

DANISH or GROUP METHOD of JUDGING

WHO GETS THE BLUE RIBBON?

THE DANISH OR GROUP METHOD OF JUDGING IN THE 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

by

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The group method of judging has been developed to evaluate exhibits and meet the needs of the 4-H Youth Development Program. It is used almost exclusively in the program in Washington State and it is the accepted method in use throughout the 4-H Youth Program in the United States. The group method of judging is sometimes referred to as the "Danish System," or "Modified Danish System" of judging.

What Is the Group Method?

The Group Method is a method of evaluating entries or exhibits in a particular class or contest according to the standards developed for that class or contest. The entries, exhibits, or contestants are evaluated and arranged into groups for recognition of their achievement based upon how close the exhibit meets the pre-established standards.

How Do You Use the Group Method?

After evaluation of each item in the class, the entire class may be subdivided into four groups according to their own merit. All exhibits in this approach are judged in comparison with a standard as opposed to comparison with other exhibits in a class. The standard for each exhibit is established by the characteristics of the "ideal" product in each category. If the performance of 4-H members is being evaluated, due consideration of their age and/or development and experience must be taken into account.

The three groupings are:

Excellent or Blue: A blue is given to those entries or members who most nearly meet the standards established for the particular class or level of performance. Excellent does not indicate perfection, but is a wide grouping indicating a high degree of achievement toward the elements in the standards for the exhibit.

Good or Red: The second or red grouping indicates those exhibits or individuals who rank good in relation to the particular standards or expected achievement of the class or contest. Either the general level of the accomplishment is less than excellent or enough specific shortcomings are found to cause the placing to drop from excellent too good.

Fair or White: The white grouping contains those exhibits or contestants who upon evaluation are found lacking and rate only average, acceptable, or satisfactory rating for the standards established.

No Award or No Ribbon: maybe given if exhibits or individuals who for one reason or another fail to produce that level of achievement which can be reasonably expected in relation to the specific class or performance in which they are entered.

The difference between the Danish and Modified Danish system is the degrees of specificity in the number of exhibits distributed between the Blue, Red, White, and no award groups. In the Danish System exhibits are generally assigned an award based on a numerical score for blue, red, and white ribbons. Some projects have history of assigning different scores from the general rule. The scoring most often would be a blue ribbon score of 90-100; red ribbon would be 80-89; white ribbon would be 70-79; and no award or a participation ribbon for a score of 69 or below. When the Modified Danish System is employed individual entries or contestants within each group are further ranked in relation to their relative standing within each group giving strict adherence to a standard of characteristics for a blue, red, or white ribbon that is used by the judge.

Why Is the Group Method Used in the 4-H Program?

It provides recognition for the maximum number of 4-H members. We realize that recognition is a basic need of all young people (and adults, too) and that public recognition for achievement helps fulfill this basic need.

The Group Method or Danish System of evaluation recognizes the existence and allows for the relatively minor differences between two or more entries or performances of any two individuals or groups of individuals. The method promotes the educational objectives of 4-H and furthers the motto "Make the Best Better" by providing incentive for the maximum number of youth.

The group method attempts to distribute awards (ribbons, premiums, and public recognition) among the majority of those participating.

When the Group Method of Judging Is Used, the Following Should Be Considered:

1. The exhibit should be judged against outlined 4-H project standards and applied equally to all participants, not against other items.
2. The exhibitor should not be judged, except in Fitting and Showing, horse classes as Equitation Class, Fashion Revue, demonstrations, public presentations, etc.
3. The judge should not determine what members should make, grow, etc., or enter in the fair. This is a program decision!
4. The judge should not assume that a member has experience because of age; or if a person makes an error, they are inexperienced.
5. When selecting champions, the exhibit must be of blue ribbon quality and be the first and second best blue ribbon exhibits in the class.

References

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