Coaching for success; Iowa livestock judging coaches manual

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Coaching for success; Iowa livestock judging coaches manual

by

Ashley Wiebe

Creative Component submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

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Program of Study Committee:
Scott Smalley, Major Professor
Mark Hanline
Jodi Sterle

The student author, whose presentation of the scholarship herein was approved by the program of study committee, is solely responsible for the content of this thesis. The Graduate College will ensure this thesis is globally accessible and will not permit alterations after a degree is conferred.

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2018

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this creative component is to design a tool for 4-H and FFA livestock judging coaches to use to strengthen their team and teach their students. Livestock judging team participation helps students grow in skills including, but not limited to, communication, confidence, animal evaluation, decision-making, competitiveness, self-motivation, organization, self-discipline, and the ability to accept criticism. A manual was put together as visual material coaches could reference and reuse as they choose. Materials were gathered from 20 years of 4-H, FFA and collegiate livestock judging experiences, as well as coaching and studying other successful coaches techniques to training their teams. The material was organized into a manual with sections relating to each part of the contest including parts to the contest, mindset and motivation, classes, performance data, reasons and test. While geared toward Iowa 4-H and FFA livestock judging coaches, with the exception of the test and a general list of available contests in the state, the rest of the information is applicable to any 4-H and FFA livestock judging team in the USA.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Those who compete in livestock judging contests and practice for a livestock judging contests, through youth organizations such as FFA and 4-H, have a higher correlation to developing skills highly sought after in the workplace, such as: ability to verbally defend a decision, decision-making, oral communication, organizational skills, problem solving, self-confidence, self-discipline, self-motivation, teamwork, and also animal industry knowledge (Nash & Sant, 2005).

I, myself, started participating in livestock judging simply to gain more time and experience with livestock animals and began to see all the other benefits livestock judging had to offer. I enjoyed it and saw the value of the skills I gained and chose to participate in livestock judging teams all throughout college. Seeing the positive impact this valuable activity has had in my own life and can have on other student’s lives, I vowed I would one day give back and coach youth livestock judging teams of my own.

I have been fortunate as an agricultural educator, FFA advisor and 4-H leader, to work with many students willing to trust in my abilities as a coach. My teams have had many successes personally, locally, state wide, and nationally. As others coaching or hoping to coach a livestock judging team in Iowa have seen my teams’ successes and know my experience with livestock judging, I am frequently asked for help and resources. Many agricultural instructors, FFA advisors and 4-H leaders do not have much personal experience with livestock judging and struggle with either the confidence or skillset to coach their team to a high level. Knowing the benefits of livestock judging, and wanting all students to be able to participate on a high level, I will help anyone who asks for assistance.
Putting together a livestock judging manual specifically for Iowa coaches would allow coaches quick access to high quality material that is catered to their needs and would free up the time I spend gathering up physical materials and forwarding digital information. I opted to assemble this coach’s manual and use it as my creative component for my masters program in Agricultural Education because it meets a need of secondary agricultural teachers and students across the state of Iowa. By organizing material and having a manual to hand people when they ask for assistance, it will free up time I would spend gathering material and use it to strengthen my own agricultural program.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this creative component was to develop a livestock judging coaches manual specifically geared to Iowa coaches. To accomplish this purpose the following objectives were developed:

**Objectives of the Component**

1. Organize compiled livestock judging resources to create a livestock judging manual to be used by Iowa agricultural teachers/FFA advisors and 4-H leaders to prepare livestock judging teams.

2. Develop and describe strategies to be used for coaching the different elements of livestock judging

3. Identify and explain the value of livestock judging
Need

Livestock judging is a strong part of Iowa’s impressive agricultural history. Even today, livestock judging is one of the most highly participated in FFA and 4-H contests at the state level. Success at the state level allows teams to travel to the national competitions, in addition to the many opportunities to participate at smaller and local events, according to Scott Johnson, Executive Director for Iowa FFA (Johnson, personal interview, Aug. 25, 2018).

While the number of teams competing at the state contest has held steady over the years - the quality and depth of quality teams in the contests has dropped. Former Iowa State Livestock Judging Coach and coordinator of Iowa’s State 4-H and FFA Livestock Judging Contest Jon DeClerck states, “Iowa has a rich history of strong livestock judging teams, partially correlating to the strong tradition of raising quality livestock – it would be a shame to animal agriculturists in Iowa to lose that history,” (DeClerck, personal interview, Aug. 26, 2016). Running contests throughout the state has become more challenging, as students are not always aware of what they should or should not do with inadequate coaching. With the diversity of agricultural education at the high school level and fewer and fewer students growing up with livestock, it is easy to see why fewer students have background information than previous years. This also means agricultural educators, FFA advisors and 4-H leaders are less likely to have experience in livestock judging themselves. Many have reached out for materials and training to help them coach their teams to higher success.

Many coaches do not simply want to be handed a stack of materials in reply to their asking for help. There is a plethora of livestock judging material readily available to those looking. They have more questions on how to use the material and often are not confident enough to know if the material they find or have is of good quality. Many have asked me to put
on a livestock judging coaches clinic to help them learn, but that would not be something they could use over and over as they could a manual. I chose to create a manual because it can be printed, laminated if need be or electronic copies can be used on smartphones or other electronic devices giving it a lot of flexibility. With a manual, coaches can add their own notes and can write on it if the need arises.

This coach’s manual will not be the same as livestock judging handbooks and manuals extension offices and college judging coaches put out that show what to look for and how to give reasons. This manual will focus more on materials and strategies that help coaches learn to coach.

**Use of Manual**

This manual it will allow for consistency in Muscatine’s FFA and 4-H livestock judging programs when I am no longer coaching. Perhaps more importantly, FFA and 4-H livestock judging coaches across the state of Iowa can use this manual to help them gain materials, methods and confidence to coach their livestock judging team. Hopefully, this will strengthen the quality of livestock judging programs across the state of Iowa and, with competition breeding excellence, send strong teams to represent Iowa at the national level.

**Definition of Terms**

Struggling with what to call this project, a booklet of instructions and materials associated with coaching livestock judging, the terms manual and handbook were both tossed about and used interchangeably. For consistency, I decided to pick one or the other and look up the definition of both to see which fits the purpose of this project best. A fast Google keyword search
and a look at Merriam-Webster Dictionary yielded little help, as the definition was essentially the same- a book to carry to reference, to use for instructions such as operating a machine or learning new subjects. (Handbook, n.d.) Manual was settled on as I thought it sounded more professional.

If the purpose of this creative component was to develop a livestock judging coaches manual specifically geared toward Iowa coaches, we should examine what livestock judging is. Livestock judging is the evaluation of an animal’s (usually cattle, sheep, hogs, and goats) physical characteristics. Then making a comparison from one animal to others and the ideal standard of that class, breed and/or use of the animal. The animals are then ranked from best to worst. Typically there are four animals per class to judge and are assigned a number one through four, (Thayne, 2011). Beyond the judging of the animals, sometimes questions are asked, oral reasons are said, performance data is given, and a test is taken. Questions are simple questions worth points asked of the contestants about the animals. Reasons are a short speech the contestant gives the official about the class of livestock describing their logic on why they placed the animals the way they did. Performance data is a scenario of what the animals are going to be used for along with genetic information about the animals to help contestants make decisions how to place the animals. A test in a livestock judging contest is a general animal science knowledge exam that is written out in multiple-choice format.

Though I doubt many are unfamiliar with the term coach, the popular Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a coach as “one who instructs or trains” (Coach, n.d.). This manual has a target population of Iowa livestock judging coaches and most of those happen to be FFA advisor and 4-H leaders. I was shocked to find no solid definition of either online. For our purposes, an FFA advisor will be defined as an agricultural educator who also acts as adult supervisor for the
FFA chapter and activities. According to the official FFA website, “FFA is a dynamic youth organization that changes lives and prepares members for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education” (FFA, 2018). A 4-H leader will be defined as an adult volunteer who has invested time and resources into helping youth with the 4-H program. According to the 4-H website, “4-H is delivered by Cooperative Extension—a community of more than 100 public universities across the nation that provides experiences where young people learn by doing. Kids complete hands-on projects in areas like health, science, agriculture and citizenship, in a positive environment where they receive guidance from adult mentors and are encouraged to take on proactive leadership roles” (National 4-H Council, 2018).
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature Review

The history of livestock judging and its contributions to youth development go back a long way in modern agriculture history. When the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 began bringing agriculture education formally into public schools, agriculture educators quickly started holding a variety of agriculture judging contests for students to showcase their skills (Tenney, 1977). Virginia and Alabama were the first to hold state level agriculture contests for students to compete as early as 1919. The first high school level national judging competition was held at the National Dairy Show in 1925, in the form of a youth dairy cattle judging contest (Tenney, 1977).

Seeing the growing popularity of these youth judging events and the scope of contestants participating at the 1925 National Dairy Show judging contest, the Federal Board for Vocational Education began working with representatives from the American Royal Livestock Show held in Kansas City, Missouri to hold a similar event. They agreed to hold the first national livestock judging contest geared for secondary agriculture students and 4-H members. They scheduled the contest during a week long celebration of agriculture education with business and industry leaders holding trainings, vocational leaders visiting with students, complete with newspapers reporting the activities. Over 1300 youth from 22 states competed in the very successful event and helped pave the way for the Future Farmers of America, or FFA, and its National FFA Convention (Tummons, Simonsen, & Martin, 2017). The FFA, now known as the National FFA Organization, is currently one of the largest youth organizations in the United States (FFA, 2018) and the FFA Career Development Event of livestock judging is one the largest contests offered.
Similar to FFA, livestock judging events through 4-H are among the most highly participated contests within the organization. 4-H considers livestock judging an Experiential Learning Event, which is part of their experiential education model. Learning by doing is the sort of slogan that encompasses experiential education as it incorporates the psychomotor with cognitive and affective areas of learning. Learning through doing uses personal experiences and the reflections on them to match the learning style and development level of the individual with the stage of human growth they are in. Experiential learning through 4-H programs, such as livestock judging, include problem solving, critical thinking, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, and connecting youth with adults and the community, all considered to be positive life skills (Weatherford & Weatherford, 1987). According to Boyd, Herring and Briers (1992), “the development of life skills allows youth to cope with their environment by making responsible decisions, having a better understanding of their values, and being better able to communicate and get along with others.”

Whether through FFA or 4-H, livestock judging has been associated with developing a variety of employer-preferred life skills such as communication, problem solving, and decision-making (Boyd, Herring, & Briers, 1992). By putting students in a position where, under the stress of timed competition, they have to decide which animal is best for the given situation and be able to defend that decision- skills can rapidly be developed. Practice with coaching helps fine-tune those skills and gives students the confidence and repetition to quickly and accurately make good decisions.

Beyond building employability skills, livestock judging team participation helps students personally with skills ranging from communication, confidence, animal evaluation, decision-
making to competitiveness, self-motivation, organization, self-discipline, and the ability to accept criticism (McCann, 1992). Many students have the desire to be competitive, but perhaps have no intentions of joining a sports team or perhaps do not believe they are athletic enough to play on an organized team. Many students at the middle and high school level lack the communication skills they desire and by working on those skills, it fosters a new confidence in their self. When competing in livestock judging, not only are the groups scored as teams, but each member of the teams is also scored as an individual, making them eligible for individual awards in addition to any team accolades. Often this helps with self-motivation and self-discipline to try to excel not only as a team, but also as individuals. According to Smith, (1989) many studies have proven participation on livestock judging teams is credited with improved critical thinking skills, enhanced self-confidence, and development of better team skills.

Although many of the individuals who choose to participate in livestock judging, or are talked into joining a team by the coach, are already connected to the agricultural industry, many students are not. In addition to gaining personal skills through learning about livestock, students are exposed to agriculture industry knowledge and potential employment opportunities. For those already familiar with agriculture, livestock judging can broaden their background with exposure to various operations, different animal species and new connections. Benefits for the nonagricultural student can include exposing them to the animal sciences industry and a look at careers that agriculture has to offer (National Livestock Coaches Association, n.d.).

As mentioned, judging can increase students’ skills within the agriculture and livestock industries. The Livestock Judging Handbook produced by the National FFA Organization lists the following skills as some of the areas students should be able to do following participation on a livestock judging team: Make accurate observations of livestock and determine the desirable
traits in market and breeding livestock. Understand desirable selection, production, management and marketing techniques for livestock. Understand and interpret the value of performance data based on industry standards. Select and market livestock that will satisfy consumer demands and provide increased economic returns to producers while meeting the needs of the industry and proficiently communicate using the terminology of the industry and the consumer (National FFA Organization, 2016).

John Rayfield, former chair of the FFA’s national livestock evaluation event, gives evidence there are many studies and literature works proving livestock judging is a way for students to develop positive life skills such as leadership and teamwork. It gains those who participate knowledge about the agriculture and livestock industries and helps build connections for careers. Livestock judging gives students a chance to showcase their ability and shine through competition while building communication skills, leadership skills, a higher self-esteem, problem-solving skills and critical thinking (Rayfield, 2006).
CHAPTER 3: METHODS & PROCEDURES

Program Used

Microsoft Word was the word processing program used to create the manual to be easily accessible to a variety of audiences should the manual be sent in an electronic method. It is also the best program I am familiar with to add pictures and graphics. Several of the pictures added in to the manual came from printed material I have collected. I either took pictures or scanned and cropped images to fit. The only other program in consideration for use was Google Docs. However, Google Docs only saves changes when connected to the internet and running the risk of working on the manual and accidently failing to save work due to lack of internet connectivity was not appealing. Not to mention, when Google Docs are downloaded, the formatting sometimes changes slightly and I am not as familiar with all the formatting features as with Microsoft Word.

Planning Materials

The idea of putting together a manual for livestock judging has been tossed around in my head for a long time. When I first thought of the idea, it was something I wanted to create for my own students who wanted to learn about livestock judging and would focus more on what to look for in each species of animal. When the concept came to me about instead creating a manual for coaches on how to coach a livestock judging team—since that seems to be the more specific need, I had to rethink how I would organize the information.

First, I created a list of all the things I thought would be important for coaches to know about coaching a livestock judging team. Then I made another list of common questions livestock judging coaches ask of me. Finally, I assembled a list of all the parts to livestock
judging contests in Iowa. After creating the list, I cross-referenced them to make a master list of the topics and categories I should include. Plus, the areas that showed up on all three lists were given a higher priority and more was added to that particular section of the manual. A question was posed on the Teachers Lounge- Iowa Ag Educators Facebook page to ask what FFA advisors coaching or planning on coaching a livestock judging team would most like to access to in a manual. With those requests, I cross-checked my list to make sure I those areas of judging or coaching covered in the manual. To no surprise, the list of common questions fielded, the areas I thought were the most important, and those requested for information on Facebook, all overlapped. Those areas were: performance data, reasons, and methods to coach reasons. The section on performance data offers the most value to coaches, in my opinion. Other then competing on a collegiate livestock judging team, I have never seen a breakdown like this.

**Materials Used**

The instructional strategies and information used to put the handbook together have come from my experiences through FFA, 4-H, junior and senior college livestock judging and now coaching teams for nearly 10 years. Collectively, that gives me over 20 years experience in livestock judging. Many different coaches who had different teaching and learning styles have taught me. I have seen what works successfully and what has not, and how coaches adjust accordingly. Realizing I am not all knowing, and wanting my students to have the best possible chance at learning and success, I have studied other livestock judging team coaches, both at the 4-H and FFA level as well as college, with a winning history to see what they are doing in their program.
Many of the things I recommend are combinations of methods and materials from some of my former coaches. A few of my former coaches include: Mark Wiebe, Todd Franz, Nate Brugman, Garrett Englin, Christy Jackson, Heath Hornecker, Kolby Burch, Jeff Thayne, and Jon DeClerck. Current Iowa State livestock judging coach Chris Cassidy has contributed ideas based on his observations of what Iowa coaches need. A few coaches I have watched, studied, or worked next to include: Dave Fowler, Kaylee Kerbs, Kraig Bowers, and many junior and senior college livestock judging coaches past and present.

**Organization**

Deciding where to draw the line as to what materials to use and how much to add would be the second most challenging part of creating the manual. Not only do I have nearly 20 years worth of materials, there is a plethora of information available on the Internet and many ideas were suggested to me on what should be added. But after creating lists of potential information to add and sticking with it, it just became a matter of using the highest quality material or strategies. Organizing the materials in the manual and creating a format was the most time consuming and mentally stressful part of the process.

To start the organization of the material, I made a list of everything that I was going to include in a separate Microsoft Word document. I then began the process of thinking through which of this information builds on each other and which of these things is more complicated to teach. When it was determined, the materials were then listed in the Word document from least challenging, easiest to coach and the most built upon, to the most challenging, hardest to coach and least built upon. As work for the manual was underway, the order would shift and change slightly and I would copy and paste pieces of the list in the Word document to match the new
order. That was later used in creating the table of contents towards the front of the manual. Keeping that Word document open on the side of my computer allowed me to see where I was and if materials were lining up in a logical order without having to continuously scroll top to bottom. This became especially handy toward the end of putting everything together and adjusting little things that did not fit logically or fit better another place. It was easy to glance at the page it would fit better, copy, and scroll to paste, without scrolling all over the document.
CHAPTER 4: PRODUCT

The Coaching For Success; Iowa Livestock Judging Coaches Manual that was created by myself, Ashley Wiebe, as a tool to help agricultural educators, FFA advisors and 4-H leaders coach their livestock judging teams. I chose to also use it to complete my AgEdS 599 Creative Component to help fulfill my requirements to graduate with a masters degree in agricultural education can be found next, on pages 19-104.
Coaching For Success:
Iowa Livestock Judging
Coaches Manual

Compiled by Ashley Wiebe
Agriculture Educator at Muscatine CSD/Muscatine 4-H Leader
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*Pro-tips*- are important summarized points of importance spread out throughout the book. Things are labeled as a “pro-tip” if it is a common practice or belief among competitive coaches.
INTRODUCTION

Many Iowa FFA and 4-H livestock judging coaches have asked for resources to help coach their team to a higher level of success. This manual has been put together from a secondary agriculture teacher, 4-H leader, and former collegiate livestock judger’s perspective. It has been kept relatively short to ensure quick reading but long enough to provide help in nearly every area related to the livestock judging FFA and 4-H contests, particularly in the state of Iowa.

While this is geared toward coaches in the state of Iowa, with the exception of the test and a few of smaller supporting details, such as the list of potential contests around the state, and the breakdown of the state contest- most everything is applicable to coaching a general livestock judging team across the USA.

