

GENERAL RULES: STATE 4-H JUDGING CONTESTS

A) Age Division: There will be a junior and senior division in each contest. 4-H members in the junior division must not have passed their 14th birthday on or before January 1 of the current 4-H year. 4-H members in the senior division must have passed their 14th birthday on or before January 1 of the current 4-H year and not have passed their 19th birthday as of this date.

B) Team Composition: A county or multi-county group may enter as many teams as it wishes in either the junior or senior division. Counties with more-than-one team in an age division will designate these as A, B, C, etc. The members for each team must be designated on or before the day of the contest. Teams may consist of four members with the three high scores making up the team score. The contestant with the lowest score on the team will be designated as the alternate. The alternate and any individual contestants will be eligible for individual awards. Counties not having a fourth team member may enter a team with three members.

C) Multi-county teams: Counties who have organized multi-county (2 counties or more) programming groups with the purpose to provide specific educational subject-matter judging (i.e. land, home site, forestry, horse, dairy cattle, poultry, livestock, and horticulture) knowledge for 4-H members may have teams and/or individuals representing the multi-county group. This may only occur if the counties are contiguous, and if a **Letter of Intent** is submitted from the program director and received in the State Office **thirty (30) days prior to the event**, stating the approval of the specific programming area and the coach or Extension agent of record.

Any changes in this programming approach must be stated in a letter from the program director 10 days prior to the event. 4-H members must be members in only one county and must be approved by the specific agents involved in the multi-county group endeavor. A county or multi-county group can enter as many teams as it wishes in either the junior or senior division; however, if a county participates in a multi-county group for a particular contest, it must notify the state office in the above Letter of Intent if it wishes to also have single-county teams in that contest.

D) Entries: Students are allowed to compete in more than one national/out-of-state contest in a given year. Members who competed in a previous national contest are not eligible for the same state or national contest again. Junior team winners are eligible to compete in subsequent contests in the Junior division as long as age eligibility is current.

E) State Eligibility: Unless extreme extenuating circumstances exist, a state winner who, for whatever reason, declines the national/out-of-state event may not enter the same state event the following year. Extenuating circumstances will be determined by the Extension agent, subject-matter specialist, and the state 4-H office representative. If a state-winning team or individual chooses to not participate in the National/out-of-state contest for any reason, the State Office and second place team must be notified at least 60 days prior to the deadline for registration for the national/out-of-state contest to give the second place team the opportunity to compete.

F) National contest team composition: If a county has entered only one team consisting of three members and this team wins the state contest, the next highest individual in the state contest (at the discretion of the Extension Agent in consultation with 4-H Youth Agriculture Program Coordinator) may be added to the team to participate in Page 5 of 8 the national contest. If a winning county team has an original team member elect not to participate in the national event, leaving the team with three members, the following procedures will be instituted in consultation with and approval of the Extension Agent, subject matter specialist, and state 4-H office representative to replace that team member:

1. A letter from the 4-H team member declining the trip must be submitted to the Extension Agent with copies to the Extension Specialist, 4-H Youth Agriculture and coach of record;
2. The letter must be signed by the 4-H member and his/her parent or guardian;
3. This letter must be submitted and postmarked at least 60 days prior to the national registration deadline; and
4. Upon receipt of the letter, the Extension Agent, subject matter specialist, and state 4-H representative will consult on the final team composition prior to national team registration. To replace a winning team member who is unable to compete nationally, the county must have had additional 4-H members who competed in the same state contest as the original team members. The vacant position would be offered to the winning county's 4-H member with the highest score, descending consecutively to the next highest scorer until a four-member team is selected.

G) National 4-H Competitive Events Effective January 1, 2002:

1. To be eligible for participation in a national event, a 4-Her must compete in the state contest.
2. Contestant must not have reached his or her 19th birthday as of January 1 of the year in which the National 4-H competitive event is held, with the exception of the Land & Homesite Judging Contest (See Section A).
3. All contestants must be members of 4-H in the state they are representing during the year in which the National 4-H competitive event is held.
4. The contestant(s) or team(s) of contestants must be certified as the official state entry by the State 4-H Leader or by a person designated by the State 4-H Leader. The individual(s) or team(s) may be selected by any procedure the State 4-H leader believes is appropriate.
5. The contestant, his or her county 4-H staff member, and the State 4-H Leader must certify as follows on the application form: "This contestant has not participated in post-secondary coursework in the subject area of the national 4-H competition, nor has he or she participated in training for post-secondary competition in the subject area of the national 4-H competition." Violation of the above will result in forfeiture of any awards or recognition that have been won in the National 4-H Competitive Event.

