepares for the National Event.

The State Event, classes and resources are discussed in the following sections:

B.State 4-H Poultry Judging Event

C.Past egg production

D.Oral reasons for past egg production

E.Ready-to-cook chickens

F.Identification of chicken carcass parts

G.Interior egg quality: candled eggs

H.Interior egg quality: broken-out eggs

I.Exterior egg quality

J.Resources

B. State 4-H Poultry Judging Event

There are 800 points total. Each class has equal weight of 100 points.

1. Classes and scoring

a. Past egg production (2 classes)

Each class will consist of four live White Leghorn hens. The Hormel computing slide for scoring judging events will be used to determine the scores of the placings. In this system, points will be deducted for each incorrect pair depending on the difficulty of placing that pair. The deductions are normally from 2 to 10 points for each incorrect pair.

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If more than one placing is checked on the card, the lowest score possible for the class is given. If no placing is checked on the card, zero is given.

b. Oral reasons for past egg production (1 set)

Oral reasons will be presented on one class of past egg production White Leghorn hens. The score will be based on appearance (24%), proper use of terms (20%), accuracy of statements (20%) and completeness of coverage (36%). Detailed information will be supplied to those counties responding to the annual announcement of the Event, and upon request.

c. Ready-to-cook chickens (1 class)

The class will be composed of ten 2.5 to 4.0 pound chicken carcasses. Each bird will be graded A, B or C. Five points will be deducted for each grade separation line crossed. Ten points will be deducted if a contestant fails to enter a grade for a bird, or enters more than one grade for a bird.

d. Identification of chicken carcass parts (1 class)

Ten chicken parts will be identified. For each part, a 10 point deduction will be made for an incorrect identification.

e. Interior egg quality: candled eggs (1 class)

Twenty white eggs will be graded AA, A, B or Inedible based on candling. One point will be deducted for each grade separation line crossed, except when the line between "B" grade and "Inedible" is crossed; then three points will be deducted. Five points will be deducted if a contestant fails to enter a grade for an egg, or enters more than one grade for the same egg.

f. Interior egg quality: broken-out eggs (1 class)

Ten broken-out eggs will be graded AA, A, B or Inedible based on appearance. Three points will be deducted for each grade separation line crossed, except when the line between "B" grade and

"Inedible" is crossed; then four points will be deducted. Ten points will be deducted if a contestant fails to enter a grade for an egg, or enters more than one grade for the same egg.

g. Exterior egg quality (1 class)

Twenty white eggs will be graded A, B or Dirty based on appearance. Two points will be deducted when the separation line between grade "A" and "B" is crossed. When the line between "B" grade and "Dirty" is crossed, three points will be deducted. Five points will be deducted if a contestant fails to enter a grade for an egg, or enters more than one grade for the same egg.

2. Rules and regulations

a. All contestants must be bonafide 4-H Club members.

b. There will be two judging divisions:

1) Senior Division - Contestants must be 14 years old on or before September 1 and must not have graduated or passed their 19th birthday on or before September 1 of the current year. A contestant can not have competed at the National Poultry Judging Event. A team will consist of three or four members. Only the total scores of the three highest-scoring members will be used for team awards. (A county is allowed to have only one Senior Team.)

2) Junior Division - Contestants must be 8-13 years old as of September 1 of the current year. A team will consist of three or four members. Only the total scores of the three highest-scoring members will be used for team awards. (A county is allowed to have more than one Junior Team).

c. The National Poultry and Egg Conference Rules

The National Poultry and Egg Conference rules have been changed to allow each state to enter a senior team and a senior individual (not a member of the winning team). All contestants (team members plus individuals) will participate in the National Judging Event at the same time. The individuals will compete for the various individual awards. As a result of this rule change, senior individuals can now

have the opportunity to compete at the National Event even if their county team did not win the State Event or if their county did not have a team.

As in the past, counties can have individual contestants at the State Poultry Judging Event (even if the county does not have a team) and the counties are encouraged to do so.

