



# 4-H Showmanship Guide

## *Small Animal*

Revised 10/2013

Acknowledgement: The information for this guide is based on the Montana 4-H publication 5269 4-H Showmanship Guidelines.

Show day at the county and state fair is your project's "moment of truth." What you have learned, how you have managed your animal and how well you control your animal are all tested.

Showmanship contests are evaluated based on preparation of animals for show, the apparent training, and the appearance and behavior of the exhibitor. Animal's conformation should not be considered except as it may affect the way an animal should have been fitted or shown. Basic skills and both grooming and showing should not be confused with current fads and trends.

This is an outline of desirable showmanship practices and their relative importance. The showmanship judges should make placing according to the degree of excellence displayed in carrying out these practices. Youth should use this guide in preparing for a showmanship contest in Fallon-Carter County.

### **This Guide Outlines Showmanship Guidelines for:**

Cat  
Dog  
Poultry  
Rabbit

### **Judging Criteria**

1. Judging should be based on preparation of animals for show, their apparent training, and the appearance and behavior of the participating showperson.
2. Type of animal should not be considered unless it will affect the way the animal should be fitted and shown.
3. Fine or technical points should not be overemphasized to the extent that they are given more weight than an effective job of presenting a clean animal, nor should minor infractions result in the disqualification of a showperson.

### **The Purpose of Showmanship is to:**

- Provide a means for youth to learn, practice, demonstrate, and improve their knowledge of their animal species.
- Provide a mean for youth to learn, practice, demonstrate, and improve the correct way to handle your animals.
- Provide a means for youth to demonstrate how to present their animals to a judge, emphasizing their animals' best traits.
- Teach youth good sportsmanship, experiencing winning and losing amongst their peers.
- Provide a reason for youth to interact with their animals, forming a closer human-animal bond.
- Improve young people's communication skills and increase young people's self-esteem and self-confidence.

### **General Showmanship Guidelines:**

- When you arrive at the show, check the show ring or show area for low spots or dark areas. This will help you avoid these areas when setting up your animal, both improving the appearance of your animal and impressing the judge.
- Know the show schedule and be ready when your class is called. A late arrival in the show ring may cause some confusion or distract the judge. It is wise to confirm that your animal is entered in the correct class. Observe the judging of a few classes prior to when you show to familiarize yourself with the show procedures and the judge's preferred show style.
- A big percentage of showmanship is how well an animal handles, cleanliness and cooperation between the animal and the handler. Make sure the animal is **clean, well-groomed** and **well-trained**. Trimming and clipping the animal should be done according to preference of the owner. A member should not be penalized for being unable to afford clippers or not having anyone to help. Members should seek help and attend training sessions in the use of clippers and other grooming clinics.
- **Make sure the animal looks its best** from the time it enters the ring until it leaves.
- If you have the chance to be first, **go for it!** Remember the first impression that a judge has of you and your animal is very important.
- Proper show equipment is a necessity and make sure it is **clean and fits properly**.
- Seven to ten days before the fair, treat your animal as if you were at the show, use the same water and feed buckets, for example.
- The more you work with your animal the more it will get used to setting up and you will have to do little work during the show.
- Keep showing until the entire class has been placed, the judge has given their reasons and you have been dismissed from the show.
- Alertness during the show is extremely important. Keep an eye on the judge and on your animal.
- Be prepared to handle any animal the judge designates (poultry and rabbit only).
- **Attitude is worth a lot in the show ring**
  - Be courteous and polite to the judge and fellow showpersons in the show ring.
  - Always remember to control your emotions and appear keen but relaxed, regardless of placing, accepting the decisions of the judge in a sportsmanlike manner.
  - Be a modest winner and a gracious loser.
  - Be quiet and patient around your animal. You will accomplish more by walking slow, than by being mean to your animal.
  - Your behavior, attitude and ability are important. Sportsmanship and temperament are good indicators of a good showperson. Remember the judge may be watching you whether you are in the show ring or not.
  - There is nothing wrong with saying "Yes, Sir" or "Yes, Ma'am" to recognize the judge as an official. If you have questions ask the ring steward.

**Be neat and clean.** Wear neat, practical, clean, serviceable clothing for the particular animal type. Nothing should be worn that focuses the attention on the handler rather than the animals and that will distract the animals.

- Long sleeve shirts are recommended.
- “Blingy” belts may be distracting to animals.
- No deduction shall be made for wearing tennis shoes
- Hair should be neat, clean and out of your face. Tie long hair back.
- Nail polish is fine provided it is not chipped.
- Do not chew gum.
- Dress guidelines may vary from show to show. Find out what is required before show day.
- Exhibitor numbers should be worn on your back or on the front of your shirt.
- If dress code is not followed the contestant will be dropped a ribbon placing.

### *Definitions*

- **SETTING YOUR ANIMAL:** A showmanship term referring to the proper placement of an animal’s legs while being exhibited to a judge for evaluation.
- **POSING WITH YOUR ANIMAL:** This term refers to where you should stand in relation to your animal and the judge.
- **RINGMAN/RING STEWARD:** Is the person who directs the animal when they are in the judging area. The Ringman/Ring Steward assists the judge in moving animals into various position in and out of the line-up
- **CLERK:** Is the person who records the placing of the various classes
- **EXHIBITOR:** Is the person showing the exhibit
- **EXHIBIT:** Is an animal which has been prepared by the exhibitor for show purposes.

### **REMEMBER**

*Members are responsible for the care, preparation and exhibition of project animals. Leaders and/or parents should be on hand to assist members should they encounter difficulties; however, SHOULD NOT perform duties which members can do themselves.*

**GOOD LUCK AND GOOD SHOWING!!!**

# CAT SHOWMANSHIP

Acknowledgement: The information for this section is based on the Ohio State University 4-H Cat Showmanship Guidelines.



howmanship is a competitive event and requires practice and learning to become skilled. Start working with your cat early.