The manual is designed to help you as a coach make your team more competitive by providing background on why livestock judging is important, help in understanding the key parts of the contest, strategies to coach your students, materials to share with them and resources to help you feel more confident in your ability to coach your team to success. It is not designed to be a manual to hand to students for them to read and study. If you would like one of those- there are some listed in appendix VI.

Most of this material comes from nearly 20 years of livestock judging experience, as a participant in 4-H, FFA, junior and senior college, plus coaching both in Iowa and Minnesota. Having learned from many coaches and seeing many coaching teaching and learning methods, I have observed many methods that could potentially help teams be successful. Teams I have coached with these methods and materials have been successful at the Minnesota and Iowa state level and gone on to represent well at the national level, including numerous top 10 and a couple top 5 national finishes. The goal is to make the “sport” of livestock judging more competitive, build students skills and increase coaches’ confidence in leading their team- even if that means giving away “the tricks of the trade” in this manual.
HELP YOU HELP THEM AND OTHER BIG TIPS

Not every FFA advisor, 4-H leader or even livestock producer is an expert to coach livestock judging. That said- not every judging coach is an expert in raising or showing livestock. While sometimes the two do go hand in hand, it is not the rule. Just because you did not judge in college and have not judged any major livestock shows does not mean you cannot coach a strong livestock judging team. Even great livestock evaluators are not always great in every species. Even the greats take on help to teach their students. Do not try to reinvent the wheel- steal when you can.

No man is an island- get help.

**Pro-tip-** Make a list of the livestock producers in your area- cattle, sheep, pigs, and goats. Make it a point to talk to them and find out if they would be interested in helping with the livestock judging team or if they have any experience. Experience judging is a bonus, but not a necessity. Try to take your team to travel to their farms to see the stock. If you can not find people with experience giving reasons to help with those- start off with people good at public speaking to critique voices instead of content. Most people in the livestock industry are generally very willing to help- you just need to ask. **See Appendix I** for an information collection sheet to help you stay organized with potential helper information.

Practice makes perfect.

**Pro-tip-** Do not try to start hard practice just a few days before or a few weeks before a contest. Students will feel like they are overloaded and cramming, or like if it was not worth practicing earlier, maybe it isn’t worth it at all. Livestock judging is a lot about being mentally ready to go and having experience reading livestock. If possible, start earlier and slowly build up skills and the amount of time working.

Reasons win contests.

**Pro-tip-** “Reasons win contests.”-Every college coach in the country. At most little contests being able to place the livestock may be an advantage, and obviously it is an important part of livestock judging, but if you want to be competitive at the state level or beyond- you have to take reasons seriously. Most FFA and 4-H coaches do not like reasons because their students do not like reasons. Reasons are one of the biggest learning opportunities of this whole contest. Just because you might not like reasons or know much about them is not an excuse for your team to skip practicing them. Just because your team does not like them does not mean you should not practice them.
Consistency is key.

**Pro-tip**- Teach your students not to worry about placing the classes right- but to focus on reading the livestock and describing what they see. Too many judges put pressure on themselves to “50” the class and get it completely correct with the officials. If you look at winners at most judging contests they are the people who do not bust any classes, take some minor cuts and talk well in reasons. Reasons allow you the flexibility to take small cuts because you can win back those points telling the officials how you saw the animals. If you are not sure what “50 a class” or “cuts” mean- check out page 6 for some judging basics.

Motivation matters.

**Pro-tip**- A lot of livestock judging is a mental battle. Whether it is comparing and contrasting to come to an informed decision, battling to speak well in reasons, or the struggle to maintain focus during a long contest. Too few coaches take time to mentally prepare their team either by confidence building, practices that build up mental endurance and toughness or having them feel prepared and ready to go.

Be positive

If you want to have a team excited about livestock judging, then you need to be excited and supportive about it- even if you know your team will get thumped at contests. Remember, there is no where to go but up and even there very best get started somewhere and more then likely do not win their first contests.
MOTIVATION AND MINDSET

“It doesn’t matter how smart your team is, it’s how smart they think they are.” — Dave Fowler

Dave Fowler is a well-recognized name in the history of Iowa livestock judging, as during his time in Muscatine he almost always had his teams in the hunt to be competitive at the state level and ready to make a run to compete nationally. He claims a lot of his success was due to making sure his teams were always mentally prepared to compete. People talk about motivation in the sports coaching world all the time. Why should it be any different in the livestock judging coaching world? In order to be successful, the team must be prepared and that includes mentally.

Stereotypes are meant to be broken.

Most would assume the students who are the best at livestock judging are either the livestock show jock kids or the practical production kids. While those things help, it is not necessarily the case. What students need to know is they do not have to grow up on a farm raising livestock or showing livestock competitively to be good at livestock evaluation. If they learn what good livestock and bad livestock look like and learn to be confident giving reasons, they can run with about any team at the state level. Also as a coach, it means the pressure is off to find those livestock and show jock kids, they are harder and harder to find. Whoever is on your team needs to feel confident they will give you and their teammates their best shot.

Focus takes focus.

If you want your team to have a strong mindset and be able to focus through a contest- they better be able to focus through a practice equivalent of the length of the contest. In todays entertain me now, always on the go society, this can get tough as state level contests go a majority of the day. Coach a tough mindset to focus for longer periods of time and tell your students they are prepared. It will build confidence.

Be confident to the point of cocky.

Your students need to have an air of confidence about them- even if they do not feel confident. Teach them to stand and sit up straight, speak loudly and confidently, dress well at events and to act like they know what they are doing. A little confidence, to the point of but not going over, being cocky, makes people believe the student knows what they are doing. This either will help intimidate the competition or give a good impression to the officials. Students that act more confident are likely to become more confident feeling.
Motivation & Mindset Coaching Strategies

“Tune Out” (focus strategy)
This strategy is used to help students practice focusing and to “tune out” background while focusing on livestock judging (or the general task at hand).

Pre-warn students ahead of time you are going to be working on their focus during this practice so they have time to be mentally prepared. After a couple times of doing this— you will no longer need to give them advanced warning. Also, do not do this every practice or they will begin to rely on having background noise.

During practice placing classes- play clips from a well-known movie on your phone to get lots of background noise.

During reasons preparation- play the most annoying (appropriate) music loudly in the area they are using to prepare reasons.

Remind students it takes mental toughness and focus to survive a big contest

After a few times of doing this at practice most students will find this amusing and almost treat it like a game.

“Picture This” (focus strategy)
Have several pictures of good, bad, and average livestock set out on a table (picture as in sale or show picture side or 3/4 shot where you can see the animal). Have the student pick a picture. Tell them they have 2 minutes to study the picture without writing anything down and to remember it.

When 2 minutes is up, collect the pictures. Talk about something completely random for 5 minutes until their brains are engaged in something else.

After 5 minutes you pull the pictures out to look without showing them back to the student. Have the student describe the animal in the picture as best they can.

To add another level, save that picture, repeat the activity and after they get done describing the second picture, have them describe the first again. Keep adding to see how many pictures they can get to.

“Sound Off” (focus strategy)
This is for focus during reasons. Have 2 students come in to give reasons at the same time. Have them start at the same time. They have to keep going with their set of reasons until they are done and get to the end. If they lose their place, get distracted by the other person, or mumble non-sense then they get to start over.
You can make this into a contest between students with prizes for the most focus if need be. When they get good at it- have them face each other instead of facing you. Try to pair up students with similar skill sets.

“Build-Up” (motivation strategy)
This is a change up of “Progressive Sets” strategy of giving reasons. Make a reasons order. Have the first student in the order give their set of reasons, this works best if the first student is the one who needs to most humbling or is already the most confident. When they are done critique them giving only positive feedback. That student stays in the room to listen to the second set of reasons. Again, give only positive feedback. Both students stay and listen to the third student give reasons- and keep repeating until everyone has given their reasons and only got positive feedback.

Only do this with a team that needs a lot of confidence boosting or right before a contest where you need them in a positive mental state. Doing this repeatedly will build of a false sense of perfection in reasons and they will not fix mistakes or strive to get better.

“The Outsiders” (motivation strategy)
Before a big contest, get in contact with respectable livestock breeders and FFA or 4-H supporters in your area. Tell them about the contest you have coming up and either bring them in to talk to your students and either keep it simple with a “we are cheering for you and we wish you the best of luck”, to a real rah-rah pump up speech.

Sometimes hearing from other people (especially those they may idolize) helps them remember they have other people hoping they are successful and wanting them to do well also. This works especially well before a state/national contest.

“Conquer Your Goals” (motivation strategy)
Sometime in the year (some do the start of the year, some do the end of the year to think ahead for the next) sit every student down with an index card. Have them set 2 personal goals they would like to accomplish with livestock judging for that ongoing/upcoming year. Double check to make sure the goal is realistic for the student (so an 8th grader isn’t planning on winning Louisville the first year they have ever judged) but will be something to stretch the student (no I just want to compete at state). The goals should be specific and measurable.

After they all have their personal goals recorded then have them share out loud. When they have heard each other’s goals, have them set a team goal. The team goal should be something that supports everyone’s (or at least a majority of the team’s) personal goals.

Set a checkpoint mid way through the year, or better yet several checkpoints to see how close students are to reaching their goals. If they reach them early- have them set a higher goal.

Review the goals periodically at the start of practice.
RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

How can I teach them if I cannot get anyone to judge? It is tough to put together a team of students that have the time in their busy schedules, who can come to a few practices, and are willing to put the time in to try something new. Let alone get them to show up anymore when the find out they have to give reason, or talk in front of someone. First you need students.

Ideally- you have four or more students who are just truly interested in learning how this livestock judging game is played. If you have this, then roll on you just need to keep them retained.

Recruiting works best when you have success because deep down, everyone wants to be part of something successful. How does the saying go? “If you build it, they will come?” If you have a team that finds success, have them, and yourself, start preaching about upholding tradition and creating lasting traditions.

Use students to recruit. Rather then you going out asking everyone to join the livestock judging team- send the students out to do the work. Peer pressure can be a great motivator.

Pro-tip- if you have a student who is very excited about recruiting, have them put together a short presentation about joining a livestock judging team.

Sit down with students individually and address why you would like them to do this activity and what the benefits are to them.

If that does not work, compile a list of benefits of livestock judging and share it with parents and pull them aside to help you work on recruiting their children.

By the way, appendix II is an example of a parent letter regarding student participation in livestock judging.

Winning is the best form of retention. Your team may not always be on top but if a student feels successful, he or she will be more likely to stick out whatever they are doing.

Have your livestock judgers set goals. The best livestock judgers set personal and team goals to help keep themselves and the team accountable and strive for success, or at the least, to make progress. Having a goal helps students stay motivated and feel purposeful in what they are doing.
CONTEST MAKE UP

Each livestock judging contest will be a little different based on who is hosting, what is available, and what level you are competing at. All contests will have at least a few placing classes, but the parts of that could be in the contest are: placing classes, performance data, keep/cull classes, questions, reasons, and a general knowledge test. We will visit all these areas in this handbook. The two biggest contests most coaches in Iowa prepare their teams for are the state FFA and state 4-H judging contests but in reality there are contests basically year-round. Appendix III gives a list of typical dates for livestock judging contests in Iowa, national level contests and others that happen to be near enough to travel with students. Below you will find the typical break down of the Iowa state FFA and 4-H judging contests- but keep in mind this is subject to change:

**Iowa State FFA Judging Contest:**
- 7 placing classes- 1 with data
- 2 keep/cull classes with data
  - 3 sets reasons
- 1 general knowledge test

**Iowa State 4-H Sr Judging Contest:**
- 7 placing classes- 1 with data
- 2 keep/cull classes with data
  - 3 sets reasons
- 1 set of 10 questions

**Iowa State 4-H Jr Judging Contest:**
- 7 placing classes- 1 with data
- 2 keep/cull classes with data
  - 3 sets of 10 questions

Remember- this is typical for Iowa, but is subject to change and is much smaller than the national level contests. The typical national level contest is 12 classes, with around 3 of those containing performance data, and talking 4-6 sets of reasons.

**Pro-tip**- It’s better to be over prepared rather then under prepared. If the contest has 3 sets of reasons, make sure they can give 4 in a row. If there are 10 questions, make students focus on 15. If they need to judge 9 classes, have them prepared for 10.
BUILDING BLOCK BASICS

Notebooks

Before you get too deep teaching about anything else- before you take your students to contests or to someone else’s house to train them- make sure they know a few of the basics. I make all my first time students write basics in the front of their notebook- which is a building block basic-having a notebook.

Make sure students have some kind of notebook to take notes with. Clipboards are convenient when there is scantron sheets- but contests with those are few and far between and most times a clipboard is just too big and bulky to carry. A regular notebook will work but often times it just ends up being wasted paper and again, too big to carry around decent.

A steno style notebook- a half size one with the spiral at the top is the best size- not too big, not too small. Big enough to write in and get good notes, small enough to carry or show in the back of your pants to carry around with you. With the smaller spiral at the top, it is also easier to flip pages and there is a less likely chance of the pages coming out.

Pro-tip- keep a rubber band to put at the bottom of the notebook to keep pages from getting wrinkled or flying away. And it can hold cards and performance data papers in place also.

Inside the front of their notebook have them write down some of the rules and basic information. That way they can never say you did not tell me that, coach. Writing helps cement things into their brain. Once you have established this with older/experienced kids- have them teach it to the younger/newer kids.

** Basic Information & Rules **

Animals are always placed best to worst
There are always 4 animals in a class
Keep Cull classes have 8 animals
Breeding animals are always the same sex
Market animals can be mixed sexes
You have 10-12 minutes to judge
Triple check your card
Mark your card(s) early to avoid rush
Don’t talk to anyone
No electronics
Ask your group leader if you have a question

Animals loose in a pen are labeled 1-2-3-4
Tied animals are always numbered left to right
Stay with your group
Backs to the class unless told to judge
Never look at anyone else’s cards of notebooks
Each class is worth 50 points
Reasons are each worth 50 points
Questions are wither 5 or 10 points
Cuts are the points you lose if wrong
There are lots of different ways to set up notebooks. This one below is common and sets students up for giving reasons the correct away. The explanation with how to fill it out is on the next page.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal info and ID 1</th>
<th>Animal info and ID 2</th>
<th>Animal info and ID 3</th>
<th>Animal info and ID 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Name/ Location</td>
<td>Placing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why does 1(^{st}) place win - good things</td>
<td>What is something better about 2(^{nd}) place over 1(^{st}) - grant</td>
<td>Why does 2(^{nd}) stay 2(^{nd}) - criticize</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why does 2(^{nd}) beat 3(^{rd}) - good things</td>
<td>What is something better about 3(^{rd}) place over 2(^{nd}) - grant</td>
<td>Why does 3(^{rd}) stay 3(^{rd}) - criticize</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why does 3(^{rd}) beat 4(^{th}) - good things</td>
<td>What is something better about 4(^{th}) place over 3(^{rd}) - grant</td>
<td>Why does 4(^{th}) end the class - criticize</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When setting up the notebook pages like this it basically puts notes directly into reasons format. Reasons format can be found in more detail on pages 47-48. Students would start with: I placed the, (name of the class), and the placing, then follow the 9 boxes (tic tac toe board) on bottom and end with thank you. This gives students space to jot quick notes on each animal but also allows for organization.

Again- this is not the only method for taking notes, but it is a good one. If students are not comfortable taking notes on livestock, have them start on something they are familiar with- see more ideas in the reasons section.

**Marking Cards**

In order to receive points for doing their work and placing the classes, students must turn in their cards or scantrons.

*Appendix IV* has examples of the scantrons used at the Iowa state FFA contest and directions on how to fill them out. Scantrons are not difficult to fill out, but if you do not show your students ahead of time- they can very easily get confused in the stress of contest day. Several other small contests in Iowa are also going to this scantron method. Most other contests, including Iowa’s state 4-H contest and most national contests still use small individual class cards. An example of those cards and how to fill them out can be found in *appendix V*.

Regardless of what kinds of cards are used- teach your students to double or triple check cards or scantrons before turning them in. This means you should probably have some practices where you have cards handed out and they turn them in. It is about the only way to actually practice it.

**Pro-tip**- When you call for cards to be handed in, remind them to check their cards. Get in the habit of saying “time is up, double check your card, do you have a name and or number, class name, and placing on it?”

Some contests may require additional information on the card and some contests may have the cards pre filled out and students just need to mark their placing. Those cards are extra important to make sure they match the class with the placing, otherwise it could turn into getting every class wrong.

At some contests students will have to turn in cards when they give their reasons. Their “reasons card” should have their name, number, or both, depending on the contest, the class name, and their placing on it. They hand their card with their placing on it to the reasons official before they start giving their reasons, that way the official can write their score on it.
SCORING

In order to help score your students cards, you should probably understand how to score yourself. Most coaches do not understand how scoring actually works, some do not calculate scores, and some have the handy app from livestockjudging.com where you punch in the officials and cuts and it spits out every score possibility.

**Pro-tip** - actually understanding how to score and teaching your students so they can score themselves is often faster then using an app that calculates for you.

Plus, a lot of contests students might not have their phones handy back at the critique anyhow and then you still get stuck trying to help them all score.

A class of four animals will have 24 potential placings. Officials rank the animals from best to worst. Each class is worth a total of 50 points and each class of four includes three pairs- top, middle, and bottom. For each pair officials will assign cuts and the severity (or number value) of the cuts are determined by the degree of difficulty of placing each pair. The easier the pair- the higher the cut value or more severe it is.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Degree of Difficulty</strong></th>
<th><strong>Value of Cuts</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easy decision, the official are extremely confident “Helen Keller can place this pair”</td>
<td>6-8 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasonable decision, the officials still think it is straight forward “Most coaches will agree with us”</td>
<td>4-5 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging decision, the officials may have some disagreements and it is more debatable “You can make those points up in reasons”</td>
<td>2-3 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Near impossible decision, the officials are arguing about it and do not want the pair to determine the contest “Chuck Norris would struggle with this pair” | 1 point (not common to see…)

The maximum total of cuts cannot exceed 15 points. To ensure there are no scores below zero, if the cuts total 15, there is a maximum of 5 points in the middle pair, and if the cuts total 14, there is a maximum of 8 points in the middle pair.

On the next page you can find an example
Placing 2-3-1-4. Cuts 4, 2, 6.

The top pair is between 2 and 3. The middle pair is between 3 and 1. The bottom pair is between 1 and 4.

In this class it is established that the top pair is moderately difficult, the middle pair is an extremely tough decision, and the bottom pair is very easy.