The procedure for selecting the senior individual to participate at the National Poultry Judging Event will be as follows: All senior contestants, team members and individuals, will be in the Senior Division. The total scores will be ranked and the names of the winning team members eliminated (because they will be going to the National Event). Then the top-ranked remaining senior contestant, team member or individual, will be eligible to go to the National Event and compete as an individual. If that person decides not to go, then the opportunity will be offered to the next ranked contestant, and so forth. It will be the individual contestant's responsibility to provide for her/his expenses to participate in the National Judging Event (as it is for the 4-H Miscellaneous Events category), however, the Extension Poultry Youth Specialist will try to facilitate participation.

d. Classes will be the same for both divisions.

e. Ten (10) minutes will be allowed for placing each class and for preparation of oral reasons.

f. First place Senior team goes to National Event

The first place Senior team will receive a grant for partial support of travel to Louisville, KY in November where they will represent Florida at the National 4-H Poultry Judging Event. There is no Event beyond the State level for the first place Junior team.

g. Funds for awards are mainly provided by the Florida Poultry Federation.

C. Past Egg Production

Objective: To rank four live White Leghorn hens according to the number of eggs they have laid before the Event.

Guidelines:

1. The judging will be done by comparison, that is, comparing each hen to the others in the class.

2. Certain characteristics are used to estimate the number of eggs each hen has laid. The hens are ranked with the top hen being the one estimated to have laid the most eggs.

3. If possible, place the class based on loss of pigment (bleaching) from the skin. It is assumed that the more bleached a hen has become, the more eggs she has laid. Compare the amount of pigment in the skin of the four hens. The hen that has the least pigment should be placed first, and so forth according to the amount of pigmentation.

4. If a pair of hens has equal loss of pigment, then use handling qualities to decide which hen is best. The better the handling quality, the better the hen. A lean, trim condition of the pubic bones, skin and abdomen means good handling quality.

5. If a pair of hens has equal loss of pigment and equal handling quality, then use abdominal capacity to decide which hen is best. A wide distance between the bottom of the pubic bones and the rear tip of the keel bone, in addition to a wide distance between the pubic bones, means good abdominal capacity and is desirable.

6. If a pair of hens has equal bleaching, handling quality and abdominal capacity, then use molt condition to decide which hen is best. A hen that is not molting (losing and replacing feathers) or that has molted the fewest primary feathers is desirable.

7. The hens may be individually removed from their cages for inspection. When a contestant has completed the evaluation of a hen, the hen is to be returned to her cage, not to another contestant. The hens should be handled gently at all times.

D. Oral Reasons for Past Egg Production

Objectives: To present the reasons the class of hens was placed in a particular order (ranked).

Guidelines:

1. Ten minutes will be provided to prepare oral reasons on one of the past production classes. Two minutes will be allowed to present the oral reasons. The contestants may be asked questions about their oral reasons or the class of hens.

2. Each pair should be compared and an explanation given for placing one bird above the other. (That is, discuss the top pair, middle pair and bottom pair.)

3. Junior Division contestants may use notes when presenting reasons. Senior Division contestants may not use notes.

E. Ready-to-Cook Chickens

Objective: To assign a grade (A, B, or C) for the quality of each of 10 ready-to-cook chicken carcasses.

Guidelines:

1. Broiler carcasses weighing between 2.5 and 4.0 pounds will be used.

2. Carcasses will be suspended from shackles.

3. Shackles may be handled; however, touching of a carcass may result in disqualification.

4. Only the factors of exposed flesh, disjointed and broken bones, and missing parts will be used from the USDA standards for determining the quality of ready-to-cook carcasses (2-6 pound range). Other criteria such as conformation, fleshing, fat covering, discolorations, and the presence of feathers will be ignored.

Table 1 summarizes the specifications for exposed flesh, disjointed and broken bones, and missing parts. Note that a 1/4 inch of exposed flesh on breast and legs is now allowed for Grade A.

5. The location of disjointed bones may be the shoulder, elbow, hip or knee.

6. The location of broken bones may be the tibia (drumstick), humerus, or radius-ulna. The radius and ulna are the two bones between the wing tip and

humerus. Even if both the radius and ulna are broken on one wing, USDA only counts it as one broken bone.