## As a 4-H member, it is important for you to:

- Have a cat that is appropriate for your abilities.
- Handle all aspects of the care and grooming of your cat.
- Participate in a year-round wellness program, keeping your cat vaccinated and free from internal and external parasites.
- Spay or neuter cats that are not purebred, and purebred cats that are not used for breeding purposes.
- Socialize your cat prior to bringing him or her to show.
- Accustom your cat to a harness and leash, cat carrier, and being transported in a vehicle.
- Put an identification tag on your cat's harness in case he or she should be lost.
- Learn as much about cats as possible from your project book and other resources.
- Have fun with your cat!



## Appearance and Conduct Count!

- You as well as your cat are on display the entire time you are in the show ring. Besides representing 4-H, you are presenting an image to the judge as well as the spectators.
- Your appearance and conduct are important.

## Grooming Cats

- Cats should be well groomed. Claws must be trimmed, regardless of whether or not they are outdoor cats. Their coats must be free from mats and burs. Cats should not shed excessively. The eyes and nose must be free of discharge. The ears must not show any signs of mites or have any dirt in them. The teeth should be reasonably clean and free of tartar.

*Pat Showmanship*

## **Showing Cats**

**Dress Code:** A long sleeved white or solid colored shirt and dark brown, black or blue jeans. No caps are allowed. The wearing of a tie or organizational scarf is preferred. Shoes should be flat and easy to walk in. Low-heeled, rubber-soled shoes are best since they provide good traction. High-heels and flip-flops are not appropriate. No deduction shall be made for wearing tennis shoes. FFA members must follow official FFA dress code.

**Equipment:** Carrying Cage. Leash and harness.

## **Showing Procedures**

NOTE: The judge may ask exhibitors to come the table one at a time or they may ask all exhibitors to bring their animal to the show table and line up all at once. You should be comfortable with both methods.

- Keep the harness and leash on your cat; loop the end of the leash over the wrist of one arm.
- Be aware of where the judge is; however, remain focused on your cat and not on the judge.
- Be able to take direction from the judge if called for.
- Be polite to those around you and to the judge.
- Keep your cat a safe distance from other cats to prevent a confrontation or fighting.

### **The judge will:**

- Observe the relationship between you and your cat.
- Assess if the cat is responsive to you and your actions.
- See if you are keeping your cat under control.
- Assess if both you and your cat are relaxed.
- Try to determine if you were responsible for the majority of your cat's care, completing the project with minimal help taking into consideration your age and abilities.
- Evaluate how well you answer the questions during your interview, and how well you and your cat complete the exercises.

### **Showmanship Steps**

- When called, hold your cat in the safety carry and approach the judge or follow the judge's or ring steward's directions.
- Keep the end of the leash looped over your wrist.
- Set your cat on the table facing the judge either in a sitting or standing position.
- You will be asked approximately five questions about cats. These questions should come from the cat project book you are taking, with consideration given for the number of years you have taken a cat project as well as your age.
- You should have general knowledge of 4-H, such as the pledge, motto, description of the emblem, etc.
- The judge will be assessing your cat's general health and overall condition. They must appear healthy. They must not have any eye discharge, runny noses, dirty ears or ear mites, fleas or other external parasites, patchy fur, open sores, or other health problems.
- Cat must allow the judge to examine them without clawing, hissing, or growling. The judge will make 3 attempts to examine the cat before moving on. If a cat continues to exhibit a threatening temperament, he or she may be excused from judging for the safety of the exhibitors, other cats, and the judge.

Refer to all other General Showmanship Guidelines on pages 1-3 and your county or show rules

## PRESENTING YOUR CAT FOR EXAMINATION

You, as the exhibitor, will be asked to show the judge how to:

- Properly pick up a cat
- Hold the cat in the safety carry position
- Open your cat's mouth to show his/her teeth and gums
- Show your cat's nose
- Show both of your cats eyes
- Show both of your cats ears
- Show the claws on all four feet of your cat
- Ruffle the coat on your cat's belly to show cleanliness and good grooming

As you are presenting your cat to the judge, explain what you are showing him/her.

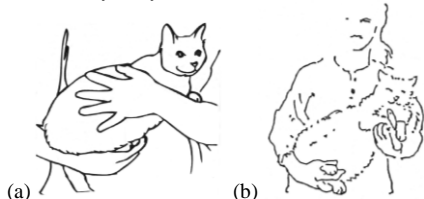
Show the judge your cat's conformation in the following order:

- Head shape
- Body
- Tail or lack of tail
- Coat texture
- Show other attributes of your cat in the manner your cat's breed requires.

**Picking Up a Cat:** Grasp under the cat's belly behind his/her front with one hand. With your other hand grasp the cat's rear legs and tail holding the tail between two of your fingers.



**Holding a Cat:** Once you have picked up your cat, you should position your cat in the *holding position* (a) or *safety carry* (b).



### Showing a Cat's Mouth, Teeth, and Gums:

Have the cat face the judge. Show your cat's mouth, teeth and gums as shown in either illustration.



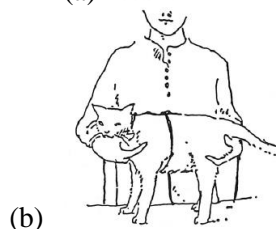
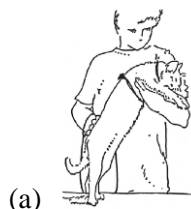
**Showing a Cat's Eyes:** Have the cat face the judge. Show your cat's eyes as shown in either illustration.



**Showing a Cat's Claws and Coat:** To show the cat's claws, slide your hand down over the cat's shoulder and leg, grasp the paw and gently squeeze it to show the claws. Show the claws on all four paws. To show the cat's coat, hold the cat on his/her rump with the belly facing the judge. Ruffle the coat to show cleanliness and grooming.



**Showing the Cat's Body Type:** Long Body (a), Short Body (b)



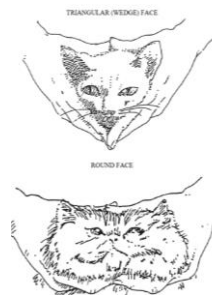
**Showing a Cat's Nose:** Have the cat face the judge. Show your cat's nose as shown in either illustration.



**Showing a Cat's Ears:** Turn the cat so the judge can see the cat's side view. Be sure the judge can see the cleanliness of the inside of the ear.