There are a total of six correct decisions that must be made to receive the maximum total of 50; otherwise, points will be deducted. Always score and do comparisons off of the officials.

When trying to figure the score- ask: is 2 over 3? If not, take away 4 points. Is 2 over 1? If not, take away 6 points since the top and middle cut were both taken. Is 2 over 4? If not, take away 12 points because you take all three cuts. Is 3 over 1? If not, take off 2 points for the middle cut. Is 3 over 4? If not, take off 8 points for the middle and bottom. And finally, is 1 over 4? If not, take away 6 points.

Here are some examples based of the above placing of 2-3-1-4 with cuts of 4-2-6:

Placing of 3-2-1-4. Only the top 4-point cut is taken, so their score is 46.

Placing of 2-3-4-1. The bottom cut 6 point cut is taken, so their score is 44.

Placing of 1-2-3-4. The top and middle cuts are taken and then the middle cut is taken again, so the score is 42.

Placing of 2-4-3-1. The bottom cut is taken, the middle and bottom are taken and then the bottom again, so the score is 14.

A complete backward bust would make the lowest score possible 14. Yikes.
Some of the types of calculations to perform are:

Single pair switch- just a switch with the officials in the top, middle, bottom, or top and bottom. These are painless to calculate.

Double pair switch- both the top and bottom pair are switched from the officials. It is still a pretty painless calculation.

Simple bust- one animal is placed correctly on top or bottom while the other three are misaligned. This is a little more challenging to score, but doable.

Complete bust- all animals are in the incorrect position. This is usually discouraging for coaches and students but is very common among beginning FFA and 4-H members. So scoring them might as well be learned!

**Scoring Coaching Strategies**

*“Score Solvers”*

After covering how to score (which is generally easiest with a white board or chalk board and just explaining step by step) put an official placing and cuts up for students to see (on the board or on a piece of paper) and give 3 other placings to score. Have them work in partners to score them. You can double-check their work, or better yet, have partners check other partners.

*“Mystery Busts”*

Have students line up and each make up an official placing and cuts to write on a piece of paper. When everyone has it written down, have them leave their papers and all slide to the right to the next person’s papers (the person on the end goes to the start of the line) and write down a placing. Then leave the papers and slide again to the right to add another placing. Continue adding a placing and sliding until they has moved the paper before getting back to their own. Then have them score all the placings. If you want to add some competitiveness to it- add in a prize for the one who solves them the fastest with fewest mistakes.
This manual is designed more as a *how to coach* and less as a *how to judge*, so with that, there will not be a lot of information on what to look for in every species, but more strategies on making classes and how to teach things. That said, there is a list of priorities and in the reasons section, some terminology. More emphasis will be put on performance data and reasons since in the grand scheme of things, that is what more teams really need to work on and is what most coaches know less about.

As previously mentioned, even great livestock evaluators are not always great in every species. Find help getting livestock to sort through and teaching what to look for in each species. If you can, go to livestock producers houses and have them set up classes and help you give the officials on them. They can then teach you along the way.

Live classes are obviously the best choice for practice but in the case those cannot be found, do to weather or availability, etc. picture and video classes can make an ok substitute. Video classes can be accessed in a variety of places, as can picture classes, or you can create your own.

A good list of picture and video class resources can be found in appendix VI. If you don’t want to steal (or buy) you can always make your own. Video classes are more challenging unless you have a good quality camera. Picture classes can be made my taking your own pictures or simply borrowing pictures from the Internet. There are a few picture classes here for you starting on page 26.

It is very easy to set up a Google Slides presentation, paste four pictures into it and have it available to share with students for a quick practice or if they cannot make it to a practice.

**Set Priorities**

*Pro-tip*- Have priorities to place every class, whether it is market lambs or breeding gilts- make sure kids know what they are supposed to be looking for. Review the priorities often; have them write them in their practice notebook.

After you have repeated priorities often enough, the more experienced students will start automatically saying them before every class and will train in the less experienced students for you. A simple list of priorities can be found on the next three pages:
Quick Judging Priorities:

Heifers
1) Practicality (Structure and Body)  
(Structure) Are they comfortable standing and moving? Will they stay sound and be able to stay around a long time? Are their bones and joints in the most ideal spot? Do they have big feet? (Body) - Do they look like a good mama cow with a deep body, and wide, bold, soft ribcage?  
2) Balance/Quality  
Are the proportional? Are they good looking with a feminine head, long neck, level top, and uniform depth?  
3) Power/Stoutness  
Do they have big feet & bone, are wide, bold ribbed and have enough muscle? Females first…
Don’t forget udders…

Bulls
1) Power/Muscle  
Are they big footed, stout boned, rugged made, wide made, bold ribbed, heavy muscled, big backed, and big ended?  
2) Practicality (Structure and Body)  
(Structure) Are they comfortable standing and moving? Will they stay sound and be able to stay around a long time? Are their bones and joints in the most ideal spot? Do they have big feet? (Body) - Do they have a dad bod with a deep body, and wide, bold, soft ribcage?  
3) Balance/Quality  
Are the proportional? Are they good looking, long necked, level topped, and uniform in depth?  
Don’t forget nuts (Bulls need NuBuGu- Nuts, Butts, Guts…)

Market Cattle
1) Power/Muscle  
Are they heavy muscled? Are they big footed, stout boned, rugged made, wide made, bold ribbed, heavy muscled, big backed, and big ended? Will they yield a lot of product?  
2) Finish/Cover aka Fat  
We want them to be happy medium fat. No Michelin men, no 0 fat body builders. They need enough fat to comfortably quality grade without sacrificing yield grade. Check brisket, rib, loin edge, and flank  
3) Practicality (Structure and Body)
(Structure) Are they comfortable standing and moving? Will they stay sound and be able to stay around a long time? Are their bones and joints in the most ideal spot? Do they have big feet? (Body)- Do they have a dad bod with a deep body, and wide, bold, soft ribcage?

4) Balance/Quality
Are the proportional? Are they good looking, long necked, level topped, and uniform in depth?

*They have to be good practical market animals before they are show calves*

**Breeding Gilts**

1) Practicality (Structure and Body)
(Structure) Are they comfortable standing and moving? Will they stay sound and be able to stay around a long time? Are their bones and joints in the most ideal spot? Do they have big feet? (Body)- Do they look like a good mama cow with a deep body, and wide, bold, soft ribcage?

2) Width & Durability
Are they wide and have big, wide, square toes and big bones? Do they look like they will last?

3) Balance/Quality
Are the proportional? Are they good looking with a feminine head, long neck, level top, and uniform depth?

4) Power/Stoutness
Are they wide, bold ribbed and have enough muscle? They need to be females first…

*Don’t forget underlines, vulvas, toes, and ears…*

**Market Hogs**

1) Power/Muscle
Are they heavy muscled? Are they big footed, stout boned, rugged made, wide made, bold ribbed, heavy muscled, big backed, and big ended? Will they yield a lot of product?

2) Cover aka Fat
We want they to be happy medium fat. No Michelin men, no 0 fat body builders. They need enough fat enough they don’t look raw but no chubby bunnies. Check chest, rib, loin edge, flank, ham-seam

3) Practicality (Structure and Body)
(Structure) Are they comfortable standing and moving? Will they stay sound and be able to stay around a long time? Are their bones and joints in the most ideal spot? Do they have big feet? (Body)- Do they have a dad bod with a deep body, and wide, bold, soft ribcage?

4) Balance/Quality
Are the proportional? Are they good looking, long necked, level topped, and uniform in depth?

*Market hogs should be “built like athletes”. Preferably running backs.*
Breeding Sheep

1) Balance/Quality
Are the proportional? Are they good looking, long necked, level topped, and uniform in depth?

2) Power/Stoutness
Are they wide, bold ribbed and have enough muscle? They need to be females first… but **stout**

3) Size
No flat narrow giants- this is not frame sheep times anymore, but not chumba womba midgets

4) Structure
Are they comfortable standing and moving? Will they stay sound and be able to stay around a long time? Are their bones and joints in the most ideal spot? Do they have big feet?

**Look at mouths**...

Market Lambs -

1) Power/Muscle
Are they heavy muscled? Are they big footed, stout boned, rugged made, wide made, bold ribbed, heavy muscled, big backed, and big ended? Will they yield a lot of product?

2) Finish/Cover aka Fat
We want them fat enough they are not skinny and boney but not enough to be soft and squishy. Check chest, rib, loin edge, and flank

3) Balance/Quality
Are the proportional? Are they good looking, long necked, level topped, and uniform in depth?

4) Structure
Are they comfortable standing and moving? Will they stay sound and be able to stay around a long time? Are their bones and joints in the most ideal spot? Do they have big feet?

5) Size
No giant, long legged freaks, but no chunky monkey midgets…

**Handle- the combination of muscle and fat based on what you feel... don’t forget handle...**

Breeding Does (Goats)

1) Balance/Quality
Are the proportional? Are they good looking, long necked, level topped, and uniform in depth?

2) Power/Stoutness
Are they wide, bold ribbed and have enough muscle? They need to be females first… but stout and wide, don’t forget wide…

3) Structure
Are they comfortable standing and moving? Will they stay sound and be able to stay around a long time? Are their bones and joints in the most ideal spot? Do they have big feet? Look at mouths...

**Market Goats -**

1) **Power/Muscle**
   Are they heavy muscled? Are they big footed, stout boned, rugged made, wide made, bold ribbed, heavy muscled, big backed, and big ended? Will they yield a lot of product? Don’t forget wide!

2) **Finish/Cover aka Fat**
   We want them lean, but not to the point of raw and boney. Check chest, rib, loin edge, and flank

3) **Balance/Quality**
   Are the proportional? Are they good looking, long necked, level topped, and uniform in depth?

4) **Structure**
   Are they comfortable standing and moving? Will they stay sound and be able to stay around a long time? Are their bones and joints in the most ideal spot? Do they have big feet?

*Handle* - the combination of muscle and fat based on what you feel... don’t forget handle...
Find The Logic

To keep things simple placing, for you and your students, try to design classes with logic in mind. What does that mean? It means have a plan with the classes. Officials who plan classes at contests (at least good contests) have a plan in mind when gathering up livestock to use. Now realize some small contests may not have much to work with- but the goal should be when putting classes together for it to have something to tie to. So if you are designing a class try to plan a lesson around or build on something.

Logic Examples:

- Easy winner. The rest of the class may be challenging, but there is one that has to win because it is a beast next to the rest.
- Easy bottom. Again- the rest of the class may be challenging, but there is one that is clearly put in to go 4th.
- Two pair. There are two that are obviously better then the others and there should be a big cut in the middle pair. Maybe the ends could be flipped, but the middle should not be crossed.
- Top, second, bottom pair.
- Top pair, third, forth.
- You get the point by now…

If you look for logic in the class, you can avoid taking a major bust and keep it down to pair switches or a minor bust. When it comes down to it, judging is really avoiding busts and talking well…

Time During Classes

Since there is only 10-12 minutes per class, students need to be efficient with their time. The first glance at the class should be a general overview to look for big picture things. (Something that sticks out real good or real bad.) Then the rest of the first 2 minutes of the class should be spend evaluating each animal individually and trying to set a initial placing. Take another look at the big picture of the class and if it seems like an easy decision, begin filling out the “tic-tac-toe board”, nine-box bottom part of the notebook and preparing a strategy for reasons, if it is a reasons class. Or if it is a questions class, gather more information on the class, especially ID’s. If the class is more challenging, take more time to compare and contrast before making a final decision.

**Pro-tip-** Cards should be marked when the 2-minute warning is given. That way plenty of time can be used to double and triple check the card before turning it in and the student can be prepared to rotate to the next class.
Coaching Strategies For Placing Classes

“Good, Average, Bad”
This strategy is to get students to make quick assessments in the quality of the animal. It can be done with live animals, photos, or videos. Put together animals of the same species and purpose- for example, all market lambs, or all breeding gilts. Try to find a variety or shapes, sizes and builds of animals. When using live animals is often this works with animals that are a little too different to fit in a class. Let students look at the animals just one at a time and make a fast judgment if it is good, average, or bad. After everyone has shared their opinion, have them all tell why they think that way. If using pictures, it works good to print and staple them into a booklet, or to put them in a slideshow on the computer. With videos, it works to steal a few seconds of a YouTube video to get a glimpse.

“Your Class, My Class”
With Your Class, My Class, students understand a little more about discovering the logic of the class and have to evaluate each animal to put their own class together. This is very time consuming with live animals as it takes a long time to sort but works really well with pictures. Have students put together their own class of 4 animals and come up with an official placing and cuts for the class. You can either let them do this on a computer- it works good to start a Google slides and have each of them put a class on a slide. Or you can print out a lot of pictures and have them select the pictures to use. If you print pictures, make sure to give them a big variety. After they completed their class, have the group judge it and see if you agree with the official and cuts the student came up with.

“Committee Decision”
With Committee Decision, students understand a little more about discovering the logic of the class and how cuts are assigned by acting as the official committee. Judge the class as you normally would but instead of giving students an official placing and cuts, inform them they have are in charge of putting an official placing and cuts on. They all need to share their placing and discuss any discrepancies so everyone’s opinion is heard. If the class is really easy, this will not have the same effect as if the class is a little more challenging. If you have a really large group of students you can always break them up into smaller groups to do this also.
“2-Minute Drill”

Learning to use time wisely and working on quick decision making is what the 2-Minute Drill is for. This strategy works well if you have students that need to work on time management, filling out notes, faster decision making, or sticking with their gut instinct (they like to overthink). It works best with students that have at least a little experience. Before placing a class- this works best live classes but can work with pictures, videos is more challenging, let them know they will only have two minutes to figure out a placing and mark their card. The rest of the time they will have for note taking, if you choose to do reasons on the class. Some do this with reasons, some without; some shake it up and do both. Inform the students to maximize their two minutes they should do a general overview of the class and then take a good but quick look at each of the four animals and do a quick assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of each. Literally set a timer and call two minutes and make them turn in a card.
Picture Class Examples

Market Lambs
Shorthorn Heifers
Market Hogs
Boer Does
USING PERFORMANCE DATA

The performance data information here can be printed in packet format for students to read and follow along. This is generally best to start introducing performance data a little bit at a time. Many high-end coaches, especially on the college end teach data in this way: first go over what the potential categories could be in each species. Then look at lots of examples of data to practice it. You can practice judging performance judging classes on paper just like you would picture classes. Just print off or post the data where the students and see it and set officials and cuts. There is example data in the back in appendix VII.

Pro-tip- have students make flashcards with the data category on one side, and what they should be looking at for that category on the other side.
BEGINNING INFORMATION
Data is usually put on class for a number of reasons: to make classes easier to sort, to make a “boring class” more fun to talk in the reasons room, to allow kids to separate themselves with cool scenario tie ins in the room and to show that they can understand what the numbers and scenario mean.
Most of the time, the data will follow the logic of the class and help you sort the livestock. It could say there is a standout, there is one to go 4th, that it pair-so on and so forth. Even so you should NEVER just look at the paper and not look at the livestock. ALWAYS look at the livestock. Sometimes the data might not quite match the livestock. In that case “good livestock with bad data beat bad livestock with good data.”

The first thing to do is to read the scenario. The scenario is those few sentences that will be on the page with all the numbers/columns. The scenario will tell you what you are looking for in that specific class.
Each scenario should give you 3 pieces of information to help you place the livestock- the production environment, the production needs, and the marketing plans. Environment would be where they are located and what the weather is like. For example, the sand hills of Nebraska is a popular setting. Production needs are what the farm/ranch/individual is searching for or what they are trying to accomplish, such as make show heifer, make replacement gilts, sell feeder calves, sell club lambs, make heifers to keep etc. Marketing is how they are going to get it done; it’s the money side of things.

That information should help you decide what you are looking for phenotypically, in the animal and genotypically, in the animal’s numbers on paper.

Performance data can be expressed in two different ways- through EPD’s (expected progeny differences) or though actual data. Actual data will be marked as such and will include things like actual weights and carcass scan information.

PRIORITIZING
99% of the time a balanced genetic script (good data across the page) is more sought after than an individual that is off the charts in one single column. UNLESS the scenario says they don’t care about anything except that specific column.
**CATTLE NUMBERS**

BIF stands for Beef Improvement Federation.
CHB stands for Certified Hereford Beef.
CAB stands for Certified Angus Beef.
If two animals have the exact same data across the page then they are NOT TWINS but are FLUSHMATES.

The following are considered maternal and growth measurements.

**Birth Weight (BW)** - expressed in pounds, and is usually written in a decimal number. The number represents the difference in weight a sire’s sons and daughters could be compared to others at birth. Birth weights should be low, or as moderate as possible. A high birth weight will cause calving (dystocia) problems. Continental breeds (Charolais, Limousin, Simmental, Maine) should never be more than a 3.5 and British breeds (Angus, Shorthorn, Hereford) should never be more than a 6.0. In a scenario where they are keeping heifers, or bulls to make replacements, this number is very important. If it’s a class of bulls and they are bred to heifers this is very important, if bred to cows not quite as much. Just note some with a very small birth figure can sometimes be a little no growth animal.

**Calving Ease (CE)** - A simplified version of CED and CEM created using those two in combination with birth weight.

**Calving Ease Direct (CED)** - is expressed as percentage of unassisted births, with a higher value indicating greater calving ease in first-calf heifers. It predicts the average difference in ease with which a sire's calves will be born when he is bred to first-calf heifers. The higher the better. Usually written in a whole number between 1 and 12. “Plus the smooth shouldered, high calving ease direct bull’s daughters should have less dystocia problems.”

**Calving Ease Maternal (CEM)** - is expressed in percentage unassisted births with a higher value indicating greater calving ease in first-calf daughters. It predicts the average ease with which a sire's daughters will calve as first calf heifers when compared to daughters of other sires.

**Weaning Weight (WW)** - expressed in pounds, and is usually written in a decimal number. The number represents the difference in weight a sire’s sons and daughters could be compared to others at weaning time. **WW should be high.** In a scenario where calves will be sold at weaning this is very important. In a scenario where calves are born and will be retained through the feedlot phase it is not a big deal. “If his genetics breed true his weanlings should attract the most sale barn attention.”

**Yearling Weight (YW)** - expressed in pounds, and is usually written in a decimal number. The number represents the difference in weight a sire’s sons and daughters could be compared to others at a year of age. **Generally YW should be high, but there are exceptions.** If the scenario calls for moderating cow size, then high is bad. If the scenario say limited resources (feed & labor) then limited is better. But, if you are making feedlot cattle- especially if the owner wants to retain ownership then the higher the better. If the scenario says something about no growth
stimulants/promotants can be used (Laura’s Lean or Nolan Ryan’s) then more growth is extra important.

