

What to Expect at the 4-H Consumer Decision Making National Contest

Consumer Decision Making (CDM) is a competitive 4-H event that teaches financial management, consumerism, and decision-making skills. The event consists of six classes, with two sets of reasons, and a group process activity. Contestants compete as a team of three or four members. If a team has four members, the lowest score is dropped in determining awards. The national contest is part of the FCS National Championship & Conference, hosted each year by Texas 4-H. The following guide provides CDM teams with the logistical information they need to prepare for the National Contest.

Contest Order

1. Contest Orientation
2. Judging Round 1
3. Oral Reasons Round 1
4. Judging Round 2
5. Oral Reasons Round 2
6. Group Think

Contest Orientation

The contest starts with a brief orientation, where the Contest Superintendents will announce the six classes, the two reasons classes, and the Group Think topic. At this time, each contestant will receive a unique number. Each team member will have the same team number, followed by a letter A-F. This letter signifies their judging group: for example, all A's will form a group, all B's will be in a group, etc.

Contestants will be provided judging cards to mark their placings on and may have their own blank clipboard. They will also be provided with Reasons Score Cards that they will give to the Reasons Judge during each Reasons Round. No other paper, calculators, or cell phones will be allowed into the contest area. Note cards will be provided for Reasons Classes note taking. Each contestant is responsible for providing their own pencils for marking judging cards and making reasons notes. It is recommended that they bring at least two pencils. When Orientation ends, coaches will be dismissed from the contest area, and the contest will officially begin.

Judging Round 1

Following orientation, contestants will be taken into the Judging Tables by letter group. Groups A, B, and C go to Judging Tables 1, and Groups D, E, and F go to Judging Tables 2. At each set of Judging Tables, there will be three tables, with one class set up at each table. The six classes will be divided between the two judging areas.

Each group will be placed at a different table with their backs to the classes. When each judging period starts, contestants may turn and begin judging. Once contestants judge and place the class, they must clearly mark their placing card before the end of the judging period. Contestants have 10 minutes to complete judging and mark their card. A two-minute warning is given before each 10-minute judging period ends. All cards are collected at the end of each period, and groups rotate to the next class as indicated in Figure 1 (page 2). Cards must be clearly labeled with the class name. Failure to write the class name will result in a zero for that card.

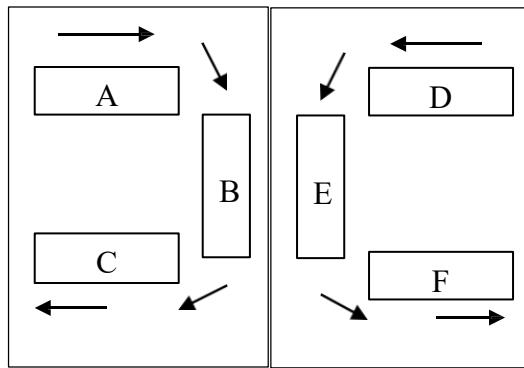


Figure 1—Judging Tables Layout with beginning tables for each Judging Group by Letter Judging Tables 1 (left) and Judging Tables 2 (right)

During this first round of judging, contestants will judge one class that has been identified as the Reasons Class for that set of tables. The Reasons Class will be clearly marked at its table. Contestants should take notes on the note cards provided while they are judging that class. They will not be able to go back to any previous class once time is called. After completing three judging rotations, contestants will be lined up in Reasons Order (determined randomly) and taken back to the Holding Room to prepare their first set of Reasons. Contestants are allowed 10 minutes study time prior to the start of the first Reasons Round.

Oral Reasons Round 1

After the 10 minutes of study time, the first round of reasons will begin. Contestants are allowed up to 2 minutes to present their set of Oral Reasons to the Reasons Judge. There will not be a podium in the room, and the Reasons Judge will not ask questions of the contestant. After the contestant gives their set of Reasons, they will return to the Holding Room. Judging Round 2 will begin after all contestants finish Reasons Round 1.

Judging Round 2

Contestants will be dismissed by letter group from the Holding Room to go to the Judging Tables that they have not visited yet. Groups A, B, and C go to Judging Tables 2, and Groups D, E, and F go to Judging Tables 1. Judging Round 2 will operate the same way as Judging Round 1 with contestants rotating through three 10-minute judging periods. At the conclusion of Judging Round 2, contestants will be lined up in a new Reasons Order (determined randomly) and taken back to the Holding Room to prepare their second set of Oral Reasons. Contestants are allowed 10 minutes study time prior to the start of the second Reasons Round.

Reasons Round 2

After the 10 minutes of study time, the second round of reasons will begin. This round will follow the same format as Reasons Round 1, with one exception. After a contestant gives their second set of Reasons, they will go to the Group Think Holding Room and wait for their team to join them. Once all members of a Team are in the Group Think Holding Room, the Group Think Round will begin, running concurrently with Reasons Round 2.