**Showing the Cat's Head Shape:** Post the cat in a sitting or standing position facing the judge. Show the conformation of your cat's head as follows.



**Showing The Cat's Tail and Coat Texture:** Show your cat's tail by grasping the top and showing its length. If your cat does not have a tail, show where the tail would be. The show cost texture, keep the cat with his/her side toward the judge, run your hand against the lay of the coat and then back down the body to make it smooth.



# DOG SHOWMANSHIP

Acknowledgement: The information for this section is based on the University of Minnesota 4-H Dog Showmanship Guidelines.



The purpose of showmanship is for 4-H members to develop skills and knowledge in dog show handling. Showmanship allows 4-H members to learn about breeds of dogs and general grooming responsibilities.

## Purpose of Showmanship Competition

Showmanship competition provides 4-H members with a meaningful experience where they can practice and improve their handling and sportsmanship skills. Showmanship gives each 4-H member the opportunity to present themselves and their dog to the best of their ability. This is exemplified by a handler working as a team with his or her dog, so the dog is stacked, alert, and under control, while at the same time the 4-H'er appears confident and in control. It is important to remember at all times that the 4-H showmanship ring is not the AKC showmanship ring.

- Showmanship will be evaluated on the following five basic areas:
  - Proper breed presentation
  - Ring procedure
  - Knowledge
  - Grooming of dog
  - Youth's appearance and conduct

## Grooming of Dog

In showmanship dogs are required to be well-groomed. 4-H'ers are allowed assistance from a professional groomer, but are strongly encouraged to learn these skills as they advance in experience. Excessive grooming of the dog in the ring to gain the judge's attention will be considered a minor fault. Use of a brush or comb to reposition messy hair is acceptable, but should be done very discreetly.

- **Coat:** The dog's coat must be clean, not scaly, free of mats, and free of loose hair. It is a major fault if a dog has mats or external parasites.
- **Ears:** The dog's ears should be free of dirt, parasites, and excessive hair.
- **Eyes:** The dog's eyes should be clean and free of matter.
- **Toenails:** The dog's toenails should be trimmed. It is a major fault if the dog's toenails are excessively long.



Toenail trimmed correctly.

NOTE: Any dog with hair over its eyes that interferes with its vision may have the hair tied back with up to four rubber bands or plain, straight, rectangular-shaped barrettes that have a solid exterior color. No ribbons or bows are allowed.

Dog Showmanship

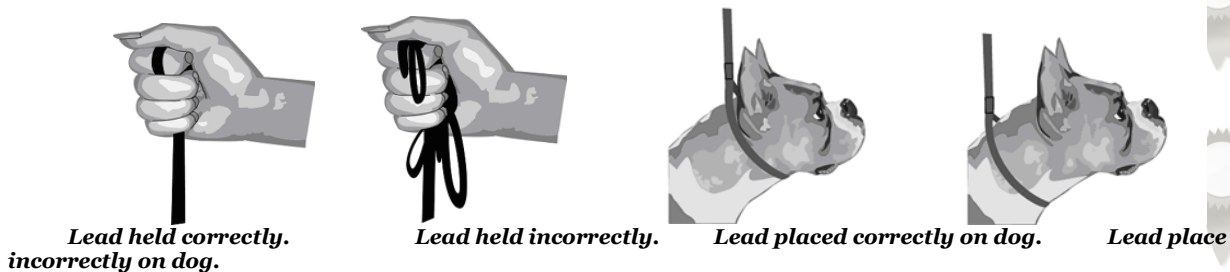
## Showing Dogs

**Dress Code:** A long sleeved white or solid colored shirt and dark brown, black or blue jeans. No caps are allowed. The wearing of a tie or organizational scarf is preferred. Shoes should be flat and easy to walk in. Low-heeled, rubber-soled shoes are best since they provided good traction. High-heels and flip-flops are not appropriate. No deduction shall be made for wearing tennis shoes. FFA members must follow official FFA dress code.

### **Equipment:**

**Leads:** There are several types of showmanship leads. They come in many styles, sizes, weights, and colors. Some include:

- **Loop lead** – this type has a loop at the end that slips over the dogs head. Caution should be used when showing with this lead, so that it does not slip off the dog’s head.
  - **Martingale** – this type has an additional loop at the end of the first loop and the dog’s head is placed between the two loops. This allows the handler to have more control with the dog.
  - **Slip collar with a short leash/lead** – this type is like those sometimes used in obedience but with a lead of four feet or less. The size of links should be appropriately matched to the size of the dog. It is appropriate for beginning and/or large and/or strong dogs to be shown with a slip collar.
- A showmanship lead is preferred, but no deduction shall be made for obedience leashes.
  - The size/weight of the lead should be appropriate for the size and/or breed of the dog. Most large dogs should not be shown on lightweight leads.
  - Regardless of which lead is used, the handler must be in control of the dog and the lead shall be held and used neatly. Deductions shall be made for leads hanging down or flapping about the dog. The handler’s lead should be ready at all times and deductions shall be made for time spent wrapping leads and getting ready to move out.
  - In the 4-H showmanship ring, the lead should never be removed when presenting the dog to the judge.



**Bait:** In the 4-H showmanship ring, baiting of dogs with food is allowed. If a 4-H'er uses bait, it must be used discretely, with no deliberate baiting near other dogs. If the bait is dropped in the ring and not immediately picked up OR is used to deliberately distract other dogs, the 4 H'er will automatically receive a white ribbon. Toys of any kind are not allowed in the showmanship ring.

The purpose of baiting is to animate your dog when stacking the dog in the lineup or during individual presentation to the judge. Your dog shows animation and/or expression by either wagging the tail or perking up the ears. Bait is also used to free stack your dog and keep his attention. (For a description of “stack” look under the heading titled “stacking”.)