**Mature Weight (MW)**- The expected finished weight of the animal expressed in pounds, and is usually written in a decimal number. Generally MW should be average. If the scenario calls for moderating cow size, then high is bad. If the scenario says limited resources (feed & labor) then lower is better. But, if you are making feedlot cattle- especially if the owner wants to retain ownership then the higher the better. If the scenario says something about no growth stimulants/promotants can be used (Laura’s Lean or Nolan Ryan’s) then more size is important. “He should do more to help fine tune cow herd maintenance.”

**Milk (M)**- The ability of the daughters to produce milk, written in pounds or percentages of pounds. This number totally depends on the scenario how high it should be. Usually you want it to be a higher number. But there are limitations. If there is limited feed/labor/resources then this number should be average or lower, especially if they are in a western/range/sand hills/large pasture setting. Otherwise if they milk too hard they will not be able to maintain themselves because all their feed and fat will go into milk production and they will shrivel away. It should be a little lower also if the scenario says anything about fine tuning cowherd maintenance, conserving energy, or moderating. Even if you are looking for a lower milk number it should still be at or just above breed average. “With his excessively high milk figure and lack of body I worry about his daughters ability to maintain themselves.”

**Stayablity (Stay)**- This number is based off the likelihood that daughters will still be in production at 6 years old. Always the higher the better for this number.

**Scrotal Circumference (SC)**- This can be an EPD or an actual figure- make sure to note which it is. It is a measure of the scrotal sac and is expressed in centimeters (cm) and it represents the fertility of the sire or his daughters. Generally the higher this number is the better. If a bull has smaller than a 32 he cannot be used and should go 4th!! Smaller than a 32 will not let him pass a breeding soundness exam (BSE) and means he’s basically a steer. In a maternal scenario (keeping heifers, replacements, breeding bulls) this number should be 34 or higher. For a terminal setting (feedlot cattle, weanlings) as long as it’s above 32 you should be ok. “I seriously question his ability to cover the cows.”

**Total Maternal (TM)**- A measurement comprised of birth weight, calving ease, milk and other maternal figures, generally expressed as a percentage. The higher the number the better. In a scenario calling for making feedlot cattle or terminal bound progeny this figure is not very important, but if any heifers are retained or bulls are used to make females this figure is very important.

The following are considered terminal measurements

**Carcass Weight (CW/HCW)**- The difference of hot carcass weight (dressing percentage). Usually written in a decimal. The higher the better, it means potentially more muscle.
**Marbling (Marb)**- With actual scan data this would be expressed as **Percent Intramuscular Fat** (%IMF) and would be the animals “actual” percentage of marbling in the rib eye. For an EPD this would be the progeny’s expected percentage of marbling in the rib eye. Either way it will probably be written as a percentage decimal number. In most cases- the higher the better, especially if it is a British breed that is known for marbling (angus, shorthorn). In a maternal scenario this number is not as important. In most terminal scenarios this should be high but there are some exceptions. If it says anything about Laura’s Lean Beef- then marbling does not matter-look for muscle and growth. In that case extra marbling is not good because they are marketed strictly on leanness. Cattle being marketed on a balanced grid should have high numbers in both marbling and rib eye. Cattle to be marketed as Certified Angus Beef (CAB) must be upper 2/3’s choice grading or better (high marbling). “I’d be more comfortable with his progeny’s chances of stamping CAB.”

**Ribeye (RE/REA)**- Check to see if this is scan data or EPD. If it is scan data then it is what the animal “actually has” and will be expressed in square inches. If it is an EPD then it represents the difference in muscle the progeny are expected to have and it will be written in a percentage of square inches. **The higher the number the better.**

**Fat Thickness (BF/Fat)**- The difference in back fat measured at the 12th rib (between the 12th & 13th). **This number should be average.** Too low symbolizes there might not be a chance to marble and grade. It means there is a chance the animal is hard doing. Too high symbolizes the animal might yield bad and have extra condition. It means there is a chance the animal could be very fat or early maturing.

**Percent Retail Product (%RP)**- This figure is the difference in dressing percentages and muscle and is expressed in a percentage figure that represents pounds. Basically it means progeny should be heavier muscled. **The higher the better.**

The following are dollar value indexes.

**Weaning Value ($W)**- Weaning merit in the feedlot based on growth, milk, muscle and feed conversion differences, expressed in dollars per head. **The higher the better!** This is especially important is calves will be sold at weaning or marketed as terminal progeny and are not retained. If they will be fed through the feedlot phase with retained ownership this number is not as important.

**Feedlot Value ($F)**- Post weaning merit in the feedlot based on growth, muscle and feed conversion differences, expressed in dollars per head. **The higher the better always!**

**Grid Value ($G)**- Carcass weight, quality & yield (muscle & fat) differences expressed in dollars per head. **The higher the better!**

**Quality Grade Value ($QG)**- Quality grade differences (intramuscular fat/marbling) differences expressed in dollars per head. **The higher the better.** Again watch out for a few tricky scenarios like Laura’s Lean.
Yield Grade Value ($YG)- Yield grade differences (muscle to fat ratio) differences expressed in dollars per head. The higher the better. Cattle sold on a balanced grid need a balance of high YG and QG.

Beef Value ($B)- Post weaning merit in the feedlot based on growth, grid performance and feed conversion, expressed in dollars per head. The higher the better always!

Energy Value ($E)- The amount of energy (money in time and resources) an animal can save by being smaller, better fleshing, reproducing efficiently and so forth, expressed in dollars per head. The higher the better always!

Baldy Maternal Index (BMIS)- This is the expected average performance of progeny of Hereford bulls used in rotational crossbreeding programs on Angus-based cows and heifers, with the progeny marketed on a Certified Hereford Beef LLC pricing grid.

Certified Hereford Beef Index (CHBS)- This is the expected average performance of progeny of Hereford bulls mated to British-cross cows, with all progeny sold as fed cattle on a Certified Hereford Beef LLC pricing grid. It is a terminal sire index, including growth and carcass information only, since all progeny are marketed and no females are retained in the herd.

Terminal Index/Mainstream Terminal Index ($TI/$MTI/TI)- A measurement comprised of growth, muscle, fat, and other terminal figures, generally expressed as a percentage. The higher the number the better. In a scenario calling for making feedlot cattle or terminal bound progeny this figure is very important, less important in maternal scenarios.

All Purpose Index (API)- This figure is in a league of its own because it is an index that is not usually not expressed in a dollar figure but just a simple number. This figure encompasses nearly everything and should always be high. This is the expected average performance of progeny of Simmental bulls used on the entire cowherd, with a portion of the daughters being retained for breeding and the remaining progeny being put on feed and sold grade and yield. No matter what the scenario a high API is good, especially in a very complex one.
SWINE NUMBERS

NSR stands for National Swine Registry.
NSIF stands for National Swine Improvement Federation.
BLUP stands for Best Linear Unbiased Prediction
STAGES stands for Swine Testing and Growth Evaluation Systems provides producers of Duroc,
Hampshire, Landrace, and Yorkshire hogs with performance records. These records utilize
growth, back fat, pounds of lean, litter size, and litter weight to predict genetic values for each
pig and its parents.
Actual data and scan data can be used- which means they are “real numbers”. Or EPD’s can be
used which means they are the numbers expected for the animal’s progeny. Make sure to see
which you are using!
Hogs with the same litter notch, parity, NBA, NW, LW and SPI are considered littermates. The
growth, BF and LEA etc. columns do not have to be the same.

Notches- This is not an EPD obviously but is often written on the paper with the data. Notches
are written like this 3-2. 3-2 would mean the animal came from litter number 3 (right ear) and
was the 2nd one notched (left ear). Note for reasons and talk about potential littermates if animals
have the same first number. So 2-3 and 2-7 would be potential littermates.

Parity- A parity is a farrowing or litter of pigs. This is just something to note for reasons.

Number Born Alive (NBA)- The actual or expected (EPD) number of piglets born for a parity.
This measures reproductive efficiency and is expressed in either a whole number or a percentage.
Either way, the higher the better.

Number Weaned (NW)- The actual or expected (EPD) number of piglets weaned off a sow for
a parity. This measures sows productivity, milk and progeny growth and is expressed in pounds
and written in a percentage. The higher the better.

Number After Transfer (NAT)- The number of pigs the sow is raising after her litter has been
equaled out between one or more other sows within the first 24-48 hours after farrowing. It takes
mothering ability and milking into consideration. The higher the better.

21-Day Litter Weight (21 DLW/LW)- The actual or expected (EPD) weight of the piglets
weaned off a sow for a parity. This measures sows productivity, milk and progeny growth and is
expressed in pounds and written in a percentage or whole number. This should be high. Take into
account the number weaned- don’t get sucked in by a high 21DLW for a litter of 9 compared to a
litter with 4…
**Days (Days)**- Also known as **Days to 250** or occasionally **Days to 230**. Days EPD is an estimation of how fast/in how many days the progeny will take to reach 250 pounds (unless it specifies 230). Actual is how many days it took the individual. This can be written in 2 different ways. The number of days in which case a 170 would be pretty slow (not good) and a 140 would be pretty fast (good). For the number of days- the lower the number the better (means faster gaining). So a 145 is better than a 154. It can also be written in a percentage of days, in which case 3.2 would mean it takes 3.2 extra days verses a -2.0 would mean it takes 2 days less to reach the weight. For a percentage of days- the more negative the number the better! So a -1.0 would be better than a 1.0. In any livestock the biggest cost to producers is feed. In pigs, especially large operations, just a few extra days on feed per pig could mean the difference between making a little money, breaking even, or losing a lot of money. Days are especially in pigs, even for a show pig scenario, because not every single pig is going to be sold for show- there will be some culls. “If the low days gilt transmits her growth to her progeny they should be the most efficient on the feed floor.” “If her progeny inherit her growth they should be the quickest to market.”

**Back Fat/10th Rib Fat (BF)**- Note if this is scan data or an EPD. EPD’s are adjusted to 250 pounds. BF is usually expressed in tenths of inches and generally ranges from .3 to 1.3, or it can also be written as a positive or negative percentage. Either way- middle of the road is generally best unless the scenario calls for something specific. If they were trying to increase leanness and muscle then a lower number or more negative would be desired. If they were trying to increase body or practicality then a little higher number or bigger positive would be sought after. In most cases, too little fat correlates to a hard doing hog. Too much fat begins to take away from muscle, leanness and good composition. In gilts especially a little more fat can be tolerated. “I correlate her extra back fat with her deep, soft, productive look.” “The ultra lean barrow is too hard in his center, flat ribbed and tight in his structure- he’s just not practical.” At this time- a .6 would be a safe number.

**Loin Eye Area/10th Rib Muscle (LEA)**- Again note if this is scan data or an EPD. EPD’s are adjusted to 250 pounds. LEA is usually expressed in inches and can also be written as a positive or negative percentage. The bigger the number the better. If there is an animal with a negative LEA this is bad, not like days where a negative is good… When hog carcasses are ribbed, they are cut between the 10th and 11th ribs and it is where the back fat and loin eye measurements are taken, hence the terms 10th rib muscle or fat. “His progeny should rib large eyes.” “She should produce heavier muscled show pig prospects.” “Her terminally bound progeny should be worth more on the rail.”

**Pounds (Lbs.)**- Pounds of lean EPD is the amount of fat free lean meat adjusted to a 185-pound carcass. A boar with a LBS EPD of 2.0 is expected to produce offspring that generates carcasses with 2 pounds more lean than from an average sire. The average LBS EPD is 0.0, while a positive value is more desirable producing offspring with more pounds of eatable pork product. The higher the number the better, as it means more muscle or “cut out value”. “Her sons and daughters should end with more pounds of edible product.”

**Average Daily Gain (ADG)**- The amount of weight, or expect amount of weight the animal did or should gain, expressed in pounds. We like fast growing hogs- especially in a terminal setting! This number should always be high.
**Sow Productivity Index (SPI)**- This is an indicator for sows reproductive traits. This index combines the NBA and 21-day LWT and includes a sows lifetime NBA and 21-day LWT data. The SPI of the average sow is 100. Any animal with an SPI under 100 you should automatically be thinking bottom pair or 4th place candidate. **The higher the better.** “The gilt farrowed from the most productive dam is very maternal in her look.” In a maternal scenario (replacement gilts or boars for replacement gilts), SPI is the most important column.

**Maternal Line Index (MLI)**- This indicates the economic value of the progeny produced. The MLI puts twice the emphasis on reproductive traits (SPI) as it does on post weaning traits (TSI). So basically it is the king pin figure since it combines nearly everything into one number. The components of MLI are BF, days/250, LBS, NBA, and LWT. Just like SPI, the average MLI is 100. Anything with an MLI less than 100 you should be thinking bottom pair or 4th. **The higher the better.**

**Terminal Sire Index (TSI)**- TSI combines growth (days to 250 lbs.), pounds of fat free lean (LBS), and back fat (BF). The TSI value is used to select boars to be used as terminal sire or as sires to be used in crossbred breeding programs. The average TSI is 100. When you see a TSI under 100 you should think bottom pair or 4th. **The higher the better.** In a terminal setting-making market hogs or terminal boars this is the most important column.
**SHEEP NUMBERS**

If the EPD is expressed in FEPD’s then it is the differences found within the flock only. The numbers are used the same way though.

NSIP stands for National Sheep Improvement Program. Sheep data is easy- everything should be high.

**Type Born (Born)**- How the sheep is born, if it is a single (S), a twin (TW), or a triplet (Tr), or in rare cases a quad (Q). Twins would be ideal but there is no right or wrong here. Make a note for the reasons room.

**Type Reared/Raised (Raised/Reared)**- How the sheep is raised, if it is a single (S), a twin (TW), or a triplet (Tr), or in rare cases a quad (Q). However many were born with it, to have the same type now would be ideal but there is no right or wrong here. Make a note for the reasons room.

**Lambs Born/Number Born Alive (NBA)**- The number of lambs expected to be born alive with dams milking and mothering ability to be taken into consideration. The higher the number the better.

**Birth Weight (BW)**- expressed in pounds, and is usually written in a decimal number. The number represents the difference in weight a sire’s sons and daughters could be compared to others at birth. Birth weights should be low.

**60 Day Weight (60 DW or WW)**- The weight or expected weight of the sheep in relation to others when it is around 60 days old, or about “weaning” time. This number should always be high. Size counts double in sheep!

**120-Day Weight (120 DW)**- The weight or expected weight of the sheep in relation to others when it is around 120 days old. This number should always be high. Size counts double in sheep! “The big extended ewe has genetic growth on her side.”

**Milk (M)**- The ability of the daughters to produce milk, written in pounds or percentages of pounds. This number is different from cattle in the fact you always want the number to be high.

**Maternal Milk & Growth (MMG)**- Combines information on 60-day weaning weight and maternal milk EPDs to provide a total estimate of the genetic merit of an animal’s daughters for weaning weight. It recognizes that the genetic contribution of a ewe to the weaning weight of her lambs combines the effects of her milk production and growth potential. EPD is expressed in pounds of lamb weaned by an animal’s daughters. Look for the high one.

**Pounds of Lamb Weaned (LbsW)**- An indication of reproductive rate, maternal ability of the ewe, lamb survivability, and growth. The higher the better, especially in commercial sheep.
Maternal % Lamb Crop- This indicates genetic potential for prolificacy (how many babies can there be/reproductive efficiency), and is expressed as number of lambs born per 100 ewes lambing (or %). For example, the difference in % Lamb Crop EPDs suggests daughters of Ram A should drop an average of 5.0 more lambs per 100 ewes lambing than daughters of Ram B (or 5% more lambs). Ram A +10.0 verses Ram B +5.0. Look for the high one.

Codon Test or Scrapie Status- Just for reference there is 3 different scrapie codon tests Codon 136 (VV is good, AA bad), Codon 154 (HH good, RR bad), Codon 171 (RR good, QQ bad). The only one ever used in a contest on paper is Codon 171- just something to be aware of. These letters represent a sheep resistance to scrapie. It is NOT wether or not they have it or cannot get it. RR means that a sheep is the most resistant to scrapie, QR means it has some resistance to scrapie, QQ means it has less resistance to scrapie. Therefore RR is good and QQ is bad and QR is in between. Scrapie is a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE) that affects the central nervous system and if infected, is always fatal. It is “mad cow” (BSE) or chronic wasting (CWD) for sheep. In some scenarios they will say point blank that scrapie resistance is important or they would like to “maintain the scrapie integrity of the flock”, then QQ sheep will go to the bottom. In some cases- like in wether dams, if it does not mention scrapie resistance in the scenario and there is one that is obviously the best but is QR- then use it!! His RR status should help maintain the scrapie free integrity of the flock.” “His RR status is a bonus to his good phenotype.” “Her QQ scrapie status on further convinces me to place her 4th.” “In the middle pair of heterogeneous scrapie resistant sheep (QR).”

Spider Lamb Status- Spider is a hereditary chronodrodysplasia (lethal recessive genetic disorder) that came about from single trait selecting sheep for growth and frame. It causes skeletal deformities in sheep such as abnormally long, bent & twisted limbs, twisted spines, excessively shallow bodies, and flattened rib cages. It is prevalent in Suffolks. Spider status is determined by a genetic test. NN means the sheep is a non-carrier of the disorder “normal”. NS means the sheep is a carrier of the disease and may or may not produce progeny with the disorder pending on if they are mated with another carrier or one that is “clean” (NN). If a sheep has spider it will be SS and will probably not live hence you should never see one in a contest. Most spider lambs do not live more than a few hours after birth if they are born alive. “The spider carrier limit breeding versatility.”

Blood Type- is a combination of scrapie and spider statuses. The most ideal would be RR/NN. See Codon Test/Scrapie Status and Spider Lamb Status. “A more problem free genotype.”
KEEP/CULL CLASSES

Keep/Cull classes are different then your average four animal regular placing class as there are eight animals in the class and you are deciding which four should be kept back for production, or whatever the scenario says they are doing with them, and which four are going to be culled off or gotten rid of.

To make things easier- because it is a lot to look through eight animals in ten minutes, most of the time there is data put on the class to help make decisions. This performance data is interpreted the same as the performance data explained in the previous section- so if your students understand data, they will be in good shape for keep/cull classes.

The four animals that are kept do not need to be placed in order and the four animals that are culled do not need to be placed either- simply select four to stay and four to go.