Group Think Round

The final component of the contest is a Group Think. The Group Think consists of 5 basic steps:

- Ascertain the issue or problem and state the facts
- Determine the alternative solutions to the problem
- List personal or social goals (or criteria) bearing on the problem
- Evaluate the alternatives according to the goals or criteria
- Make a decision based on the evaluation

Each team will be given 10 minutes processing time. Teams will be taken into the judging room in random order. Upon entering the judging room, the team will be presented a situation. With the judges watching, the team will read and evaluate the problem, discuss their solution, and present a final statement of their decision. Recommended processing time is 3 minutes for read through, 3 minutes for discussion, and 2 minutes for the final statement. If a team has not started giving a final presentation by the 8-minute mark, a 2-minute warning will be given. Below are example Group Think steps to help teams prepare for this section of the contest:

Sample Group Think Steps:

- Step 1: State the situation/problem.
- Step 2: List the alternatives found in the relevant study guide and add your own.
- Step 3: List the criteria stated in the study guide and add your own as appropriate.
- Step 4: Evaluate each alternative based on the criteria. Teams can create a visual guide like the grid below and make plus, minus, or zero signs to indicate good or not good choices. Teams could also assign point values if needed to assist in ranking.
- Step 5: Select the best choice for the situation. Explain your choice(s).

Example Decision Making Grid

Alternatives	Criteria					

The Group Think is scored on team participation (all members must participate), communication skills of team members (speaking and listening), variety of options generated, conclusions, and overall presentation. Once a team completes the Group Think Round, they are finished with the contest and will return to their coach(es).

For more information on this contest, please contact the 4-H CDM Superintendents:
Matthew Hibdon (Matthew.Hibdon@mtsu.edu) and Cari Snider (Cari.Snider@ag.tamu.edu).

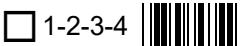
Sample Judging Card

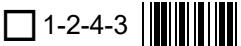
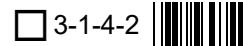
Contestants will receive six (6) judging cards like this example. The placing must be clearly marked in the box next to the selected placing.

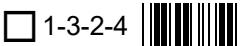
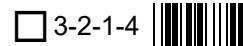
Failure to write the class name on the card and to clearly mark the placing will result in a zero (0) for that round of judging.

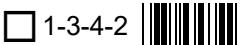
Contestant Name
Class Name (to be written in by contestant)

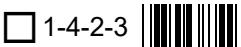
Mark Your Placing Selection Below

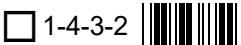
1-2-3-4  3-1-2-4 

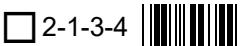
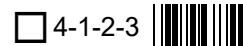
1-2-4-3  3-1-4-2 

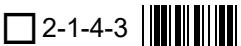
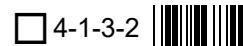
1-3-2-4  3-2-1-4 

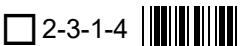
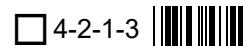
1-3-4-2  3-2-4-1 

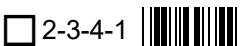
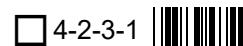
1-4-2-3  3-4-1-2 

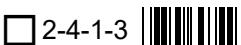
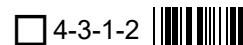
1-4-3-2  3-4-2-1 

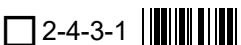
2-1-3-4  4-1-2-3 

2-1-4-3  4-1-3-2 

2-3-1-4  4-2-1-3 

2-3-4-1  4-2-3-1 

2-4-1-3  4-3-1-2 

2-4-3-1  4-3-2-1 

Sample Reasons Card

Contestants will receive two (2) reasons cards and must write the appropriate reasons class name on the top of the card.

This card will be turned into the judge when the contestant enters the Reasons Room.

The "Notes" section on this card is for the judge's use only. Blank notecards will be provided during judging for contestants to use for any notes needed on reasons classes.

4-H FCS National Championship
Consumer Decision Making
Score Sheet for Oral Reasons

Contestant Number _____ Class _____

	Possible Score	Contestant Score
Accurate and clear statements Comparisons which justify placing Content accurate and factual	15	
Information Given Is there evidence of criteria being used and proper terminology Completeness of reasons – major points emphasized and use of grants	15	
Delivery Were the reasons organized with a structure of comparing pairs Did the contestant speak up Opening and Closing statements Poise and appearance of the Contestant	20	
Total Score A maximum deduction of 5 points for going over 2 minutes	50	
Final Score if there were deductions		

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Information Given Is there evidence of criteria being used and proper terminology Completeness of reasons – major points emphasized and use of grants	15	
Delivery Were the reasons organized with a structure of comparing pairs Did the contestant speak up Opening and Closing statements Poise and appearance of the Contestant	20	
Total Score A maximum deduction of 5 points for going over 2 minutes	50	
Final Score if there were deductions		

4-H FCS National Championship
Consumer Decision Making
Group Process Score Sheet

Team/State: _____

Team Participation (80 points maximum)

Participation:	All team members participate in group process class (20 points maximum)	_____
Reading:	All team members given time to become familiar with the situation (20 points maximum)	_____
Discussing:	Speaking and listening skills demonstrated by each team member (20 points maximum)	_____
Summarizing:	Reaching consensus based on discussion of options and criteria (20 points maximum)	_____

Team Process (120 points possible)

Alternatives:	Variety of options generated (20 points maximum)	_____
Criteria:	Expectations necessary for a positive decision are listed (20 points maximum)	_____
Solution:	Conclusions reached are explained and reasonable for the situation (40 points maximum)	_____
Presentation:	Total team effort is shown: 1. Every member contributes to reach group consensus (20 points maximum) 2. A clear statement of the group decision is presented (20 points maximum)	_____

Maximum of 200 points possible

Total: _____