7. Protruding bones may be broken or unbroken. Any protruding bone makes the carcass a Grade C.

8. Processing (eviscerating) cuts may sometimes result in some flesh being exposed on the tip of the breast or on the thigh near the tail. As a result of extensions of the evisceration cuts, Grade A carcasses can have about 1 1/2 inches of the tip of the breast exposed and about 1 inch of each thigh exposed. If more flesh is exposed than about 1 1/2 inches of the tip of the breast or about 1 inch of either thigh, but no more than one-third of the flesh exposed on the breast or on either thigh, then the carcass would be a Grade B.

9. Note the footnote for Table 1. A carcass is defined as having six parts: two wings, two legs, back and breast. Thus, each leg includes a drumstick and thigh. "Elsewhere" means the back and two wings.

F. Identification of Chicken Carcass Parts

Objective: To identify carcass parts.

Guidelines:

1. Only chicken carcass parts will be used.

2. Parts for identification will be limited to whole breast, breast with ribs, split breast, boneless breast, breast quarter, breast tenderloin, whole leg, leg quarter, drumstick, thigh, boneless thigh, wing, back, neck, giblets, flat and drumette. Note that the last two parts (flat and drumette) were added at the 1996 National Event.

3. A part may appear more than once. For example, two wings might be used.

4. Parts can be displayed in any position.

5. The parts must not be touched. Touching a part may result in disqualification.

6. The individual parts will be in plastic bags to prevent drying.

G. Interior Egg Quality: Canded Eggs

Objective: To assign a grade (AA, A, B, or Inedible) for the interior quality of each of 20 eggs.

Guidelines:

1. Candling is one of the methods used to evaluate the interior quality of an egg. Knowledge of the parts of the egg is helpful for understanding candling and grading.

2. The depth of the air cell will be the primary factor in determining the grade of an egg. Ordinarily, the smaller the air cell the higher the interior egg quality. The yolk shadow will be a secondary factor. A prominent shadow or outline indicates that the albumen is not very dense so the yolk is not held near the center of the egg and has a dark shadow when it is near the shell. A faint shadow or outline indicates dense albumen that holds the yolk near the center of the egg. High quality eggs have dense albumen.

3. Eggs with blood or meat spots aggregating more than $\frac{1}{8}$ inch in diameter will be classified as Inedible. Eggs with very small spots aggregating not more than $\frac{1}{8}$ inch diameter will not be intentionally used. The contestant should not confuse blood spots with the normally occurring chalaza. This "string" of albumen serves to help hold the yolk in the center of the egg and may be prominent in some eggs. The chalaza is usually distinguished from a blood spot by a bright area of refracted light that accompanies the darker shadow of the chalaza.

4. The air cell is nearly always in the large end of the egg. At the Event, all air cells will be at the large end of the egg. Therefore, the large end should be placed at the candling light first.

5. No loose, bubbly or out-of-position air cells will be used intentionally. If a contestant finds such an air cell then the condition should be ignored in the grading of interior quality. Also, exterior stains or dirt and faulty egg shell shape or texture will not be considered as factors which influence the interior quality.

6. Contestants will individually candle and grade 20 eggs. Correct candling technique should be taught by the coaches. Any contestant that shakes an egg "violently" in order to facilitate internal content movement may be disqualified.

H. Interior Egg Quality: Broken-Out Eggs

Objective: To assign a grade (AA, A, B, or Inedible) for the interior quality of each of 10 eggs.

Guidelines:

1. The broken-out eggs will be placed on the bottom of white plastic plates turned upside down (about 8-inch diameter plates).

2. The plates or eggs must not be touched. Touching them may result in disqualification.

3. Eggs with blood or meat spots aggregating more than $\frac{1}{8}$ inch in diameter will be classified as Inedible. Eggs with very small spots aggregating not more than $\frac{1}{8}$ inch in diameter will not be intentionally used.

4. If the albumen is tinted with blood, then the egg is classified as Inedible. That is, there is blood in the albumen, although it does not appear as a blood spot.

I. Exterior Egg Quality

Objective: To assign a grade (A, B or Dirty) for the exterior quality of each of 20 eggs.