## **Bait (con't)**

- Baiting is to be done discreetly, without a lot of fanfare and flare. Never stretch your arm out when holding the bait so that you are catching any other dog's attention. You need to be respectful of the other 4-H'ers in the ring.
- The size of the food bait pieces should be appropriate for the size of your dog. Semi-moist food chunks work best because they can be easily handled and quickly broken off without too much mess. Dry/hard bones or food cannot quickly be broken into smaller pieces. Bait should not be messy or gooey.
- Keep your bait in a bait bag or in your pants, or jacket pocket until you are ready to use it.
- Do not take the bait out of your pocket or bait bag until you are in the ring and the judge has placed you in the order he/she wants you to be in. If you are free stacking your dog, you will need the bait to stack. If you are hand stacking your dog, you will not need the bait until after the dog has been stacked for animation, as the judge is looking the group over.
- Be sure to put the bait in your bait bag or pocket before gaiting around the ring in a group. Never, ever leave the bait in your hand when not using it.
- Put your bait away in your bait bag or pocket right before the judge approaches for the individual examination of your dog.
- When you are doing an individual gaiting pattern, keep your bait in your pocket or bait bag. As you are completing the pattern and returning to the judge, you may take the bait out to present the dog to the judge.
- Bait should be held directly in front of your dog. At what height/level to hold the bait depends on the size of the dog and experience of the handler. Again, you want to think of the overall picture you are creating for the judge.
- If you bait a big dog holding the bait too high, it will throw the balance of the dog totally off – big dogs have a habit of reaching for something high.
- If you bait a small dog too low they do not respond.
- Never, ever throw the bait when you are in the showmanship ring. Never toss the bait in your hand, expecting to catch it while you are trying to get your dog's attention. (You may not catch the bait.) This is just common courtesy and respect to other dogs and 4-H'ers in the ring.

## **Showing Procedure**

Individual judges vary their judging routine and the following components may be mixed in any order.

### **GAITING**

- Make your gaiting smooth, straight, and the correct speed. When in motion, your dog should move naturally and freely. Avoid traveling ahead of or behind your dog.
- Always keep your show lead in the hand that is beside the dog. Do not keep the lead too tight or too loose for your breed or individual dog. The lead should never be so tight as to pull the dog's feet off the ground.
- Avoid unnecessary motions or noises that detract from the gaiting procedure. Use the entire ring unless the judge tells you to do otherwise.
- The dog is to be kept between the judge and 4-H'er at all times. It is a major fault if the 4-H'er is between the judge and the dog for a significant amount of time (examples: an entire side of the ring, entire pattern, all the way around the ring). It is a minor fault if the 4-H'er is between the judge and the dog for a minimal amount of time and the 4-H'er corrects the mistake.

## Showing Procedure (con't)

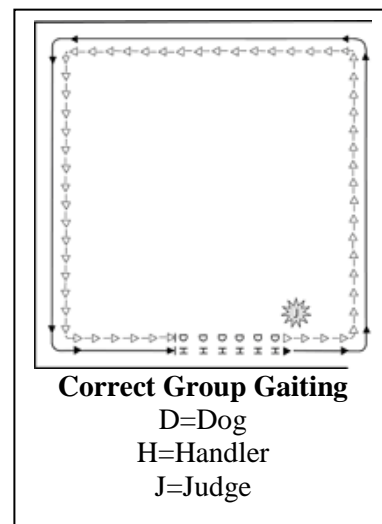
### GROUP GAITING

Normally, 4-H'ers will enter the ring in catalog order (numerical/armband order). Then the judge may choose to rearrange the dogs according to size and/or speed.

During group gaiting, the 4-H'er and dog will always move counter-clockwise around the ring. Under no circumstances may a judge direct the group to move clockwise around the ring. Gaiting is usually done around the perimeter of the ring with dogs on the left side of the handler. Passing should never be done except at the judge's request.

It is important that handlers leave space between themselves and the dogs in front (for safety and to give the judge the best view of their dog). Crowding other dogs is a major fault.

During group gaiting, when the faster dogs are at the front of the line and "catch up" to the smaller dogs at the end of the line, it is appropriate for the 4-H'er to slow down the gait of his/her dog. The 4-H'er with the faster/larger dog should continue gaiting at a slower speed, even if it is not the proper speed for his/her breed.



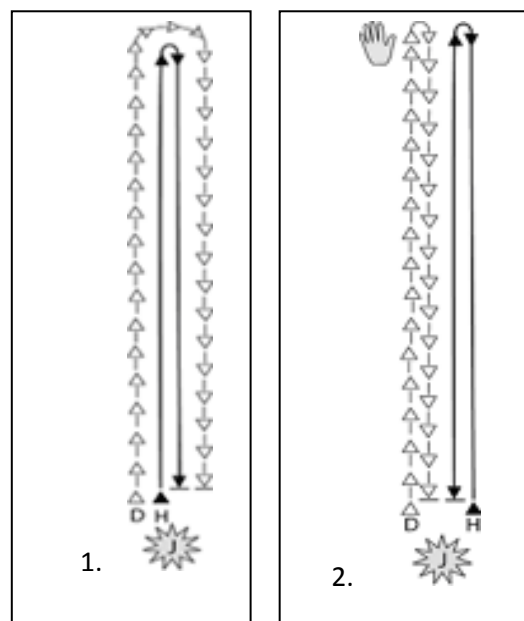
### INDIVIDUAL GAITING

During individual gaiting, the 4-H'er should move the dog at the correct speed for its breed. Depending on the breed, dogs will be shown at a walk, trot, or run, but the dog is always under control. The 4-H'er needs to move at a speed that will match the dog's appropriate gait. Trotting is when one front leg and the opposite rear leg move forward at the same time. Under no circumstances, should a dog be shown at a pace. Pacing is when the legs on the same side of the dog move forward at the same time. Pacing is a major fault.

The youth may be asked to perform one or more of the following patterns

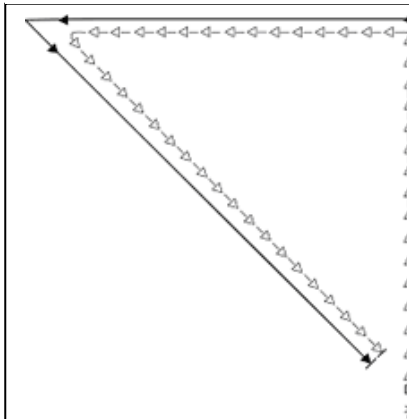
**Down and Back** – The 4-H'er and dog will be asked to gait across the ring either on the diagonal or from end to end. At the opposite end of the ring, the 4-H'er has the option to do (1) an about turn or (2) to switch hands with the lead.