As you can imagine- the scoring with keep/cull ends up being a little different then a regular class also. Actually- it is easier. Each animal is assigned a number of points and the four animals kept total points should add up to 50. So if the same four are kept as the officials, the full points, still a value of 50, are earned. When the officials are giving the critique on the class it will sound something like this, “we elected to keep gilts 6, 3, 1, and 4 and culled gilts 2, 5, 7, and 8. If you kept 6 you get 18 points, 3 is worth 12 points, 1 is worth 11 points, keeping 4 earns 9 points, 2 is worth 7 points, 5 earns you 5, keeping 7 gets you 2 and 8 is not worth any points.” All you need to do to figure the score is remember which numbers were kept, compare them to the officials and add up the awarded points.

When marking a placing card for a keep/cull class- always list the animals kept. The Iowa state FFA contest will have the scantron and all you need to do is bubble in the animals kept in no particular order. The computer is set to recognize the four kept as four possible correct answers. Some individual cards are specific to keep/cull and the numbers kept are simply circled.

Pro-tip- When students are standing waiting for the next rotation with their backs to the class is a great time to look through the data to make looking at the class faster.

There will never be reasons on a keep/cull class, but there are some contests where there are questions. National Barrow Show is notorious for having questions on keep cull classes and some of them get challenging between data and trying to see eight pigs.

In case there is no data on the class, take a quick look at all eight animals, jot some quick notes and call it good. Especially if there are questions, notes should be taken. On the next page is an example of what a keep/cull notebook page could look like.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number Kept</th>
<th>Notes about 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Notes about 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Notes about 3</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Notes about 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Notes about 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANSWERING QUESTIONS

Although questions may be ones of the easiest pieces of the contest to study for- you literally ask questions about the livestock in the class(es) assigned for question, people often fail to prepare for it. Many contests have been won and lost thanks to answering or missing a single question.

At a contest, before the questions are asked- students are sat down and given anywhere from 5-10, depending on the contest, minutes to study their notes. They then have to put their notebooks away and the questions will be asked one as a time with a chance to see if any need repeated at the end. This is repeated until every class designated as questions has the questions asked.

About the only way to prepare for questions is to pester students to take good notes, to have attention to detail, and to actually practice answering questions.

Questions Coaching Strategies

“Yours, Mine and Ours Questions”
At the end of a class- announce that everyone has to think of 5 questions that can be asked on the class. Give them time to work on writing the questions down and making an answer key. Have them turn the questions in to you when everyone is ready. Read all the questions and have the group answer. If you have a large group, you may need to divide into smaller groups and split up by class.

To assist with questions and give some ideas as to what type of questions can and will be asked below there are four sets of questions on the next page that were asked from the picture classes which can be found on pages 26, 27, 28, and 29. There are also more sample questions in appendix VIII.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lambs Answers</th>
<th>Heifer Answers</th>
<th>Hog Answers</th>
<th>Doe Answers</th>
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Market Lambs
1. Which is the blue sheep?
2. How many ewe lambs are there in the class?
3. Of the white pelted sheep, which has the least boot wool?
4. Which is the most youthful and athletic appearing sheep?
5. Between 3 and 4, which sheep is heavier muscled?
6. Between 1 and 3, which sheep is more correctly balanced?
7. Which sheep is the most stale and round over it’s loin?
8. Which sheep is the deepest in its chest floor and the most off balance?
9. Which sheep is the flattest in its leg shape and appears to be the softest muscled?
10. Which is the long tailed sheep?

Shorthorn Heifers
1. Which is the white heifer?
2. Which is the mostly red, or red with white marks heifer?
3. Between the roan heifers, which is stronger topped and is more correct in her back leg?
4. Which heifer appears to have the least body shape?
5. Between 2 and 3, who is longer necked?
6. Which is the heifer the ties look and stoutness into a functional package?
7. Between 1 and 4, who attaches their neck higher on their shoulder?
8. Between 1 and 4, who is bigger footed and stouter boned?
9. Which heifer is the flattest and narrowest made?
10. Between 1 and 2, which is more correct in their structure being more relaxed in their shoulder?

Market Hogs
1. How many barrows are there?
2. Which is the white hog?
3. Which hog is level eared?
4. Who is the belted hog?
5. Who is the heavy conditioned, round made hog?
6. Who is the hard, shallow, straight made hog?
7. Between 1 and 4, who is leaner?
8. Between 1 and 4, who is more practical in their rib and flank?
9. Between 2 and 3 who is shorter bodied?
10. How many hogs are both practical and heavy muscled?

Boer Doe Questions
1. Which does quickly grabs attention as the highest quality?
2. Which does has the longest cape?
3. Which doe is the levelest designed?
4. Which doe has the stained thigh?
5. Between 2 and 4 which is more youthful in her front end and more correct in her neck set?
6. Between 1 and two which does is stronger behind her shoulder and higher at her pin set?
7. Which does tail is not up?
8. How many does have full horns?
9. Which does appears to be the biggest?
10. Which does appears to be the leanest?
GIVING REASONS

For most students, giving reasons are hands down the most intimidating, or perhaps terrifying part of livestock judging. However, when students finally get comfortable, and confident with them, they often turn into the part they like the most- because they know they can make up points or get further ahead with points since so many others are scared of them. The only way to get better at reasons is practice- there is no way around it. Now there are things to do to make reasons less scary and ways to liven up practice or change up practice- but ultimately when it comes down to it, students have to work on conquering their fear and getting a little outside their comfort zone. Since this is a struggle for most judging teams, but especially in Iowa, we are going to cover this in a little more detail perhaps then other sections. The information following on reasons is designed to be used as a handout for students to learn about reasons.

I do not like reasons, why do we do reasons?

Although it takes some skill and practice to be good at placing the livestock, the reality is someone could get lucky and score better in the placing aspect of the contest then someone who truly understands the concept of sorting the stock and can read the livestock. To help combat that, and make sure the best “stock person” wins the contest- reasons are given. They are designed so you may defend their placing to the officials on why the placed the animals the way they did.

Too many people go into reasons with the mindset “here is what I did- hopefully it is not too wrong.” You should go in with the mindset of “here is what I see and how I sorted them- don’t you agree with me?” The biggest reasons people do not like reasons are: the lack of confidence because they are scared of looking stupid or they are lazy.

What you need to remember is there is no such thing as a perfect set of reasons- everyone has a little different style and different way of seeing things so not everyone is going to say the same things, in the same way, with the same voice. All you have to do is give it your best shot and the next time- try to do better yet. Each time in the room, you should be trying to beat your last score.
How are reasons scored?

Reasons are worth 50 points, just like the other pieces of the contest. In Iowa at a FFA and 4-H contest 40 is usually considered a good enough score to get your team to the top- but generally, 45 or higher what those who are winning reasons are talking. The average reasons score from the Iowa state FFA and 4-H contest in 2017 was 35. Although high scores are good- consistency is also good. A 45 does not do a lot of good score-wise if you also talk a 35. Point wise you are just as good with two 40s. The goal should be to give it everything on every set

Parts of Reasons

In order to score well in reasons, you must understand what the officials are looking for. The two major parts to reasons are presentation and content (terms and accuracy). In the big picture- officials want to hear accurate information about the class, with livestock terminology that fits each animal and for it to be delivered in a professional and easy to understand way.

Notes are a must

In order to give good, consistent sets of reasons- good notes need to be taken, especially on those reasons designated classes. (Coaches- Refer to pages 10-12 for help setting up the notebook).
Without proper notes, it will be hard to remember the class from the start of the contest when looking at the livestock to the end of the contest when reasons are given- especially with number of classes to judge. In the college judging world a “12 and 8” contest is typical- when twelve classes of livestock are judged and eight sets of reasons are given. Without good notes from the start to the end, details would be forgotten or classes would blend together. If notebooks are set up as shown previously, it set the reasons format already and makes it easy to plug in information.

Pro-tip- When taking notes for reasons add specific details to help you remember- notes don’t have to make sense to anyone but the note-taker. If writing “heffalump” helps remember exactly what the animal looked like- do it. Every word does not need to be spelled out- short hand and abbreviations are ok too.

Here is an example of what the ID boxes from a set of market hog notes could look like with details & shorthand and abbreviations- again, there is no wrong way to take notes if it is helpful to the person.
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(12-2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wide blt brw</td>
<td>Brk top- pcy side</td>
<td>Open strt bld</td>
<td>Bone+</td>
<td>Muscle ++</td>
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<tr>
<td>Back n ham</td>
<td>Big wide</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>(1-8)</td>
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<td>Blk glt</td>
<td>Slim Jim</td>
<td>Exp shape +</td>
<td>Long narrow Flat</td>
<td>Bone -</td>
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<td>Tight hock</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>(31-2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lvl ear wht brw</td>
<td>Michelin man</td>
<td>Canoe</td>
<td>Low lean cut</td>
<td>Round</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tight 2x</td>
<td>Wide</td>
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<tr>
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<td>(12-5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blue gilt</td>
<td>Best look- lvl</td>
<td>Neck/blade +</td>
<td>Muscle+</td>
<td>Need shot musc</td>
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<tr>
<td>Top shape</td>
<td>Nrw blade</td>
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**Format**

There is a format that should be used for reasons so the official can follow along with what is being said and because it makes the most logical sense. Once this is mastered, the format can have modifications.

Format: Opening, top pair, middle pair, bottom pair, closing.

The opening consists of the placing and the class. These should both be stated first so the reasons official can clearly understand what the placing is and to make sure the correct set of reasons is given to the correct official.

The opening should be something such as “I placed the market hogs 1-2-3-4.” Or, “1-2-3-4 is how I aligned the market hogs.”

Then follow the nine bottom boxes in the notebook:

Introduce the top pair.
Talk about why the first place animal beats the second place animal. Then talk about something better about the second place animal or something good about it. Discuss why the second place animal was beat and stayed second.
Move to the middle pair.
Talk about why the second place animal beats the third place animal. Then talk about a positive thing on third place or something better about the third place then second place animal. Discuss why the third place animal was beat and stayed third.
Talk about the bottom pair.
Talk about why the third place animal beats the forth place animal. Then talk about a positive thing on forth place or something better about the forth place then third place animal. Discuss why the forth place animal is forth- end discussion with “so he/she is forth.”

Say thank you at the end.
Putting it all together- it should go something like this for a very basic set following format:

I placed the ____________________, __-__-__-. In the top pair __ beats __ because he/she is ____________ and ________________. Yes, __ is _____________ but stays second because he/she is ____________. In the middle pair, I placed __ over __. __ is ____________________, __________, and _________________. ____ is ________________________, but is in third because he/she is ___________________ and ________________. In the bottom pair __ still beats ____ because he/she is _______________ and _________________. Sure, __ is ___________________ but is ___________________ and ________________, so he/she is forth. Thank you.

Presentation

Demeanor

• Be confident- confidence can make a five point difference walking in the room. Walking in looking confident even if you are not gives the official the illusion you know what you are doing. Fake it to make it. Pretend you are king of the world
• Be upbeat- no one likes a sour puss especially after sitting listen to reasons for hours
• Smile- it shows confidence and put the official in a better mood and it helps control your facial expressions from showing fear or anything else
• Say hello to break the ice and put everyone more at ease. It will also help you tell what your voice is like in the reasons setting/room
• Walk in with purpose and confidence- the person looks more intelligent. Especially if there is no room and you just walk up to the officials, make sure you walk confidently because they will be judging you already as you walk up
• Stand up straight- look taller and more confident and help project the voice
• Eye contact. Make eye contact right away walking in the room. You don’t have to stare the official down or even look them in the eye (some officials look at you and some look at the ground/their paper to listen) while giving your set but at least pick a spot somewhere on their face to look at so if they do look at you, it gives them the illusion you are looking and you are not tempted to let your eyes wonder… If you are confident to give eye contact the whole time- do it!

Dress

• Dress for where you are at- dress for success. What you wear can get you remembered either good or bad. If it is a low key, relaxed contest, boots, jeans, and a nice shirt may be appropriate. If it is a large contest, dress up. State level contests appropriate wear should be clean boots, dress pants, belt, guys sport coat, collared
shirt and tie, girls nice blouse and cardigan/jacket/sport coat. If it is an FFA contest-check to see if FFA official dress needs to be worn. The Iowa state FFA contest FFA official dress is not mandatory. At the National FFA Contest official dress is mandatory. “Everybody’s crazy ’bout a sharp dressed man (or woman).

- NO HATS. Unless you are George Straight or JB Mauney and can pull off a cowboy hat, no hats. Some large contests hats cannot be worn to curb cheating, plus most of the time the look unprofessional. If you show up with a hat on and plan to take it off for reasons—what happens if you get hat hair and look messy?

Voice
- Speed- reasons are not a race. If you go too fast it will look like you are nervous and make it hard to understand. Pick a nice even speed. Too slow will make it look like you do not know what to say. Vary the speed a little. If it is exciting, speed up a little. If it is important, slow down a little. In real life no one talks the same tempo unless they are an auctioneer
- Volume- the average FFA and 4-H member is not loud enough when they give their reasons. Be aggressively loud so the official can properly hear you- plus you appear more confident. That does not mean yell- but make sure you can be easily heard. If a reasons official has to work to hear you, they probably won’t and your score won’t be very good even if you have good stuff to say because they can’t hear it.
- Fluctuation - add variety to your voice by giving emphasis and fluctuation. It will make it more natural, easier and more entertaining to listen to and help you appear more confident.

Using the room
- Surveying the location- reasons can be given in a variety of locations. At most major contests it is in a hotel room. At the National FFA and National 4-H contests it is in a curtained off area. At Iowa’s state FFA and 4-H contests it could be a room like a classroom, utility closet or office, or it could be out in a section of the arena floor. Some small county fair contests you will probably be outside behind a barn.
  - If you are going into a room of some kind- it is a controlled space and easier to talk it. Gage the size and sound. If it is big and empty it might echo and you might need to talk louder and stand closer. If it is a little shoebox of a room, you may need to back up and talk a little quieter. Be outside the door waiting when the person ahead of you comes out. Don’t let the door fully close. Count to 20 (to give time to score the person ahead of you) and then swing it open and confidently walk it. Always close the door behind you.
  - If it is a curtained off area- try not to listen to the person/people ahead of you but work on your own preparation. When the person ahead of you comes out of the curtain, wait 20 second then pull back the curtain and say hello. You will need to be louder in a curtained area since there will be others giving reasons nearby and you want the official to listen to you and not them.
  - If it is outside or in an open area- there will probably be a lot going on, especially at a fair. Ignore everything else and focus just on what you are saying. You will probably have to talk louder, especially if you are outside and it is windy or it is a fair where there is a lot happening. Wait a reasonable
distance away so you can see when the person ahead of you is done but not too far so that it takes you too long to get there.

- **Entering** - when you enter the room say hello right away to help break the ice. If there is a door close it behind you. Make sure you are there promptly to go in after the person ahead of you comes out. Count to 20 but don’t wait beyond that.

- **Position/stance** - find a spot in front of the official 6-10 feet from them depending on how big you are.
  - If you are under 5’5 and not real big, you probably need to be on the closer to 6’ distance. If you are freakishly tall, you probably need to be closer to the 10’ mark. You and the official should both be comfortable—don’t stand too close you are in their personal space but not too far back you have to strain to be heard.
  - Stand still freezing from the neck down with your hands behind your back, this will help eliminate distractions
  - Stand up straight and tall— you will seem more confident, intelligent, and project your voice easier.

- **Starting the set** - when you go to start the set wait until you are set and the official is ready. They might say, whenever you are ready, if they do not pause for a second after you are set before starting.

- **Exiting** - when you exit the room, even if you think you royally messed up giving your reasons walk out confidently. If you go out hanging your head or looking disappointed, the official will think you could have done much better. This is a confidence game. Fake it ‘til you make it.

Reasons should not sound like a robot spitting out data— it should sound like you having a painting a picture in a conversation to the official about what the class looked like.

### Content

#### Terminology

- **Words** - the words used to describe the animals should be typical things livestock producers, show judges, and showman use. Knowing the proper names of body parts and incorporating them in will help.
- **Use connecting words to help pull things together.**
- **Make sure what you are saying is said in the correct grammar— no “when I seen her…”**
- Use the priorities of the class to determine what is the most important to talk about. If you are talking heifers, you don’t need to be talking a lot about muscle. If you are talking market lambs, you don’t need to be talking about which one is more maternal.
- **Use “buzz words”. Buzzwords are things we use to describe the major differences in the pair or the major reason the pair was sorted the way it was.**
- After a buzz word— give supporting details. Example. 1 beats 2 because she is more maternal since she is deeper bodied and bolder ribbed.
- Think about describing whom, what and where?
- USE IDS! Colors, markings, brands, shapes, sizes, unusual or unique characteristics can all be used as IDs. Ids are like collecting or losing bonus points.

**Accuracy**
- An accurate description of each animal must be conveyed regardless of placings
- If what you are going to say is not going to be widely considered a fact- don’t say it
- Speak the truth- don’t make stuff up just to try to solidify your case, it will backfire
- A good solid set of notes will help you be accurate and not forget things
- Creative terms will not mask false descriptions

**Up the ante**

When you are comfortable with the reasons format and using some basic terms then challenge yourself to get to the next level. Be creative!

**Class logic**
- Tweak the reasons format to start describing the logic of the class. For example- if there is an easy winner, instead of saying “in the top pair” say” __ wins easy because…” if the middle pair is close, call it close. Spend very little time talking about easy decisions- keep it simple with buzzwords. If the decision is hard and it is a close pair or trio, then spend more time discussing the details and be more specific.

**Transitions**
- Instead of always saying “in the top pair, __ beats __” reorganize information and use creative phrases of terminology to transition from pair to pair or point to point.

**Organization**
- Pick a way to organize information to make it easier to follow along. For example: talk about the animals using the priorities to order your information. Or organize information on the build of the animal talking front to back, bottom up.
- Be creative but disciplined
Strategies For Reasons

“Random Reasons”
This is a great strategy to introduce reasons, make them less scary, and make them a little more fun- especially if you have non-traditional students without much livestock experience. Have them set up their notebooks just like they would for a normal judging class. Then instead of presenting four animals bring out four other items to judge and place. Items that are popular because there is good discussion and kids like them because they are familiar with them are: 4 different candies (regular size Twix, king size Snickers, regular Hershey bar, Skittles), 4 different beverages (oj, water, Coke, Red Bull), 4 different pickup trucks (Ford, Chevy, Dodge, Toyota) (4 different Chevy 1500’s- an LT reg cab, an LT crew cab, a LXT reg cab, and high country), 4 different TV shows or movies, 4 different smart phones, etc. You can literally judge about anything in this activity. Assign a number to each of the 4 items and have students fill out a notebook page about the items and then discuss their logic with you. This activity is also good to gradually increase intensity- you can start with them judging and filling out the notebook this with a partner, the next time the judging and notebook by them selves, the next time judge and fill it out and turn and walk a neighbor through the logic, the next time they say it out loud to you, etc.