Guidelines:

1. Each egg will be laid horizontally on a flat and decisions will be based only on the visible portion.

2. The eggs must not be touched. Touching an egg may result in disqualification.

3. The USDA standards for exterior quality of eggs will be used, as interpreted below.

4. A single standard is used for Grade AA and Grade A; it is referred to as Grade A. (In the poultry industry, eggs that are Grade A for exterior quality are eligible to be sold as Grade AA or Grade A

depending on the interior quality. While eggs that are Grade B for exterior quality are only eligible to be sold as Grade B even if the interior quality is Grade AA or A, that is, the lowest grade for either interior or exterior becomes the overall grade for an egg.)

5. When possible, eggs will not be used if they have cage marks, thin spots or "windows" (translucent areas), since these conditions are somewhat confusing to grade.

6. Stained eggs are either Grade B or Dirty, depending on the characteristics of the stained portion. (An exception is that Grade A eggs may have very slight stains.) Stains vary by intensity, size and type.

a. Intensity: approximate definitions

1. Slight: easily visible from 1 foot but difficult to see from about 3 feet. (Grade B)

2. Moderate: easily visible from 3 feet but difficult to see from about 6 feet. (Grade B or Dirty)

3. Prominent: easily visible from 6 feet. (Dirty)

b. Size:

During training, 1/32 and 1/16 of the shell surface of an egg should be marked off so contestants can become familiar with those areas. The size of the stained portion must be mentally added and the total area compared to that allowed.

c. Type:

1. Localized: a single stain (all stained area is connected).

2. Scattered: two or more separate stained areas.

7. Body-checked eggs may; (a) have fracture lines which are visible to the naked eye, or (b) have ridges or bulges associated with the area of shell which was fractured during calcification but the fracture lines are not visible unless candled. If the fracture lines are visible to the naked eye, then the egg is a Grade B. If the lines are not visible to the naked eye, then the size of the ridges or bulges must be considered regarding egg shape in order to determine the grade of the egg.

8. If an egg is clean, Grade B is the lowest grade in which it can be classified regardless of the egg shape, extent of ridges/bulges and shell texture or thickness.

9. The grade assigned to an egg is that of the lowest grade on the six factors (stains, dirt, shape, texture, ridges, thickness). Therefore, defects in the factors are not added but are considered separately.

10. Contestants tend to be too critical in their evaluation of exterior quality, often classifying eggs in lower grades than do the official judges.

J. Resources

The following are sources of information about poultry judging.

1. National Poultry Judging Manual, National 4-H Poultry and Egg Conference Extension Committee, C. Wabeck, P. Clauer and J. Struwe, Nebraska Cooperative Extension Service 4-H 92, revised about 1993. (Order at \$1.50 each plus shipping from Distribution Center, 105 ACB, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE 68583-0918; phone, 402-472-3023, tax# 47-0491233).

2. A video containing "Oral reasons for judging poultry" by Dr. Michael Ouart and "Poultry Judging" from Virginia Polytechnic and State University is available free of charge (one copy per county). Contact Jacqueline Jacob or Ben Mather at tel:352/392-5594 or fax:352/392-5595 if your county does not yet have a copy.

Table 1.

Table 1. Specifications for grading individual carcasses of ready-to-cook chicken (2-6 lbs).				
Factors	AGrade		BGrade	C Grade
EXPOSEDFLESH ¹	Breast & legs ² 1/4"	Elsewhere 1 1/2" ^{2,3}	One-third of flesh exposed on each part of carcass, ⁴ provided meat yield is not appreciably affected	NO LIMIT
DISJOINTED AND BROKEN BONES	1 disjointed & none broken		2 disjointed & none broken or 1 disjointed & 1 nonprotruding broken	NO LIMIT
MISSING PARTS	Tail and wing tips		Tail, wing tips, and 2nd wing joint	Tail and wings
			Back area not wider than base of tail and extending halfway between base of tail and hip joints	Back area not wider than base of tail extending to area between hip and joint
¹ Maximum aggregate area of exposed flesh on each part.				
² A Grade A carcass may have cuts or tears that do not expand or significantly expose flesh, provided the total aggregate length does not exceed 1/4" on the breast or either leg and 1 1/2" on the back or either wing.				
³ "Elsewhere" means the back and two wings.				
⁴ The parts of the carcass shall be each wing, each leg (drumstick and thigh connected), entire back, and entire breast with each permitted to have one-third of the flesh exposed by cuts, tears, and missing skin.				