1. If the 4-H'er does an about turn, the dog stays on the same side (left or right) and goes around the outside of the handler.
  2. If the 4-H'er switches hands with the lead, the 4-H'er and dog turn into/toward each other and proceed to the other end of the ring. The dog ends up on the opposite side of the 4-H'er from where it originally started (left to right or right to left).
- Executing a U-turn (where the 4-H'er goes around the dog) is a major fault.

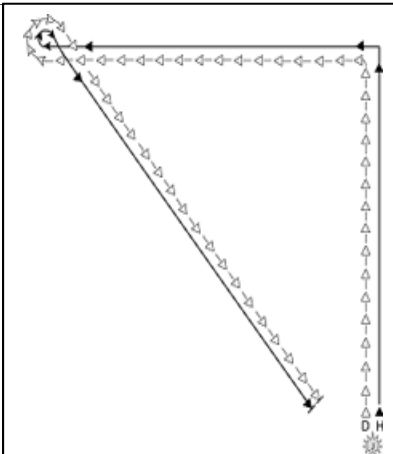


**INDIVIDUAL GAITING (con't)**

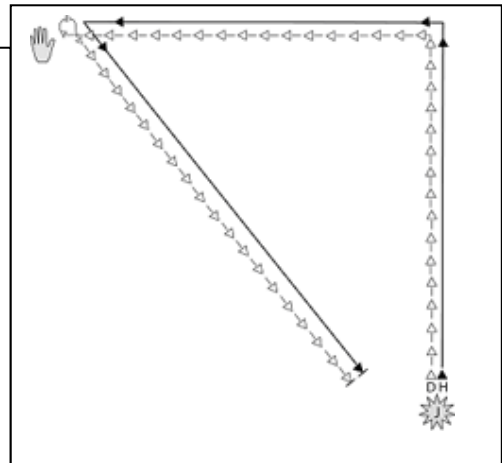
**"Triangle" Pattern** – This pattern is performed in the shape of a right triangle. The 4 H'er and dog will proceed in a straight line away from the judge to the opposite end of the ring. At the corner make a left turn and proceed all the way to the next corner. Then one of three turns below may be made before proceeding up the diagonal and back to the judge. Under no circumstances may a judge direct a 4-H'er to do a reverse triangle where the 4-H'er would go down the diagonal first.



**Triangle with simple turn.**  
The 4 H'er does not switch hands with the lead and the dog stays on the 4 H'ers left side.

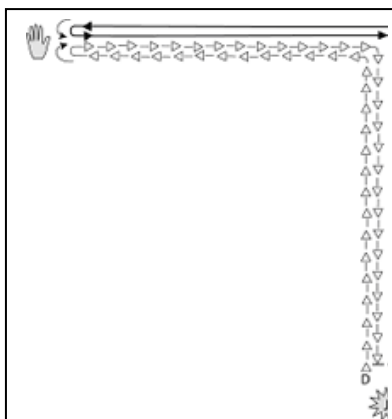


**Triangle with a circle at the corner.** The dog stays on the 4-H'ers left side. The 4-H'er does not switch hands with the lead

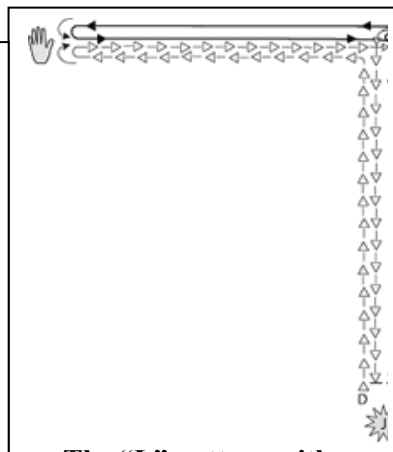


**Triangle where 4-H'er switches hands with the lead** and crosses the dog over in front of him/her. The dog completes a circle as the 4-H'er and dog turn into/toward each other and proceed up the diagonal with the dog on the 4-H'ers right side.

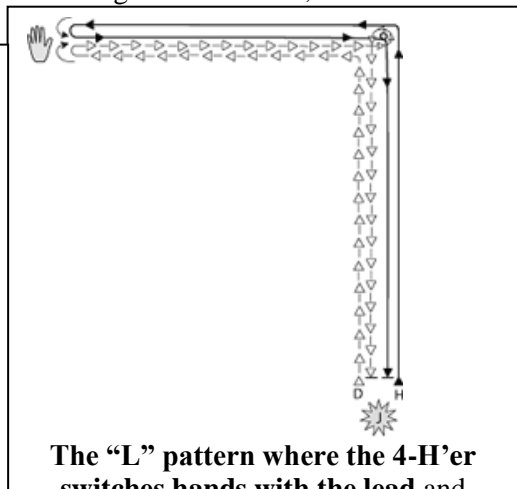
**"L" Pattern** – This pattern is performed in the shape of an uppercase letter "L". The 4-H'er and dog will proceed in a straight line away from the judge to the opposite end of the ring. At the corner make a left turn and proceed all the way to the next corner. The 4-H'er then switches hands with the lead. The 4 H'er and dog turn into/toward each other and proceed back to the other end of the ring. At this corner, the 4-H'er has three options:



**The "L" pattern with a simple right turn.** The 4 H'er does not switch hands with the lead and the dog stays on the 4 H'ers right side.



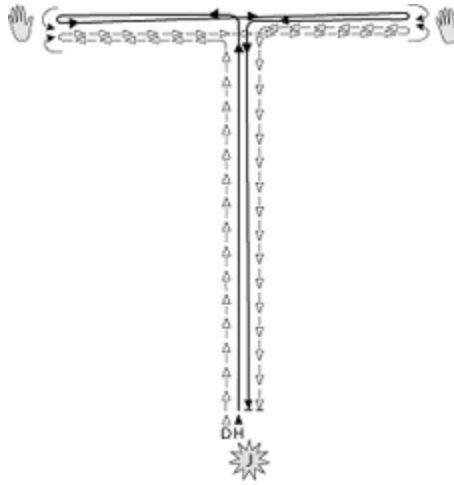
**The "L" pattern with a circle** in the corner with the dog always remaining on the 4-H'ers right side. The 4-H'er does not switch hands with the lead.