“Room Control”
To get students to work on being loud and powerful enough take them to a very large room, or this works in a big space outside. Stand about as far away as you can still able to hear them but making sure they project their voice loudly. Sit down and have them give a set or reasons without getting too quiet so you cannot hear them. If they get too quiet, have them start over. Inside, this works good in a gym, arena or them in a room and you outside the room with the door closed.

“In & Out”
This strategy is get to students comfortable coming in and out of the room. Pick a spot in the room and sit on a chair. Have the first student practice coming in, shut the door behind them say hello, find their spot and get set. Then they can give the introduction to the class, have them say thank you, pause, smile, and confidently leave. The next student should be waiting outside the door, not let it close all the way, count to 10-20 seconds and walk in. Repeat. Do this until everyone has gone. If they do not walk in confidently or forget a step, have the go out and start again. Also, alternate where you are sitting in the room so they have to adjust each time. If you really want to add a change up- bring costumes or weird faces to have them work on keeping their composure and being ready for anything when they walk into a reasons room.
“Artistic Description”
This strategy gets students to think about the words and details they are using to describe the animals in their reasons. This works good with printed out picture classes, not really live classes. Partner the students up. One partner looks at one class, the other partner looks at another class. Have them take notes as usual but tell them to really remember what the animals look like and think of how to describe them. When time is up, have the partners get back together. Give them each a blank piece of paper and a pencil. One partner has to describe the class to the other, while the other student draws out what the first student saw. Then flip so the student who was drawing is explaining their class while the one who was explaining is drawing.

“Dr. Seuss”
To help with voice tone, speed, fluctuation and volume, find a bunch of Dr. Seuss (or other children’s) books. Have the student read through the story and practice their reasons voice. Make sure they are very animated, loud, using variations in voice to make the stories exciting. Have them read the books to each other. After reading the books, then give reasons and try to use the same voice characteristics as reading through the Seuss books.

“Written Sets”
To help with grammar, terms, and organization in their reasons have the students write out the set of reasons on a piece of paper. After they have written it- have them read it out loud using their best reasons voice. Then they need to edit it and fix anything that did not make sense or was not good the first time. Read is again, edit again. This can be repeated as many times as you want.

“Colorful Reasons”
To help students understand what words then can emphasis, where to pause, where to fluctuate, etc. in their reasons have them grab several different colors of markers or colored pencils. Then have them write out the reasons. Using different colors have them go through the reasons and mark out where to use emphasis, where to slow down or speed up, where to pause, etc. Then have them read through it out loud and use the colors to remind them how to control their voice.

“Standing Room Only”
This strategy is to get students to stand straight and focus on posture when presenting reasons. Have the student give reasons with their hands (which should be behind them) touching the wall so the can not lean forward, slouch, or move around.
“Pop Corn Reasons”
This works well in a van traveling to or from a contest or practice. It is designed for students to be paying attention and making sure they understand the reasons format. You can do this two different ways: After looking at a class together and making sure everyone has the same placing, have the students prepare reasons for 10 minutes. Then have them all come back together. Inform them that one person will start the reasons but when you point to someone else, the person you point at has to jump in at the same spot in the format the last person finished. The other way, which is more challenging then everyone using the same class and official, is having them do any class with any official but still “popping” in and out at the right spots in the format.

“Progressive Sets”
This strategy is to work on confidence, term using, and seeing others creativity and styles. When students are getting their reasons ready create an order from the least experienced/poorest reasons giver to the strongest/most experienced reasons giver. Have the least experienced/poorest one start. When he/she is done with their reasons, critique them and then have him/her stay in the room while the next one on the list gives their reasons so they can hear the reasons and listen to the critique. When the second person is done, do the same with the next and so on and so forth until everyone has given their reasons. If you do this frequently, you may have to mix up the order sometimes to boost some kids confidence or to keep another from getting arrogant. Once in awhile you can also do a “Reverse Progressive Set” which is the same thing except start with the most experienced/strongest reasons giver and work the opposite way. Always make sure you have both positive and negative feedback for the student but make sure other students listening give positive only feedback- or at least make sure you monitor if you allow them to negatively comment.

“Dueling Reasons”
This is to work on focus, loud voices and grabbing attention with presentation. Have students prepare their reasons as they normally would. When it is time to give reasons partner the students up. Both partners get to go into the reasons room and give at the same time. They need to work on out talking the other and also maintaining focus. If they stop they are done and the other wins but still needs to finish even if they are already beating the other person. Take the winners from each pairing battle and keep going until an overall winner is declared. Food, or giving one less set of reasons makes an excellent prize.

Another variation of this is to have all the students partner each other and then line up facing each other. Then have the whole group give their reasons at the same time. If they stop or get flustered enough it breaks their concentration and they bobble, they have to start over. They will also have to really work on their entertaining, loud, voice so you can hear them.

Other Reasons Things
A beginning basic set of reasons from the example picture classes, found on pages 26-29, can be found on the next page. Plus, more reasons example can be found on appendix IX
Market Lamb Reasons

I placed the market lambs 2-3-4-1.

In the top pair, the athletic blue sheep beats 3 because he is the better-looking sheep that is smoother shouldered and squarer hipped. He is also heavy muscled. I know 3 is wide, bold ribbed and handles with a lot of muscle in his top. But he is the plainer and rounder made sheep, so he is 2nd.

In the middle pair, 3 beats 4 because he is the heavier muscled, harder handling sheep that has more leg shape and should cut a larger eye so his carcass should be more valuable on the rail. 4 is a bigger boned sheep that also looks bold ribbed. But he looks bolder ribbed because he is heavier conditioned and softer handling. He’s flat in his leg shape and round and plain from the side he so goes 3rd.

In the bottom pair, I can still use 3 to beat 4 because he is the bigger loined, bigger boned sheep, that is more uniform in his body depth. The slick legged 4 sheep does have more leg shape, but she is narrow and round in her loin. Plus she is the most off balanced because she is deep in her chest and high in her flank, so she is 4th.

Thank you.

Shorthorn Heifers

I placed the Shorthorn heifers 3-4-2-1.

The white heifer is the easy winner because she is the complete heifer that is big bodied, good structured and still balances correctly. 4 is the other heifer that is good designed and stout, but she is deeper chested, higher flanked and still not as stout as 1, so she is 2nd.

In the middle pair, the roan 4 beats 2 because she is the more maternal looking heifer that is deeper bodied, wider made, and bolder ribbed. The red heifer has some look from the side and is feminine- but she is too shallow, flat and narrow so she goes 3rd.

In the close bottom pair 2 beats 1 because she is sounder structured on her back leg, is higher in her neck shoulder attachment and better balanced because she is more smoother shouldered and more uniform in body depth. The roan 1 heifer is stouter and wider, but she is tight in her back leg, is heavier fronted and higher flanked so she stays 4th.

Thank you.
Market Hog Reasons

I placed the market hogs 2-3-1-4.

In a close top pair of heavy muscled barrows, that are both wide, big topped and have a lot of ham, I like the belted 2 to start. He is better looking because he is leveler topped. The 3 barrow is longer, but because of that he comes apart in his top and isn’t as good looking so he is 2nd.

In the middle pair 3 easily beats 1 because the wider made, more expressively muscled barrow should cut a larger eye and end with more lean merit. The level eared white gilt is practical, but is heavier conditioned, lighter muscled and gives up too much potential carcass value.

In a closer bottom pair I still use her over 4 because she is more practical since she is deeper and softer in her rib and flank and is still wider bodied. The blue 4 gilt is leaner and more expressive in her muscle shape. But she is the tight made, straight, flat gilt that is the shallowest bodied. So she is 4th.

Thank you

Boer Doe Reasons

I placed the Boer Does 3-1-2-4.

3 beats 1 in the top pair because she is the good-looking, smooth doe that is wide, and powerful. 1 is also good looking and is actually leveler topped. But still falls 2nd because she is flatter in her stifle.

In the middle pair, I placed 1 over 2 because she is the higher quality doe who is leveler topped because she is stronger behind her shoulder and is deeper flanked. 2 is wide and bold ribbed. But she is plain. She is off in her top, higher flanked and softer in her muscle, so she is 3rd.

In the bottom pair, 2 beats 4 because she is the bigger footed doe that is smoother shouldered and fresher in her condition. I know the long capped 4 does is bigger and longer. But she is the lowest quality doe that is big shouldered, heavy conditioned and round hipped, so she is 4th.

Thank you.
TAKING THE TEST

4-H contests do not have to worry about tests and as a whole most FFA do not have them either-but if you are going to be competitive at the Iowa state FFA contest you need to practice the test. The good news is the test as the state level does not vary much from year to year and the test is not that difficult. However, if you get to the national level- test is very challenging and your team should devote a lot of time to study it. Since the test at both the state and national level is worth a large chunk of team points, if you do not do well on the test, you probably will not be in the top three for sure, probably top five. An example of the test can be found in appendix X

Strategies For Tests

“Kahoot”
Make sure all your students have access to a computer or smart phone they can connect to Kahoot (online game). If you have never used Kahoot, to create one (free accounts) go to create.kahoot.it and log in and set up an account. If you have an account simply create another Kahoot. Type in the test questions and answers- or better yet, have the students alternate typing in the test questions and answers. When finished, play the game. To play the game, students go to kahoot.it and enter a player name and enter the game code- that will pop up on the game itself when you push play. Each student playing will need his or her own device to play on.

“Flashcards”
Have the students go through the tests and turn each question into a flashcard. Keep the flashcards in a big box from year to year.

“Read-a-long”
Have the students read through the test together with each having a copy and following along. One can read the question while the others answer, then rotate so everyone has a chance to both read and answer the question.
PLANNING TRIPS

Schedule Ahead

If you are traveling anywhere on a trip to look at livestock and practice or head to a contest- be sure to think ahead. What will you need a long? Where are you traveling?

If it is just a day trip- here are some things to consider taking:

- Plastic boots (because biosecurity and cleanliness)
- A whip/pipe (if you need to move some wild beast)
- Marking chalk/duct tape (in case you need it to label animals)
- Extra notebooks
- Extra pens & pencils
- Cards/scantrons to practice marking
- Change of clothes/shoes- between the crazy Iowa weather & animal messes- better safe then sorry
- Phone charger/GPS

If you are headed to the state contest and are thinking of being there overnight, here are some things to consider (in addition to those things already mentioned):

- Do you need hotel rooms?
- Will you need meals and if so think about kids & money & timing
- Did you get all your registration stuff done and turned in?
- Have you paid in advance for meals for contest day or did you bring money along to pay for meals (no POs on meals at livestock state contests)
- Do any of your students have anything they need to be back for quickly and if so let the contest chairs know as soon as possible

If you made it on a big trip- there are other things you might want to think of:

- How long will you be gone?
- Who can you contact to line up places to practice along the way?
- Do you have an itinerary for students/parents to know what is happening?

Communicate

In order to help you clearly communicate to students, parents, Extension and school staff, try to have an itinerary so students know what times they are supposed to be where, what to have and what to expect. Then parents also know for rides, money, and so on. If you are going to be taking students out of school- if might help to inform teachers they are going to be gone, and make sure to get them officially cleared.

An example of an itinerary can be found in appendix XI and a letter for teachers/clearing can be found in appendix XII.
## APPENDIX I - HELPER INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Best Time To Contact</th>
<th>Help Area(s)</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix II- PARENT INFO LETTER

Muscatine Community Schools, Agriculture Department
Ms. Ashley Wiebe
600 Kindler
Muscatine, IA 52761
ashley.wiebe@mcsdonline.org

To: Parents of students interested in livestock judging
RE: Livestock Judging Questions

What is livestock judging?
Livestock judging is learning about horses, what makes cattle, sheep, goats, and pigs “good” or “bad”, seeing if they meet their intended purpose, discovering what we use them for, what equipment we have, and how to care for them. There is a lot of critical thinking, comparing, contrasting and logic building skills learned during this activity.

What will they do?
Students will look at groups of 4 or 8 animals and compare them to one another, then place them from best to worst. They will look at several groups or “classes”. They will also answer questions about the animals, take a general knowledge test about livestock production, and give reasons. Reasons are a short speech to the judge about why they placed the animals in the class the way they did. Reasons are only given on a few select classes.

Who will compete?
Any 6th, 7th or 8th grader at West or Central that has taken an Ag class or is in 4-H and any high school student in FFA or 4-H. You do not have to own animals or grow up on a farm to do this. Anyone who shows up regularly to practices will be able to go to contests.

When are practices?
We will start by practicing in homeroom at the middle schools and Muskie time at MHS at least once a week through the end of the school year. In summer, we will always meet at the Ag Center (3200 Lucas) and practice there or drive to farms to see other animals. If we go to another farm there will be transportation available. Practice days and times will be flexible due to sports and music schedules but here will be a schedule sent out for a few weeks at a time for scheduling purposes.

What is needed for practice?
All they need is pencils and paper- preferable a steno notebook (1/2 size with binding at top). We provide anything else we may need.

When are contests?
Contests are scattered throughout the year but the busiest season is the summer. The state contest is traditionally the 4th Saturday in August.

If you have any other questions, please email ashley.wiebe@mcsdonline.org or text 507.822.0023
Thank you,
-Ms. Wiebe
Appendix III- LIVESTOCK JUDGING CONTESTS

These contests are typically held every year around the same date, with it and location they are held listed. They are somewhat in order by date starting at the beginning of the year (Denver is the exception). This is just an idea of contests- some may cancel and not host them and others may pop up, or I may just have missed listing them...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contest</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Typical Date</th>
<th>Other</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sioux Empire Farm Show</td>
<td>Sioux Falls, SD</td>
<td>Last Saturday in January</td>
<td>College &amp; 4-H/FFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa Pork Congress</td>
<td>Des Moines</td>
<td>Last week of January</td>
<td>No reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa Beef Expo</td>
<td>Des Moines</td>
<td>2nd Sunday in February</td>
<td>College &amp; 4-H/FFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackhawk East Invitational</td>
<td>Kewanee, IL</td>
<td>1st Saturday in March</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Pork Expo</td>
<td>Des Moines</td>
<td>1st Week of June</td>
<td>Part of Expo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District &amp; Practice Contests</td>
<td>Kirkwood in Cedar Rapids</td>
<td>2nd Tuesday in June</td>
<td>Held w/ state CDE contests</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carroll County Fair</td>
<td>Coon Rapids</td>
<td>2nd week of July</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington County Fair</td>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>2nd week of July</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adams County</td>
<td>Corning</td>
<td>2nd week of July</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Muscatine County Fair</td>
<td>West Liberty</td>
<td>3rd week of July Thursday</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Pottawattamie County</td>
<td>Avoca</td>
<td>3rd week of July</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Floyd County Fair</td>
<td>Charles City</td>
<td>3rd week of July</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Franklin County Fair</td>
<td>Hampton</td>
<td>3rd week of July</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Adair County Fair</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>3rd week of July</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wayne County Fair</td>
<td>Corydon</td>
<td>Last week of July Wednesday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Des Moines County Fair</td>
<td>West Burlington</td>
<td>Last week of July Thursday</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cass County Fair</td>
<td>Atlantic</td>
<td>Last week of July Saturday</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plymouth County Fair</td>
<td>LeMars</td>
<td>Last week of July</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Monroe County Fair</td>
<td>Albia</td>
<td>Last week of July</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Benton County Classic</td>
<td>Vinton</td>
<td>1st week of August</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa State Fair Contest</td>
<td>Des Moines</td>
<td>1st Sunday of State Fair August</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa's State FFA &amp; 4-H</td>
<td>Ames</td>
<td>4th Saturday of August</td>
<td>Pre-entries due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Barrow Show</td>
<td>Austin, MN</td>
<td>2nd Monday of September</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clay County Fair</td>
<td>Spencer</td>
<td>2nd Saturday of fair-September</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northwest Missouri State</td>
<td>Maryville, MO</td>
<td>1st week of October</td>
<td>Held with other CDEs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boilermaker/Purdue Mock</td>
<td>West Lafayette, IN</td>
<td>Friday before National FFA</td>
<td>Pre-entries due 10/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premier Stockman</td>
<td>Frankfort, IN</td>
<td>Saturday before National FFA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aksarben</td>
<td>Grand Island, NE</td>
<td>Last weekend in September</td>
<td>State qualify with 4-H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota Beef Expo</td>
<td>St Paul, MN</td>
<td>2nd full weekend in October</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Royal</td>
<td>Kansas City, MO</td>
<td>Last full week in October</td>
<td>State qualify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National FFA</td>
<td>Indianapolis, IN</td>
<td>Last full week of October</td>
<td>State qualify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National 4-H</td>
<td>Louisville, KY</td>
<td>2nd Week of November</td>
<td>State qualify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western National Roundup</td>
<td>Denver, CO</td>
<td>2nd or 3rd weekend in January</td>
<td>State qualify</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix IV- IOWA STATE FFA SCANTONS

Below is an example of a correctly bubbled PLACING

When bubbling in your placings, only bubble in the first 3 numbers of your placings. The 4th is automatically known when you bubble the first 3.

Example: If your desired placing is 2341
- bubble in 2 in the first column.
- bubble in 3 in the second column.
- bubble in 4 in the third column.
- do not bubble the 1 any place

Below is an example of a correctly bubbled KEEP/CULL

Bubble in one of the KEEP animals in each of the questions designed for that class

Assuming you wanted to KEEP 2 - 6 - 3 and 1
- bubble in 2 in the first question
- bubble in 6 in the 2nd question
- bubble in 3 in the 3rd question
- bubble in 1 in the 4th question
Appendix IV - IOWA STATE FFA SCANTONS

On CDE day, the blanks will have the Species name.

Pictured above is the correct marking of the scan form for the following placings:

First species that has a keep-cull class
Question 1 -- Breeding ______ - 2314
Question 2 -- Market ______ - 3421
Question 3 to 6 -- Keep-Cull ______ - Keeping 1,2,3, and 6. *

Second species that has a keep-cull class
Question 7 -- Breeding ______ - 2431
Question 8 -- Market ______ - 2143
Question 9 to 11 -- Keep-Cull ______ - Keeping 1,4,6, and 8. *

Species that does not have a keep-cull class
Question 13 -- Breeding ______ - 1234
Question 14 -- Market ______ - 4213
Question 15 -- Meat Goats - 1432

The ______’s will be filled in with the name of the respective class on event day.
* -- When marking the keeps for the keep-cull classes, bubble in the numbers of the keeps, one per question. The order does not make a difference.
Appendix V - MARKING CARDS

On the style of cards to the left, make sure students mark their class name at the top and clearly label their contestant number. Often they may be asked to write their school/chapter/county name on the backside in case of number mix-ups. Clearly mark which placing is to be used. The safest is to circle the placing and mark an X next to it. If a mistake is made, scratch it out (or erase if it is pencil) and write “no”. Write, “yes” next to the corrected placing.