H) Competing in both 4-H and FFA National Events: The National offices of 4-H and FFA have agreed on the following national policy, in the interest of consistency between events and between organizations in eligibility for national competition. "Participation by the same individual in both a National 4-H and a National FFA Page 6 of 7 competitive event in the same year may occur only when the following is accomplished:"

One for 4-H:

Participation in a National 4-H competitive event will require that all youth participating be "bona fide" current 4-H participants and must qualify for the national event through an approved state competition or selection process conducted or sanctioned by the representative organization.

One for FFA:

Participation in a National FFA Career Development event will require that all youth participating be "bona fide" members of an FFA chapter and must qualify for the national event through an approved state competition conducted or sanctioned by the representative organization.

4-H and FFA determined to establish a consistent policy for all their National 4-H Competitive Events, and National FFA Career Development Events. Criteria for the policy included:

1. Assure that participants in national event are genuine representatives of their state and organization.
2. Assure that each individual is given all the opportunities he or she has legitimately earned.
3. Assure that the policy is easy for participants and states to understand.
4. Assure that the policy does not require extra efforts from the Management Committee to enforce.
5. Assure that the national offices of 4-H and FFA are supportive of each other and consistent in their interpretation of eligibility.

I) Pre-registration: forms will be required and will be submitted to the State 4-H Office by the date requested.

J) Contest results as announced are final. The county teams winning any state contest are eligible to represent West Virginia in the out-of-state event. Example: Hardy County might enter three teams in the senior division for the Livestock Judging. The teams would be designated team A, B, and C. If team B were the state winning team, then it would be eligible to represent West Virginia in the out-of-state/national event. This includes the alternate if there were four members entered. The coach of the winning county team would be designated as the coach for the out-of-state/national trip.

K) After the winning team is selected, it will be the responsibility of the county coach to work with the appropriate state specialist to provide training for the team to participate in the out-of-state/national event.

L) Any individual who has competed in the National Land and/or Homesite Judging Contest in either the FFA or 4-H Division will not be eligible to compete in succeeding State 4-H Land & Homesite Judging Contests.

M) Determination of Ratings for Livestock, Poultry, Horse and Dairy.

1. Fifty points shall constitute a perfect mark on placings, and fifty points a perfect mark on reasons.
2. Species/Breed Ties
 - a. If tied for a species/breed award, the contestant or team having the highest reason score in the division will be listed first.
 - b. If still tied for a species/breed award, the contestant or team having the highest score for all species/breed will be listed first.
3. Overall Ties
 - a. If tied for individual or team overall award, the contestant or team having the highest overall reasons score will be listed first.
 - b. If still tied from after the above, the contestant or team having the highest score in placing used for reasons classes will be listed first.
 - c. If teams are still tied from a and b, the team with the highest scoring alternate will be listed first.
4. Alternates will be eligible for individual awards.

N) Judges for Livestock, Horse, and Dairy Contests.

1. The official judges will work each class and shall place the classes while the contestants are working the ring of animals. The judges will enter their placings on a placing card, indicate the cuts to be made and file that card with the superintendent.
2. Contestants may be handed their card as they appear before a judge to give oral reasons. When the contestant has finished, the judge will place the official reason grade upon the contestant's placing card or designated official sheet.

O) Contestant Conduct

1. All contestants will remain with assigned group throughout the contest.
2. Contestants are discouraged from wearing any clothing, pins, or badges that will in any way reveal his/her identity or the county represented.
3. While the contest is in progress, there shall be no communicating between a contestant and anyone else unless directed by the superintendent or his/her representative.

P) All judging contests will be conducted under conditions as near as possible to those of a national contest.

Q) Use of Technology in State 4-H Judging Contests and Events: The use of all electronic devices; including but not limited to cell phones, PDAs, MP3 players, programmable calculators; are prohibited during all State 4-H Judging Contests and Events. If an event requires the use of calculators, the event coordinator will provide exact specifications on the type(s) of devices (including functions) that will be permitted. Failure to comply with this regulation will result in the elimination of the entire team from competition. A letter will be sent to the Extension Agent and State 4-H Leader by the state staff detailing the reasons for the dismissal.