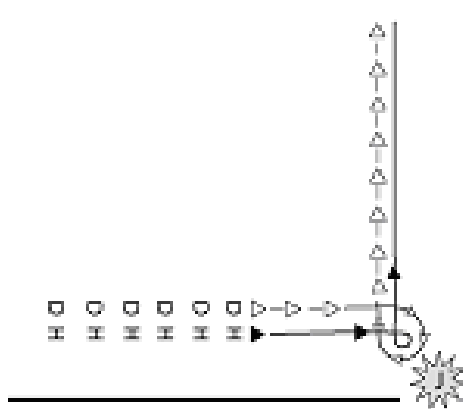
**The "L" pattern where the 4-H'er switches hands with the lead** and cross the dog over in front of him/her. The dog completes a circle as the 4-H'er and dog turn toward each other and proceed back to the judge with the dog on the 4-H'ers left side.

## INDIVIDUAL GAITING (con't)

**“T” Pattern** – This pattern is performed in the shape of an uppercase letter “T.” The judge will indicate where to start the “T” pattern. The 4-H'er and dog will proceed in a straight line away from the judge to the opposite end of the ring. The 4 H'er should turn to whichever side the dog is on and proceed to the corner of the ring. The 4-H'er then switches hands with the lead. The 4 H'er and dog turn into/toward each other and proceed to the other end of the ring. At the other end, the 4-H'er again switches hands with the lead. The 4 H'er and dog again turn into/toward each other and proceed back to the center of the ring. The 4-H'er then turns back toward the judge and proceeds in a straight line back to the judge.



**Courtesy Turn** (used at the start of the individual gaiting pattern)-A courtesy turn is optional in 4-H, but is recommended to get the dog moving from its stacked position. To do a courtesy turn, the 4-H'er will use a right hand turn before beginning the individual pattern designated by the judge. The courtesy turn should be executed quickly and smoothly and there should not be any break in the gaiting pattern. At this point it is acceptable for the 4-H'er to briefly pass between his/her dog and the judge.



As the courtesy turn is completed, the 4-H'er continues directly into the designated pattern (4-H'ers should not stop in between). If the courtesy turn cannot be executed smoothly, it should not be done because it then detracts from the overall teamwork.

## **SWITCHING HANDS**

- It may be necessary in some patterns to switch the lead from one hand to the other to ensure the dog is always between the judge and the 4-H'er. These changes should be done gracefully at the corners of the patterns only as necessary to be sure the judge has an unobstructed view of the dog.

## **COMPLETION OF PATTERN**

- It is customary for the 4-H'er to stop a few steps back from the judge. Some judges will use a hand signal to designate when to stop, others may not. If a judge does not signal, be sure to stop two to three feet from the judge. Most breeds should stop and stand with all four feet square. The dog should walk into the stack squarely, without the 4-H'er moving the dog's feet by hand. If 4-H'ers use their hands to stack their dog upon the completion of an individual pattern it is considered a major fault.

## **STACKING (posing with your dog)**

- Stacking dogs should be done when the class stops gaiting around the ring. It should be maintained while the judge is doing individual examinations of other dogs in the class. The exception would be that occasionally the judge may give directions to relax your dog due to large class size, etc. This means that it is ok for the dog to sit or lie down; however, the 4-H'er must remain attentive to both the judge and his/her dog's needs. (The 4-H'er may not relax.)
- 4-H'ers may lift from underneath the chest or mandible and hips to stack their dog
- 4-H'ers shall never use the tail to stack their dog (as is done with some breeds in the AKC ring). It is considered a major fault to use the tail to stack a dog.
- 4-H'ers shall never lift all four feet of the dog off the floor at the same time. It is considered a major fault to lift all four feet of the dog off the floor at the same time
- Free stacking is walking your dog into the proper stack and keeping his attention. The breeds that are stacked square are the easiest to work with and look the best free stacked.
- As the judge moves to various locations in the ring, it is important that the 4-H'er keep the dog between himself/herself and the judge. The 4-H'er should not at any time block the view of the dog from the judge (hands on tail, hands over muzzle, etc.). It is acceptable for the 4-H'er to stack his/her dog by reaching over the dog to position the feet furthest from him/her.
- For safety reasons, under no circumstances may a judge walk between the ring gating and the "line up" of 4-H'ers. If a judge wants to observe the group switching sides, they should move the "line up" to the diagonal.
- It is each 4-H'ers responsibility to find out how their breed is customarily stacked. While stacking the dog, handlers will be evaluated on the correct stack for the breed. All breeds are stacked with their front feet positioned evenly with each other.
- It is each 4-H'ers responsibility to leave sufficient space between them and the dog in front of them. Sufficient space means there is enough room for the judge to walk between the dogs without touching either dog or feeling crowded.
- 4-H'ers should work to develop proficiency in speed and ease of stacking. To begin learning this process, 4-H'ers should begin practicing walking their dog into a stack where the dog will automatically place its front feet squarely.
- The judge may request that 4-H'ers move to a different location in the ring or restack their dog facing another direction. When this occurs, it is important to be able to turn the dog gracefully and to re-stack the dog quickly.

## INDIVIDUAL EXAMINATION OF THE DOG

Individual examinations of each dog will be conducted, usually from the group stack. The judge may look at the dog from a few steps back and then move forward to examine the dog. While the judge is doing this, the 4-H'er should be attentive to the judge while maintaining full control over the dog.

Some judges may ask the 4-H'er to show the bite (teeth) of the dog at this time. The 4 H'er should show the front teeth for all breeds. The purpose of showing the bite in the 4-H ring is to check for cleanliness. 4-H'ers whose breed would typically require showing side teeth in the AKC ring are not required to do so in the 4-H ring. The 4-H'er should pull the dog's lips back so the judge has a clear view of the dog's front teeth with the dog's mouth closed. 4-H'ers should be careful not to get hands or head in the way of the judge's view of the bite.