On the style of card to the right, students need to fill out their information at the top and circle their placing. There is a section at the top right for a reasons score if this was a to be a reasons card. Students do not need to mark this section at all.
APPENDIX VI- JUDGING CLASS RESOURCES

These are the most recommended resources for Iowa livestock judging coaches, but are certainly not all. Just Google can pull up lots and lots of options. These below are tried and true.

- Judging Pro.com- picture classes, most with officials, paid subscription
- Judging101.com- video classes, most with officials, paid subscription
- Livestockjudging.com- lots of resources, free basic subscription, full paid
- CEV multimedia- video snippets free, paid subscription is lots of videos & supporting materials by Dr. Ryan Rathmann & company
- Iowa FFA http://www.iowaffa.com/LivestockEvaluation.aspx- rules, scantron sheets & tests
- Iowa 4-H https://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/livestock-judging- rules, questions, video tutorials
- National FFA https://ffa.app.box.com/s/wr9mv2f8q120vf9xsdp4lh6raysok7tl tests, data
- Ohio State https://u.osu.edu/livestockjudging/ - pretty much everything for free
- Sure Champ Resources- https://surechamp.com/blog/category/judging/ - picture classes
- Quizlet- https://quizlet.com/56196163/livestock-judging-terms-flash-cards/- terms
- South Dakota State Livestock Judging Camp- June
- Iowa State Livestock Judging Camp- June
- Google- search livestock judging classes- click pictures
- YouTube- search livestock judging (anything by OkState, Texas Tech & A&M are good)
APPENDIX VII- PERFORMANCE DATA

Class 6- Performance Angus Heifers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>BW</th>
<th>WW</th>
<th>YW</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Marb</th>
<th>REA</th>
<th>$F</th>
<th>$G</th>
<th>$B</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>34.19</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>41.28</td>
<td>38.73</td>
<td>94.37</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>44.57</td>
<td>29.87</td>
<td>91.32</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>52</td>
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<td>.64</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>39.13</td>
<td>38.34</td>
<td>92.48</td>
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<tr>
<td>Breed Av</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>34.24</td>
<td>30.60</td>
<td>84.97</td>
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Rank these heifers as they would best be utilized in a purebred outfit in Southeast Iowa. The primary source of income for this operation is its annual production sale, which features elite females and commercial bulls. This operation has a reputation of producing practical cattle with a balance set of EPDs.

Class 8- Performance Hampshire Ewes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>% Lamb</th>
<th>60 day wt</th>
<th>120 day wt</th>
<th>Milk</th>
<th>Codon</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>QR-NS</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>RR-NN</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>3.1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>RR-NN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>RR-NS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flock Av</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Rank these ewes as they should be used in a registered flock in Northern Iowa. This producer is wishing to retain the top 30% of replacements and places selection pressure on retaining genetically clean sheep, in order to maximize marketing versatility. The primary source of income is through the sale of rams at performance tested sales. Most ram buyers run white faced ewes and select their rams on growth characteristics.
APPENDIX VII- PERFORMANCE DATA

Class 4 - Performance Simmental Bulls

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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>CE</th>
<th>WW</th>
<th>YW</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Stay</th>
<th>Marb</th>
<th>REA</th>
<th>TI</th>
<th>API</th>
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<td>97</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>130</td>
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<tr>
<td>Breed Av</td>
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<td>92</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.79</td>
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<td>120</td>
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Rank these Simmental Bulls as they would best be utilized by a commercial operation in Western Iowa. These bulls will be mated to Angus influenced cows. This producer wishes to expand his cow herd and is planning on keeping 50% of the heifers out of these bulls as replacements. All cull cattle are fed out in the family owned feedlot and sold at a Tyson plant in Dakota City, NE. This plant pays premiums for cattle that grade low choice or better with yield grade’s 1 and 2.

Class 8 - Commercial Gilts

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<th>WDA</th>
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Adjusting to 250 lbs

Rank these gilts as they will be best utilized in a show pig operation in Central Iowa. Gilts will be housed in confinement building and mated to dark cross boars. The resulting offspring will be sold at the Iowa State Alumni Show Pig Sale and various online consignment sales.
APPENDIX VII- PERFORMANCE DATA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANIMAL NUMBER</th>
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SCENARIO: Keep four of these heifers as potential replacements for a 50 cow purebred Hereford operation in the Midwest. The owner of the operation works days at a manufacturing plant and cares for the cattle at night and on weekends. This operation markets bulls to other purebred producers and markets the heifer crop as show heifer prospect. The focus of the operation is on balanced traits. Feed resources are mainly forage with limited supplementation.
APPENDIX VII - PERFORMANCE DATA

KEEP/CULL

YORKSHIRE GILTS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>EPDs</th>
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<td>0.02</td>
<td>101.5</td>
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SCENARIO: Keep four of these gilts as potential replacements for a purebred Yorkshire operation in the Midwest. This operation markets show pigs and breeding stock to other purebred breeders and FFA members. All pigs that do not sell in the club pig sale or production sale are fed to 280 pounds and marketed on a lean grid. All hogs are raised on concrete and slatted concrete floors.
APPENDIX VIII- SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Sample Breeding Ewe Questions

• Which ewe appears to offers the most weight per day of age?
• Which ewe is the highest volumed?
• Which ewe appears to possess the longest hindsaddle?
• Which ewe is the earliest maturing?
• Which ewe is the most structurally correct?
• Which ewe has the most muscle thru her leg?
• Which ewe is the frailest featured?
• Which ewe is the most attractive from profile?
• Which ewe offers the least capacity and is the narrowest based?
• Which ewe is parrot mouth?
• Which ewe is the poorest balanced?
• Which ewe is straight in her shoulder and tight in her pastern?
• Which ewe is the most feminine fronted?
• Which ewe offers the least breed character?
• Which ewe offers the least performance?

Sample Breeding Gilt Questions

• Which gilt is the most functionally correct in her structural design?
• Which gilt is the biggest-outlined and longest-bodied?
• Between gilts __ and __, which one offers more structural width and rib shape?
• Which gilt is the most feminine in front of her blades?
• Which gilt offers the most performance?
• Which gilt displays the most muscle shape?
• Which gilt is the most ideal in her condition?
• Which gilt is the narrowest chested and flattest ribbed?
• Which gilt is the most restricted in her movement?
• Which gilt is the most attractive from the profile?
• Which gilt presents the highest quality, most uniform underline?
• Which gilt has the smallest vulva?
• Which gilt approaches with the squarest chest and boldest blade?
• Which gilt is the most correct in her rump structure and drives away the widest?
• Which gilt is the least maternal in her look?
• Which gilt is the biggest footed and heaviest structured?
APPENDIX VIII- SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Sample Market Steer Questions

- Which steer is the heaviest muscled?
- Between steers __ and __, which one would be more apt to grade Choice?
- Which steer is the nicest balanced?
- Which steer is the most structurally correct?
- Which steer is washy through his brisket?
- Which steer is the soundest in his movement?
- Which steer it the widest pinned and thickest thru his hip and quarter?
- Which steer appears to be the easiest feeding and biggest ribbed?
- Which steer appears to need more days on feed to reach his end point?
- Which steer is the narrowest topped and flattest through his quarter?
- Which steer is the weakest topped and steepest hipped?
- Which steer is the straightest through his shoulder?
- Which steer is the tightest ribbed and shallowest flanked?
- Which steer should be the most profitable when sold on a grade and yield-rewarding grid?
- Which steer should rail a carcass receiving the lowest numerical yield grade?

Sample Market Goat Questions

- Which is the doe?
- How many wethers are in the class?
- Which is the dapple goat?
- Which goat handles with the most shape to their top?
- Which goat is the nicest balanced and especially strongest behind its shoulder?
- Between wethers __ and __, which is wider made and bolder ribbed?
- Which goat would require the most fat trim?
- Which goat is the steepest in his hip?
- Which goat has structure problems as it is bucked over at its knee?
- Which goat is the most opened up in its chest and widest gauged?
- Between __ and __, which is better looking because it is leveler hipped?
- Which goat is the lightest muscled?
- Which is the unclipped and uncooperative goat?
- Which goat is the stoutest structured?
For Adair County 4-H Market Lambs

I placed the market lambs 4-1-2-3.

There’s quickly a pair of heavier muscled sheep that sort up. Between them, I like 4 to start because the darkest blue wether is the most powerful appearing. He’s the bold ribbed sheep that’s the squarest hipped and appears to have the most rack and loin shape. Plus he has the most dimension to his leg.

He’s a bit short bodied and has a touch more condition. This is why the top pair is close and I almost started 1. 1 is the more expressive, extended, later maturing wether. He’s more compositionally correct because he’s trimmer and I’d expect his to have a higher cutability carcass. Yet, he doesn’t appear as powerful as my winner and in comparison he’s round hipped, a bit deep in his chest and high flanked. So he’s a competitive second.

The middle pair isn’t close. It’s clear 1 beats 2 because he’s the more product driven sheep that stands on more bone and base width. This lays the foundation for more muscle up high and I believe he’ll end with more boneless yield.

From the side the 2 sheep to his left has more look because he’s taller fronted. But from behind he’s a very distant third because he’s very narrow based, flat and cuts up in his twist. Not to mention he’s also round hipped.

Despite this criticism, 2 still has more muscle than 3 and this is why he beats him in the final pair. He has more shape to his rack and he’s wider loined. With this, he’s also stouter featured.

3 get the credit for being the longest bodied wether that is certainly big and extended. However, he’s the frail sheep that happens to be the light muscled, the most prominent in his spine, has the least leg shape. So he’s fourth.

Thank you.
APPENDIX IX- EXAMPLE REASONS

Cottonwood Co Fair Market Steers Example Set

I like the market steers 4-1-2-3.

Muscle makes 4 an easy winner. He’s by some margin the stout, wide made steer that’s the boldest ribbed. He’s the biggest topped, most powerful from behind and he’s on target in his finish. I believe he’ll end with the most ideal combination of quality and yield. Furthermore, he’s good balanced from the side.

Flexibility and reach favor the blue roan 1 steer. He’s the most correct in the angle to his joints and seems most comfortable on the move. But next to my winner, he’s plain shaped, narrow hipped and fades in his lower quarter. So he’s a distant second.

This makes the middle decision tough. In the end, I sacrificed the shape and expression of 2 for the extra practicality of 1. The blue roan is more flexible in his hock and pastern. He’s deeper and softer in his rib and flank and because he’s got more finish I think he’ll be more likely to push choice.

2’s extremely shapely. Terminally, I like the brown tinged steer because he’s bigger hipped, deeper quartered and he’s actually the most expressive down his top. He’s the trimmest conditioned and should end with the lowest yield grade. The problem is he’s not very practical. He’s really straight hocked and upright on his pastern, not to mention he’s a hard ribbed and high flanked. Combined with the fact he’s deep chested and steep hipped makes him the most off balanced.

Product alone sorts the bottom 2 over 3. I make this call because 2 is clearly the shapelier, bolder topped steer that has more flair to his quarter and he should rib a larger eye.

I prefer the notched 3 steer from the side. He’s leveler hipped and more uniform in his depth from chest to flank and there’s no doubt he has a softer look. But this is probably because he’s carrying the most finish. The flat narrow steer is the lightest muscled and plainest shaped. He’s the cutability concern and a distant 4th.

Thank you.
APPENDIX IX - EXAMPLE REASONS

Aksarben Shorthorn Heifers

I placed the Shorthorn heifers 1-4-3-2.

Instantly the red 1 heifer grabs my attention as the highest quality and most attractive. She’s the neat fronted, feminine featured female that’s still wide made and deep and soft in her look. At the same time the deep healed heifer seems the most comfortable on the move. I like her quite a bit.

This is to take nothing away from the 4. I think the high performing heifer at the end of the line will make a good cow because she’s big bodied, bold ribbed, deep and maternal looking. But I still think she’s a logical second because she’s not in the same league as my winner. Comparatively she’s a tick upright in her shoulder. She’s deep in her chest and plain fronted.

Despite these criticisms, it’s easy to use her to beat 3 in the middle pair of red-necked heifers, because I still see a gap in quality. 4’s the longer necked, smoother shouldered replacement that’s stronger topped. Perhaps more importantly, she uses her hock with more flex and sets with more cushion to her pastern and as a bonus she’s more honest in her breeding condition.

Sure, 3’s a bit more uniform in her depth because she has a shot more flank and she shows more udder development. At the same time, the heavier conditioned, coarse naveled, broken tailed heifer is extremely plain from the side. The shorter necked heifer comes apart in her top line and is also deep in her chest. Plus she’s tight hocked and upright on her pasterns.

This makes the bottom the closest pair. In the end I give the edge to 3 because she’s the taller fronted female that ties her neck in higher to her shoulder. She’s more relaxed in the angle to her front skeleton and is longer bodied.

I can see the remaining red heifer is a bit more powerful in her kind, is bolder ribbed and more impressive from behind and she’s also more refined in her teats. Yet to me, she’s the most off balanced and has the most structure issues. The low fronted, straight-shouldered heifer is off in her hip straight in her hock. So I marked her 4th.

Thank You!
APPENDIX X- SAMPLE TEST

LIVESTOCK EVALUATION TEST

1) Which of the following correctly defines the term hybrid vigor?
   a. The value of the animal as a parent
   b. The crossbred offspring exceeds the average of the two parental breeds
   c. A group of animals of the same age, sex, and breed composition
   d. The measure of how inbred an animal is

2) Which swine selection index swine is calculated solely by maternal traits (i.e. NBA, 21-day litter weight, WTE)
   a. Sow Productivity Index (SPI)
   b. Maternal Line Index (MLI)
   c. Terminal Sire Index (TSI)
   d. Weight per day of Age (WDA)

3) Which factor(s) is/are used to determine Yield Grade in sheep carcasses?
   a. Loin eye area
   b. Body wall thickness
   c. 12th rib fat thickness
   d. All of the above

4) Cattle that are of the same breed composition and sex, are similar in age, and have been managed under the same conditions are considered to be a what?
   a. Sire group
   b. Maternal group
   c. Breeding group
   d. Contemporary group

5) Consider a beef carcass of B maturity, which of the following quality grades can it not qualify for?
   a. Standard
   b. Select
   c. Choice
   d. Prime

6) Which of the following influence quality grades in lamb carcasses?
   a. Carcass maturity
   b. Lean quality
   c. Carcass conformation
   d. All of the above
APPENDIX X- SAMPLE TEST

7) Which trait is not considered when calculating terminal bioeconomic indexes in beef cattle (i.e. $Beef, $CHB, TI, MTI, etc.)?
   a. Milk
   b. Yearling weight
   c. Marbling
   d. Ribeye area

8) The record of the ancestors of a particular animal is recorded in its:
   a. Performance record
   b. Pedigree
   c. Phenotype
   d. Genetic map

9) If a ewe with a Codon 171 status of QR is mated to a ram with a Codon 171 status of QR, what percentage of her offspring will be resistant to Scrapie?
   a. 25%
   b. 50%
   c. 75%
   d. 100%

10) Which feedstuff can NOT be used effectively by a monogastric animal (pig)?
    a. concentrates
    b. vitamin supplements
    c. forages or roughages
    d. fats/oils

11) What is the number one reason cows are culled from the herd in the U.S.?
    a. Structure problems
    b. Producing poor calves
    c. Docility
    d. Reproductive failure

12) Which of the following is not an example of a growth promotant used in livestock production
    a. Implants
    b. Beta-agonists
    c. Ionophores
    d. Dried distiller’s grains

13) A lamb carcass with 0.16 inches of fat at the 12\textsuperscript{th} rib, a 2.9 sq. inch ribeye area, and a carcass weight of 68 lbs. would have a final yield grade of?
    a. 1.5
    b. 2.0
    c. 2.5
    d. 3.0
14) Which factor is NOT included in the formula for determining pounds of lean in a pork carcass?  
   a. 10th rib fat thickness  
   b. Hot carcass weight  
   c. Ham score  
   d. Loin eye area  

15) Which of the following would most closely describe a heavy muscled, extremely lean steer?  
   a. YG 1  
   b. YG 2  
   c. YG 3  
   d. YG 4  

16) Which of the following swine EPDs is the best indicator of how prolific a boars’ daughters will be?  
   a. NBA  
   b. LWT  
   c. Days to 250  
   d. Backfat  

17) Marbling is also known as?  
   a. Intramuscular fat  
   b. Subcutaneous fat  
   c. Seam fat  
   d. Intermuscular fat  

18) Which of the following is a British breed of cattle  
   a. Chianina  
   b. Charolais  
   c. Hereford  
   d. Simmental  

19) _________ is a measure of the degree of difference between the offspring of a specific bull and the offspring of the average bull of the breed in the trait being measured.  
   a. OSB  
   b. EPD  
   c. SPF  
   d. MPV  

20) The average dressing percent for sheep is closest to?  
   a. 55%  
   b. 65%  
   c. 75%  
   d. 85%
APPENDIX X- SAMPLE TEST

21) Which Codon 171 status below suggests that the individual is Scrapie susceptible?
   a. NN
   b. RR
   c. QR
   d. QQ

22) 29. The number of cows a bull will naturally service in a normal season is closest to?
   a. 5 cows
   b. 25 cows
   c. 50 cows
   d. 75 cows

23) Which is not a compartment of the ruminant stomach?
   a. Abomasum
   b. Jejunum
   c. Omasum
   d. Rumen

24) Which hormone is responsible for a male animal’s masculine look?
   a. Estrogen
   b. Progesterone
   c. Testosterone
   d. Oxytocin

25) Why are weak pasterns criticized in swine?
   a. They indicate a light muscled animal
   b. They are the result of excess pressure on the animal’s feet
   c. They tend to lead to torn dewclaws and lameness
   d. They indicate an overconditioned animal

26) Approximately what percentage of beef carcasses are graded prime?
   a. 5%
   b. 15%
   c. 25%
   d. 50%

27) Which of the following breeds of sheep are considered blackface and have wool on their legs and head?
   a. Hampshire
   b. Dorset
   c. Columbia
   d. Suffolk

28) The genetic makeup of an animal is called its:
   a. Genotype
   b. Phenotype
   c. Dominance
   d. Recessiveness
APPENDIX X- SAMPLE TEST

29) The average length of the estrus cycle for sheep is?
   a. 12 days
   b. 17 days
   c. 21 days
   d. 22 days

30) Which amino acid is first limiting for swine?
   a. Tyrosine
   b. Phenylalanine
   c. Carnitine
   d. Lysine

31) The average LEA (loin eye area) for a 270 pound barrow is closest to?
   a. 3 square inches
   b. 7 square inches
   c. 10 square inches
   d. 13 square inches

32) Considering most sows are farrowed in crates, which would be the least concerning flaw when selecting for replacement gilts?
   a. Poorer balanced
   b. Poor underline
   c. Weak pasterns
   d. Bow legged

33) What is visually used by producers to identify what litter each hog belong to?
   a. Ear notch
   b. Brand
   c. DNA Verification
   d. Color pattern

34) Which of the feeds below would have the most energy for animals?
   a. corn
   b. oat straw
   c. silage
   d. hay

35) When judging a market steer class which term is used to describe the amount of fat cover on an animal?
   a. Fluff
   b. Carcass Merit
   c. Quality
   d. Finish
36) Which of the following would be considered a continental cattle breed?
   a. Angus
   b. Hereford
   c. Simmental
   d. Shorthorn

37) What would be the best term to describe an animal that has too much set to their hock?
   a. Post-legged
   b. Sickle-hocked
   c. Cow-hocked
   d. Bow-legged

38) Which of the following EPDs predicts the average ease with which a sire’s daughters will calve as first calf heifers when compared to daughters of other sires.
   a. Birth weight (BW)
   b. Calving ease direct (CE)
   c. Calving ease maternal (CEM)
   d. Milk

39) Which trait(s) are used in the calculation of a gilt’s terminal sire index (TSI)?
   a. Days to 250
   b. Backfat (BF)
   c. Loin eye area (LEA)
   d. All of the above

40) What is the common name for the genetic disorder in Southdown sheep known as Ectodermal Dysplasia?
   a. Scrapie
   b. Spider lamb syndrome
   c. Hairy lamb syndrome
   d. Parrot mouth syndrome

Use the following scenario to answer questions 41-44

Rank these Duroc boars a they would be used on Landrace x Yorkshire sows for the production of market hogs to be sold on a contract basis to Hormel Foods. All offspring are fed out and sold at 270 lbs.

