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Organizing a Poultry Showmanship Contest

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Poultry showmanship is an opportunity for young people to demonstrate their ability to present and display their bird and communicate their knowledge of poultry husbandry to others. It is the exhibitor's time to interact, one on one, with a poultry judge.

Who is eligible to Show? 4-H and FFA members and younger children, who assume the responsibility of caring for their own birds, make good showmanship candidates if they are able to understand the purpose and benefits of this type of competition.

How are Showmanship classes divided? Ideally, a separate class should be created for each age group by year, for example all 3rd graders, all 4th graders, etc. When there are insufficient numbers to achieve this (aim for four or more entries per class) the competition may be divided as follows: Pre-junior

(children in grades K – 2nd) Junior Division for children grades 3rd – 5th, Intermediate Division for children grades 6th – 8th, and Senior Division for grades 9th – 12th. Some shows add a Novice class to meet the needs of those who have never participated in showmanship before, regardless of age.

What equipment is necessary? Cages may be needed so exhibitors can demonstrate the proper way birds should be taken from and put in cages. All cages should be bedded with good quality clean shavings for safe footing. A table with a none-slick surface or matting is needed for posing and walking of the bird. A microphone is helpful for calling exhibitors and giving instructions. Sometimes the judge will want to offer advice or elaborate when the class is finished.



Figure 1. Examples of a well-bedded cage and a well-groomed Black Rosecomb hen and Old English cock.

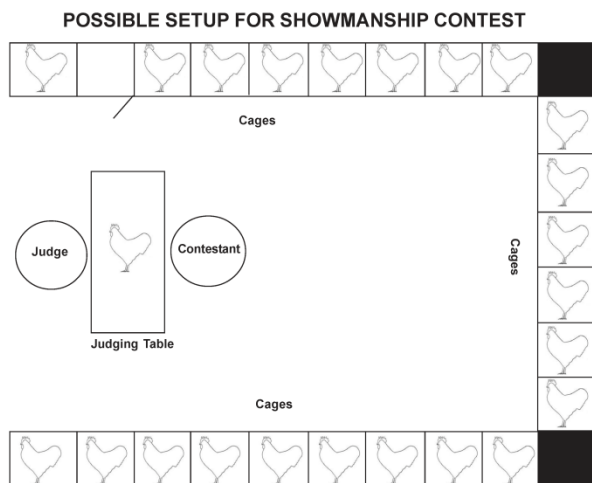


Figure 2. One example of a possible configuration for a showmanship contest.

Where is the contest held? The contest should be visible. It is best held in or near the show rooms. An area large enough to provide freedom of movement is important. A good choice of locations would be a livestock arena if it is available and close by.

When is the contest held? Some shows set aside an extra day for showmanship. When showmanship is held on the same day as the regular show, it should take place before or after the exhibition judging.

Who should judge the showmanship contest? Any knowledgeable poultry person with a positive attitude and an interest in youth can judge. 4-H leaders, FFA teachers, and seasoned adult exhibitors also make good candidates. Potential judges must have a good general knowledge of the various breeds and varieties

and possess the ability to communicate easily with young people. A good judge must also be able to assess the expected knowledge level of the showmanship class under consideration (i.e., younger vs. older classes), and be able to ask age level-appropriate questions.

References

Poultry Showmanship, A Manual for the Organizer and the Judge. Published by the American Poultry Association.

American Standard of Perfection 2010, Published by; American Poultry Association, INC. Burgettstown, Pennsylvania.

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