### General Showmanship Guidelines:

- As the judge moves, the 4-H'er should move around the dog, so the dog stays between the handler and the judge, while keeping the dog under control.
- Refer to all other General Showmanship Guidelines on pages 1-3 and your county or show rules



# POULTRY SHOWMANSHIP

Acknowledgement: The information for this section is based on the Utah State University Cooperative Extension publication "What is Expected of the Poultry Showman?"

**P**oultry showmanship is an exhibitor focused activity. The bird serves as a prop, while the exhibitor does the performing. The young person's attitude, appearance, speaking ability, care and management skills, and willingness to follow instructions are all on stage.

For **Showman 5th grade and under**, instructions given by the judge are usually brief and to the point, covering personal safety and well-being of the bird. Appropriate skills include carrying and posing the bird properly, and placing and removing the bird from the cage. Exhibitors should be able to answer questions about basic management, simple anatomy, and they should know the breed, variety, gender, and class of the bird.

For **Showman in grades 6 through 8**, instructions can be more detailed. Appropriate skills include all of the skills for 5th grade and under plus passing the bird, examining the wings, under-color, feet and head. They should be able to do a physical examination and an oral evaluation of their bird. Exhibitors should be able to answer questions about poultry diseases, parasites, defects, disqualifications, and additional anatomy.

For **Showman in grades 9 through 12**, instructions can be very specific. Appropriate skills include three handling skills and 9 evaluation skills. They should be able to answer any question given to them about the poultry industry. The novice showman would be expected to show the handling abilities and knowledge of the 5th grade and under.

## Showing Poultry

**Dress Code:** A long sleeved white or solid colored shirt and dark brown, black or blue jeans. No caps are allowed. The wearing of a tie or organizational scarf is preferred. Shoes should be flat and easy to walk in. Low-heeled, rubber-soled shoes are best since they provided good traction. High-heels and flip-flops are not appropriate. No deduction shall be made for wearing tennis shoes. FFA members must follow official FFA dress code.

## **Showing Procedures**

NOTE: The judge may ask exhibitors to come the table one at a time or they may ask all exhibitors to bring their animal to the show table and line up all at once. You should be comfortable with both methods.

Exhibitors of poultry should know and be able to present their bird following the poultry showmanship steps.

- **Caging and carrying the bird.** When you cage your bird, always cage it and uncage it head first. Bird should be kept balanced and upright on the palm of the hand. The other hand rests on the bird's back.
- **Posing the bird.** Bird should be posed in an alert position with tail fluffed, head and beak raised, feathers smooth, wings in normal position.



Poultry Showmanship

## Examination steps of the bird for the judge

1. **Examining the head.** Bird should be raised to shoulder height with the free hand used to move the head and point to the following parts: comb, beak, wattles, earlobes and head.
2. **Examining wings.** Starting with the bird's right wing, carefully grab at the wrist and the wing will unfold with a gentle tug. Check for all primaries and secondary feathers, check the axial feather, check for wing mites and/or lice, check for proper color and size. Let go of the wing and smooth it out. Repeat for the other wing.



3. **Examining undercoat.** Finger tips are used to gently pull tops of feathers against the grain. Check for proper color of skin and fluff, check for lice and mites.
4. **Showing width of body.** Place your thumb and pointer finger in both wing pits and run your hand down the body. Show the judge your measurement.
5. **Checking the breast.** This step requires you to hold the bird upside down or on its side while maintaining complete control. Turn the bird towards you, turn the bird upside down. Carefully grab the hocks with one hand while supporting the breast with your other hand. When you feel your bird is ready, take your free hand and feel the keel bone. Examine for straightness, breaks and breast blisters. Show the judge the length of the keel using your thumb and index finger.
6. **Checking the vent.** The vent is usually checked on egg production breeds. Slip the bird under your arm so that the vent is facing outward. Lift the tail, blow on the fluff, and check for mites, cleanliness, and signs of illness.
7. **Measuring depth of abdomen.** You are looking for the end of the keel bone and the 2 pubic bones. Place as many fingers as possible between the end of the keel and the pubic bones and show how many figures fit between the bones to the judge.
8. **Measuring width of pubic bones.** Finding the two pubic bones, fit as many fingers between them as possible. Show the judge your measurement. This is an indicator of the productivity of the bird.
9. **Examining feet and legs.** Check the bottom of the legs first, and then the front. You are checking for cleanliness, absence or presence of stubs, absence or presence of scaly leg mites, condition, appropriate color for the breed/variety, etc.

## General Showmanship Guidelines

- Practice with your bird the proper way to handle the bird and the steps in bird examination. Study about the poultry industry and how to care for your poultry project. This will help you in preparing for questions that may be asked during the showmanship contest.
- Exhibitors should have a positive attitude, the ability to focus attention, and show respect for the judge and other participants.
- Remember that poultry showmanship is the opportunity for you as a young exhibitor to demonstrate your abilities as a poultry steward and to communicate your knowledge of the poultry industry.
- Refer to all other General Showmanship Guidelines on pages 1-3 and your county or show rules



# RABBIT SHOWMANSHIP

Acknowledgement: The information for this section is based on American Rabbit Breeders Associations 4-H Showmanship Guidelines.



Each judge will have a different style and expectations. However, it never hurts to educate yourself to your best ability. Use ALL of your 4-H material books and handouts. Ask other kids what types of questions were asked the year prior and last but not least, **STUDY!** Not the week or night before but all year long. Study with other rabbit kids, as they may have study tips or can teach you something new.

## Knowledge

- ✓ Know your rabbit breed.
- ✓ Know other colors, min/max weights, history, body types, fur types, and different breed characteristic.
- ✓ Know more than one breed of rabbit and some pointers about those breeds.
- ✓ Know a handful of diseases, including prevention, cause and cure.
- ✓ Know what you feed your rabbit and how much. (protein, fiber and fat %'s).
- ✓ Be able to describe how you house and clean your rabbit's cage.
- ✓ Know body parts and the temperature of rabbits.
- ✓ Know about gestation and kindling.
- ✓ Know fryer, roaster and stewer weights and ages.
- ✓ Know about 4-H and what it's all about. Also know the other areas of your project (companion rabbit, producing does or market project).