41) Which of the following traits (EPDs) would be the most important for selection of the Duroc boars?
   a. Days to 250
   b. Number born alive (NBA)
   c. TSI
   d. Backfat
APPENDIX X- SAMPLE TEST

42) What is this sowbase expected to bring to this cross?
   a. Maternal strengths
   b. Growth
   c. Lean cutout value
   d. Docility

43) What percentage of the daughters of this mating will be kept back within the herd as replacements?
   a. 0%
   b. 10%
   c. 15%
   d. 20%

44) What is the primary advantage of this and any crossbreeding scheme when compared to breeding purebreds?
   a. Docility
   b. Structure
   c. Heterosis/Hybrid vigor
   d. Balance

Use the following Angus bull data set to answer questions 45-48

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<td>49</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.55</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

45) In situations where there is minimal labor available at calving, which bull would be the safest to use on first calf heifers?
   a. 1
   b. 2
   c. 3
   d. 4

46) If mated to the same group of cows, which bull’s offspring will have the most challenge making the Certified Angus Beef program?
   a. 1
   b. 2
   c. 3
   d. 4
APPENDIX X - SAMPLE TEST

47) Which bull should calculate with the most desirable $EN$ value?
   a. 1
   b. 2
   c. 3
d. 4

48) If mated to the same group of cows, which bull would you expect to generate the fastest growing offspring?
   a. 1
   b. 2
   c. 3
d. 4

Use the following scenario to answer questions 49 and 50

Rank these ewes as they would be utilized in a club lamb operation. These ewes will be mated to a proven ram whose bloodwork came back as QRNN. This operation markets show wethers and ewes to junior exhibitors nationwide via multiple online sales throughout the year.

49) If the ewe selected to win had a QRNN status, what percentage of their progeny would be susceptible to scrapie?
   a. 0%
b. 25%
c. 50%
d. 100%

50) Which traits would you expect to be most valuable to select for in this elite operation?
   a. 60 day weight (60D)
b. 120 day weight (120D)
c. Phenotypic balance/quality
d. Percent lamb crop (%LC)
### APPENDIX X: SAMPLE TEST

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43) A
44) C
45) A
46) B
47) A
48) B
49) B
50) C
APPENDIX XI- TRIP ITINERARY EXAMPLE

2018 STATE LIVESTOCK JUDGING CONTEST ITINERARY

Tuesday (8/21)
   6pm Ag Center- Practice
Wednesday (8/22)
   Work on your own- tests/review packets
Thursday (8/23)
   6 pm Ag Center- Practice

Friday, Aug 25
   Meet at the Ag Center at **7:30am**- wear nice clothes (jeans, nice shirt)
   Stop 1 (8:15): Goats at Troy Schlopkols
   Stop 2 (10:00): Pigs and Heifers at Kirkwood Community College
   Reasons/Lunch
   Back to Muscatine- tests
   Volleyball practice/Finish getting stuff together
   To Hotel in Ames- tests

Saturday, Aug 26
   Contest day!
   At Hanson Learning Center at 8:45am
   Food & return to Muscatine after contest, estimated back at 7pm

Packing list:
   Steno notebook
   Pencils/Pens
   Terms/performance/tests/other judging packets
   Boots
   Belt
   Judging outfit
      Girls: boots, belt, dress pants, blouse, jacket
      Guys: boots, belt, dress pants, button-down shirt, sport coat, tie
   Extra set of clothes
   Pj’s
   Money (need for 3ish meals- lunch Saturday provided)

Judging stop expectations:
   Be polite and professional
   Shake hands and thank the hosts
   Answer any questions loud and confident
   Pick up any trash/things we bring
   You are representing yourself, family, school, community, FFA/4H...
APPENDIX XII- TRIP EXCUSE LETTER EXAMPLE

Muscatine Agriculture Department
Ms. Ashley Wiebe
2705 Cedar St.
Muscatine, IA 52761
ashley.wiebe@muscatine.k12.ia.us

To: Muscatine High School teachers of Ava Daufeldt, Grace Williams, Alexis Moeller, and Tyler Moeller

Re: Missing class Friday August 24th, 2018

Dear Teachers,

Please excuse Ava Daufeldt, Grace Williams, Alexis Moeller and Tyler Moeller from your classes on Friday, August 24th. These Livestock Judging Team members will be traveling to Ames, IA to compete in the state FFA livestock judging contest.

Please keep in mind, this is a school related activity and these students have worked very hard and practiced throughout the summer to represent not only themselves and the school and FFA chapter, but also the city of Muscatine at this contest. They are not taking this trip lightly and would appreciate your help to stay caught up with academics and sports. For some of these students, this trip will boost their ability to receive college scholarships with judging or agriculture, allow them to explore in their chosen college/career path and enable them to network with people they will work in future agriculture activities.

Attached are the standards based performance indicators and elements these students will be demonstrating as part of this activity. If you have any other questions, again, please ask the students or contact myself. Each student should be taking the responsibility to be talking to you personally about this matter.

Thank you,

Ashley Wiebe
With Sam Paul, Dave Tometich, Josh Day
The following performance elements and indicators are directly assessed as a result of this Livestock Judging Career Development Event:

CS.02. Performance Element: Personal Growth: Develop a skill set to enhance the positive evolution of the whole person.

CS.02.02. Performance Indicator: Social Growth: Interact with others in a manner that respects the differences of a diverse and changing society.

CS.02.03. Performance Indicator: Professional Growth: Develop awareness and apply skills necessary for achieving career success.

CS.03. Performance Element: Career Success: Demonstrate those qualities, attributes and skills necessary to succeed in, or further prepare for, a chosen career while effectively contributing to society.

CS.03.01. Performance Indicator: Communication: Demonstrate oral, written and verbal skills.

CS.03.02. Performance Indicator: Decision Making – Analyze situations and execute an appropriate course of action.

CS.03.03. Performance Indicator: Flexibility/Adaptability: Describe traits that enable one to be capable and willing to accept change.

CS.09. Performance Element: Technical Skills: Compare and contrast issues affecting the AFNR industry.

CS.09.01. Performance Indicator: Apply economic principles to AFNR systems (e.g., supply, demand and profit).

AS.02. Performance Element: Classify, evaluate, select and manage animals based on anatomical and physiological characteristics.

AS.02.01. Performance Indicator: Classify animals according to hierarchical taxonomy and agricultural use.

AS.02.02. Performance Indicator: Apply principles of comparative anatomy and physiology to uses within various animal systems.

AS.02.03. Performance Indicator: Select animals for specific purposes and maximum performance based on anatomy and physiology.

AS.05. Performance Element: Evaluate and select animals based on scientific principles of animal production.

AS.05.01. Performance Indicator: Evaluate the male and female reproductive systems in selecting animals.

AS.05.02. Performance Indicator: Evaluate animals for breeding readiness and soundness.

AS.05.03. Performance Indicator: Apply scientific principles in the selection and breeding of animals.

AS.06. Performance Element: Prepare and implement animal handling procedures for the safety of animals, producers and consumers of animal products.

AS.06.01. Performance Indicator: Demonstrate safe animal handling and management techniques.
CHAPTER 5: REFLECTION

Reflection

Looking back on the time and work put into creating this livestock judging manual I see a lot of rewards and a lot of frustrations. At the start, I felt almost a little overwhelmed with the amount of information and materials I had available to for the manual and needed to narrow it down. The hardest part for me was figuring out which information and methods were the most important to use in the manual and what were things that did not matter much in the grand scheme of things and could be left out. Even though I had a plan in my head with what I wanted the manual to look like content wise when I was done, I had to make sure it was not just things I thought were important, but information that would actually be helpful to coach a team and also would be information coaches would like to have. Once I determined the material to be used, I hit another speed bump as far as the best way to organize it. After deciding to go back to the beginning and start with the most simple to the most complicated, things fell together well, in my opinion. Though, I do wish I had a few more pictures and graphics in the manual.

Impact

Creating the manual stretched me as a teacher and a coach, with a chance to reflect on methods of coaching livestock judging that work well and explain them to other coaches to use in the programs. It forced me to think through what methods I was using and if there was any way I could improve my own coaching. In addition to impacting my own coaching career, I believe this manual will help at least a few livestock judging coaches in the state of Iowa more successfully train their livestock judging teams. At the very least, it can boost their confidence level to coach a team.
Recommendations

I plan to give out a copy of the manual to Iowa agriculture teachers and 4-H leaders that coach a livestock judging team and ask for assistance. After talking with Dr. Chris Cassady, the current livestock judging coach at Iowa State and the host for the state FFA and state 4-H livestock judging contests at this past year’s state contests, I discovered he plans to host a workshop for FFA and 4-H coaches to learn how to better coach their team in the summer of this coming year. We discussed the purposed manual I planned to create and agreed to make it a joint workshop, where he teaches from his perspective, a college livestock judging coach seeking to recruit high school students, and I teach from mine. I recommend manuals be handed out to coaches who would like one at the workshop as this would be an excellent place to get the manual into coaches’ hands that are truly interested in using it.

Further recommendation can also be given to coaches who receive and plan to use the manual to help them coach their team that this is not designed to be a stand-alone resource and they should add this into the arsenal of materials and methods they already have. If they do not have other supplies and materials, they can use the manual to get a start.

Extensions

As mentioned previously, Iowa State livestock judging coach Dr. Chris Cassady and I plan to host a workshop for FFA and 4-H coaches to learn how to better coach their team in the summer of this coming year. We plan to make it a joint workshop, where he teaches from his perspective, a college livestock judging coach seeking to recruit high school students, and I teach from mine. This would also be an excellent place to get the manual into coaches’ hands that are
truly interested in using it. If possible, I would like to collect data on the coaches who use the manual to see if it was a useful tool for them in their coaching endeavors.

To expand further on the information given to coaches in the manual, I plan to make a series of videos getting more in detail in the actual judging by showing a class and giving a placing and explanation of why the livestock should be placed that way. The video series could be geared either towards coaches or students or one of each could be made. My plan is to use our agriculture department’s Go-Pro camera to record videos with short lectures followed up by activities for coaches or students to practice. These could either be put into a Google classroom or would probably be more beneficial to have loaded onto a YouTube channel.

**What Could Be Done Differently?**

If more time were to be spent to maximize the potential of the manual- I would organize it in a more artistic and modern way to make it more eye catching and visually attention grabbing. I would use more pictures and graphics to help illustrate the points being made. While putting it together, I tried to implement good design as it pertains to the use of white space and not crowding the text, using bold and underline to set things apart without over using them and having titles, page numbers, and a contents page. However, compared with the sophistication of computers and graphic designs anymore, the manual looks very basic. If I were to do this over, I would work on the aesthetics of the manual, perhaps using a different program other than Microsoft Word.
Summary

As a whole, I feel successful putting this Coaching For Success; Iowa Livestock Judging Coaches Manual together. I am excited to show it to coaches and get feedback about what works and does not work for them. Perhaps a revision can be made in a few years to add to the value of the manual if it proves to be at least somewhat useful for Iowa livestock judging coaches. It has been time well invested into the agricultural education profession and to preparing young people for livestock judging contests and also freshening up my own skills as a coach.

I feel this has been a nice capstone project to my master’s degree program, as I had to draw from things I have learned on throughout my educational experience. I drew from courses on adult education- as I am getting information to adult FFA advisors and 4-H leaders to be used to coach. There are several handouts that are geared directly to student learning. I had to think through different teaching methods and strategies and match them with the information to be taught so the best practices could be used. I sorted through information to use that of the highest relevance and rigor to add the most value to the manual. A few elements of design were also sprinkled into the mix as far as the actual creation of the manual on Microsoft Word.

There are subtle things I would change, such as using a graphic design program to give the manual a fresher, more modern, and aesthetically pleasing design. I addition, I would add more graphics and pictures for visual learners. Overall, I am satisfied with how the manual turned out and hope it is a help to the FFA advisors and 4-H leaders in the state of Iowa to help them coach their livestock judging teams to success and strengthen the livestock industry and youth programming across the state.
FINAL REFLECTION OF GRADUATE PROGRAM

As mentioned, I believe this Coaching For Success; Iowa Livestock Judging Coaches Manual has been a solid capstone project to completing my master’s program in agricultural education. It has pulled together many of the skills I have gleaned from the courses I have taken or information that has been re-polished and corroded over time.

One of the main reasons I decided to pursue a master’s degree was I was starting to feel a little stuck in my own agriculture classroom, using the same methods and materials. I thought grad school would be a good way to freshen up my agriculture education knowledge, and perhaps gain some leverage to advance in my career. Not to mention, it helps show an example to my own students about what it means to be a life-long learner, something I regularly discuss in the classroom. There are few in my family, and none in my immediate family, that have pursued an advanced degree, so it was a little uncharted territory for me. I am thankful when I was weighing the pros and cons of whether or not to pursue the degree I had a lot of support from fellow agriculture educators, former professors, co-workers and friends and family to pursue the idea to further my education.

It was not always easy. Though I enjoyed high school, community college and my time as an undergraduate at Iowa State, and studying and getting good grades came fairly naturally to me, grad school has been different. Between working a job that I am practically married to, raising livestock, having a little family time, being active at church, and acting as a 4-H leader-trying to study and do the work to learn the material for graduate classes was challenging. Sometimes more challenging then I had anticipated. In fact, I nearly quit a year ago. Burning the candle at both ends had me feeling burned out and coupled with a dwindling cash fund from a poor teacher’s paycheck and a looming major knee surgery- I was not sure I could endure
another semester. It was not the work itself, and the time put into it, though it was a factor, it was the fact I knew I could produce higher quality work than I sometimes turned in as I was trying to do this in an overloaded schedule. I was frustrated with myself and not satisfied with my grades, at no fault of the faculty teaching the classes. With the support of family and friends who refused to let me quit, I slowly worked my way through, and though it took me longer than I was anticipating and my grades were not always as high as I hoped, the end is finally near.

One thing I did not expect from taking these classes was to gain an entirely new appreciation for research. Though I had plenty of science classes in high school and for my animal science degree at Casper College and plenty of education classes at Iowa State, I somehow sneaked by having to do little research on my own. This was the first time I really had to large quantities or and evaluate research regularly. Dr. Miller’s AgEdS 510 class was a challenge for me, and I attempted to take the class one fall without realizing the depth of research and the depth of the class. Combined with other classes and an already overactive schedule, I quickly realized I had bitten off more than I could chew and dropped the class. I knew if I really wanted to understand the mechanics of research, I would need to do more than try to survive the semester. When I began the class again, I knew to start strong and had a much better understanding of the usefulness and necessity of proper research and had a much higher appreciation for the class.

If given the option to go back and do it all again, I would still pursue a masters degree in agricultural education from Iowa State. More than likely, I would change some of the ways I went about it, but I would still do the program. The figurative blood, and sometimes literal sweat and tears make the degree that much more valuable to me, knowing I had to sacrifice and work
to learn new skills and concepts to earn this new title. I would still recommend to those interested in pursuing higher education to do so and offer them support to chase their dreams.
REFERENCES


National 4-H Council. (2018). What is 4-H. Retrieved from https://4-h.org/about/what-is-4-h/


AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My college professor, Dr. Tom Paulsen, and countless fellow agricultural educators, especially Dave Tometich and Sam Paul deserve credit for pushing me to start a masters program in agricultural education. While they helped to get me started, I would not have been able to finish without the encouragement of my major professor Dr. Scott Smalley and again, the fellowship of agriculture teachers, especially Zach Morris and Dawn Mausser, to get me to the finish line. Smalley, along with Dr. Jodi Sterle and Dr. Mark Hanline, were fantastic as a committee and offered a lot of support and constructive criticism to make the final project even better than I was hoping for. Pastor Dan Schoepf gave up time to act as my proctor and prayer warrior, Finally, I need to thank my family, for sticking with me through both the masters journey itself and completing the final project. I know there were times I was tired and likely less than pleasant, but you encouraged me to keep working, researching, writing and pushing myself to finish strong. Through proofreading papers, pestering me to make sure work was turned in, and making sure I was up and chipper to teach after a long night reading- you all kept me motivated. To Mom, Dad, the siblings, Jenny and Larry and Dave and Christel- thank you! I would not have made it without you.