

Texas 4-H Judging Contest

General Rules & Guidelines

Updated : September 1, 2025

Changes noted in RED

These rules will apply to all judging contest conducted by the Texas 4-H Youth Development Program. All rules stated within this document will be adhered to by all participants. Please refer to the specific judging contest rules as well for information that may vary due to the nature of the contest.

Recommended equipment: *All equipment is subject to review by the contest superintendent or assistants and subject to disqualification if determined they provide an unfair advantage to the contestant. Individual contest superintendents can modify allowed equipment and will notify contestants in advance of the contest.*

- Clipboard
- Plain file folder
- Blank paper or Steno Pad
- #2 pencil(s)
- Scan sheet or judging cards (will be provided by contest coordinator)

General Contest Rules

1. A team shall consist of a minimum of three (3) members and a maximum of four (4) members in the same age division from the same county (unless individual contest rules specify differently). Team scores will be determined by the combined score of the three (3) highest scoring individual team members. The contestant with the lowest score will be designated as alternate but will remain eligible to receive individual awards.

Note: A County can only have a maximum of 2 individual entries per age division. If there are 3 individuals from a county wanting to judge in the same age division, they must be declared a team entry.

2. Contestants are prohibited from possessing communication devices (cell phones, tablets, smart watches, fitness trackers, or any other smartphone-style watch devices) or **audio listening devices** during the contest. Exceptions are allowed only for medically necessary devices (e.g., blood sugar monitors, medical apps, or hearing aids). All medical device needs **MUST** be communicated in advance to the contest superintendent through the accommodations request process outlined in the Accommodations section. **Any violation by an individual contestant or team member will result in disqualification.**

3. All participants are expected to uphold the highest standards of sportsmanship, integrity, and respect toward fellow contestants, contest officials, and volunteers. Contestants shall treat fellow participants, officials, and volunteers with dignity and respect. Disruptive, disrespectful, or unsportsmanlike behavior, including inappropriate language or gestures, will not be tolerated. At the discretion of contest officials and the Texas 4-H Program management, **any demonstration of unsportsmanlike conduct may result in warnings and/or individual or team disqualification from the contest.**

4. The contestants will be divided into groups for the contest and will remain with the assigned group throughout the contest. While the contest is in progress, there shall be no communication between contestants or between a contestant and anyone else except by the Superintendent or assistants. **If a contestant is caught communicating with other contestants, the contestants and their teams may be disqualified.**
5. Display Group Assignment Label on upper portion of shirt, visible always. Do not place label on pants, clipboard, etc.
 - If a contestant is found outside of his/her properly assigned group, the contestant and their team may be disqualified.
 - Contestants should not wear clothing with monogrammed individual identification (Name or county) while presenting Reasons
6. Contestants will remain outside of the contest area until judging classes are in place, and they are asked to enter the area.
7. Coaches, agents, and parents are not allowed into the judging area once the contest begins, *unless allowed by the contest Superintendent*. Following the contest, coaches, agents, and parents may be permitted into the area for officials and allowed time to review the classes with contestants, if time permits.
8. Contestants should face away from the judging class until instructed by the contest coordinator or group leader that they may turn and face the judging class. **If a contestant does not cooperate with this rule, the contestant may be disqualified.**
9. Once time has been called and judging on all classes has been completed, contestants must immediately turn in their scan sheet / judging card to their Group Leader. **Any contestant failing to turn in their scantron immediately following the end of the contest, will result in no score.**
10. In the event of a tie, please refer to specific contest rules for the method of determining the winner.
11. **Scantron management is the responsibility of the contestant. Make sure not to damage the scantron in a manner that would prevent it to be scanned. Scan sheets that are abused will not be scored.**
12. **Contestants and coaches are required to verify that all details on the scantrons are filled out correctly. Team numbers will be assigned, and it's essential for contestants to accurately mark their team number, along with their name, for scoring purposes. If a team number is not accurately marked, the scantron will be disqualified.**