## Grooming Rabbits

- ALWAYS groom YOU and YOUR RABBIT. Your rabbit should be free of molt, but every attempt to groom the rabbit for those summer months is kept in mind.
- Your rabbit should bear no stains; ears, eyes and vents should be clean.
- Your rabbit's nails should be clipped as short as possible but not so they bleed (llok and trim carefully), filed smooth if still sharp.
- If you have a white rabbit, it should be purely white.

## Dress Code:

A long sleeved white or solid colored shirt and dark brown, black or blue jeans. No caps are allowed. The wearing of a tie or organizational scarf is preferred. Shoes should be flat and easy to walk in. Low-heeled, rubber-soled shoes are best since they provided good traction. High-heels and flip-flops are not appropriate. No deduction shall be made for wearing tennis shoes. FFA members must follow official FFA dress code.

## Showing Procedures

NOTE: The judge may ask exhibitors to come the table one at a time or they may ask all exhibitors to bring their animal to the show table and line up all at once. You should be comfortable with both methods.

When coming onto the show table, always pose your rabbit frontwards. Sometimes, the judge will have you all turn to the left, towards you and to the right making a complete circle or he will tell each individual a position which may be different than your neighbor. **KEEP** that position after examining your rabbit until/unless he/she tells you to do otherwise.

Rabbit Showmanship

## THE BASIC VET CHECK

When asked to “check” the teeth/nails/sex, show yourself. If asked to “show” the teeth/nails/sex, the judge wants to see it. Look at the judge after you complete each step. When “showing” you have to do it the “opposite” or whichever way you feel most comfortable. You should have plenty of practice with your rabbit when not checking yourself, use a parent or another kid to be the judge. When asked to “check” or “show” the teeth/nails/sex, do it in that order and that order only. Keep one eye on the judge and one on your rabbit.

- **Carry to Table**
- **Pose Rabbit.** When you are told to begin, carefully set your rabbit down on the table. Pose your rabbit on the table with left ear facing the judge, so the judge can see ear tattoo (if applicable). Use correct pose for breed, proper setting of front and hind feet, ears and tail . Describe your rabbit including breed, age, variety and sex.
- **Ears** for mites, cankers, rips/tears, tattoo. Open ear using your index finger and second finger with thumb for support behind ear so that the judge can see inside the ear. (you may use one finger.) Do left ear first, then right ear using a ½ turn so right ear faces the judge. (Do not drag rabbit, lift rabbit when turning).
- **Eyes,** left then right eye for proper color or disease. Know proper color for variety/breed and know diseases that affect the eye.
- **Nose.** Look at/in nose – know what symptoms of disease would be there. Look at insides of legs.
- **Teeth.** Look at front and bottom teeth. Know what problems affect teeth and know proper bite.
- **Front Feet/Toenails.** Count correct number on left and right. Proper nail color and pad color.
- **Front Legs/Bone.** Lift and feel each bone in right and left.
- **Back Feet/Toenails.** Count correct number on right and left. Know proper color and check hocks.
- **Back Legs/Bone.** Lift and feel each bone in right and left
- **Know Sex.** (Doe – expose vent, Buck – expose penis, check for both testicles. Know possible diseases (make sure the area is clean))
- **Tail.** Check bone for breaks, straightness and carriage.
- **Checking Top Body:** Place your rabbit facing you and smooth its fur. Check body area with both hands for bare spots, spots in fur color, abscesses, scratches. Start at the tail and work towards the neck. Feel back and both sides. Repeat, starting at the neck and work towards the tail. (Do not just tickle your rabbit, feel it.) Check back of neck for mites and scratches. Hold up ears with one hand and feel behind neck for scaly patches or scratches with the other hand. Explain body type. Check upper & under body, feel for abscess or rupture, sides and neck area.
- **Check Fur.** After you are all done, stroke fur backwards and blow, checking for mites/mange. Set fur properly when done. Know DQ’s, how to treat and what fur type you have.

If you are given the wonderful chance to switch rabbits with your neighbors, know that breed and how it’s posed. If it is posed correctly, leave it alone. If your neighbor forgot something, FIX IT! When switching, always put one hand on your neighbor’s rabbit while switching positions with them. If the other showman is on the other end of the table, look to the judge and he should hold your rabbit while you walk over to the other.

Depending on your age level and the judge, he/she may put a carrier on the table and have you place and remove the rabbit in the carrier. Always control the back feet to make sure you don’t hook nails and latch the carrier when the rabbit is in. After removing the rabbit and it’s safely tucked, close and latch the carrier back up.

## General Showmanship Guidelines

- ALWAYS handle your rabbit and others with 100% safe handling skills.
- NEVER drag your rabbit's toenails on the carpet; ALWAYS pick your rabbit completely off the table {judges like to see air}.
- Use 1/4 turns and do not rush.
- If asked to "pick up your rabbit, turn around and walk back", do not set your rabbit down unless instructed to. It gets kids every time. Pick your rabbit up, tuck it's head and legs under your arm and support the rump with the other hand.
- DO NOT watch your neighbor. Do not repeat what they said. Usually the reason a judge asks kids who are next to each other is because one person said it wrong and he wants the right answer. If you truly do not know, it's okay to say "I do not know". If you have an educated guess, go ahead and say it – you might be right.
- ALWAYS speak loud and clear. If the words don't come out right, try to rephrase yourself before the judge goes onto another showman. Most are patient and willing to listen. Do not "over" talk, but don't talk too little. The more good information you can get out in reasonable time, to show the judge what you know is preferred.
- When the judge moves to the next person, slowly move your feet so you are still facing him. If your rabbit moves, calmly place it back on your rug, repose and put your hands behind your back. If your rabbit is way out of control, you should keep one hand on your rabbit's head, or whatever keeps it still. Even if your rabbit is rowdy, knowing how to calmly keep your rabbit in place and answering questions to your best ability, you can still come out a winner.
- After showmanship, whether you've won or not, always smile and shake the judge's hand. He/she should offer a time to ask questions, and tell you what he was expecting or looking for and what some of you did wrong. Take this advice wisely.
- SMILE.
- Refer to all other General Showmanship Guidelines on pages 1-3 and your county or show rules.

