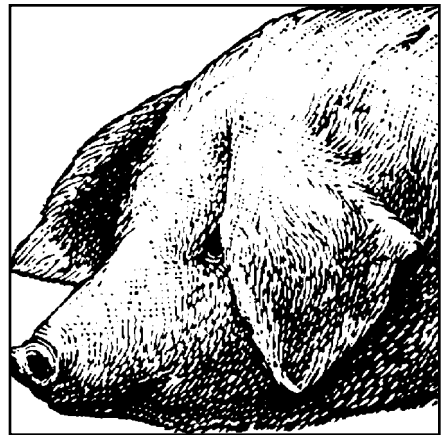


Introduction



Livestock judging is a process of evaluating, selecting, placing, and learning the various livestock species—beef cattle, sheep, and swine. Judging is the foundation of any 4-H livestock project. Feeding, exercising, grooming, and showing the animal are all important aspects of your 4-H project; however, none may be as exciting as selecting your project animal. Selection of project animals is actually judging livestock, comparing the merits of one animal against the merits of other potential project animals. This selection process is just one of many applications of livestock evaluation and judging.

Livestock producers, breeders, feeders, buyers, and packers evaluate livestock for their potential as either breeding or market animals. These people try to relate the “form” of an animal with the “function” for which it is intended to serve. That is why livestock judging is often called the application of “form and function” to livestock.

WHY JUDGE LIVESTOCK?

Stockpersons judge livestock to differentiate between superior, average, and inferior animals within each of the livestock industries. They are looking for the most desirable animals for their particular needs. Stockpersons often compare their own livestock to those of others. Using their judging knowledge and skills, producers analyze the potential value of animals for particular purposes.

As a result of reading this manual; listening to your parents, 4-H leaders, and county Extension agents; and practicing on your own, you should be able to do the following:

- ✗ Identify the different breeds of livestock
- ✗ Compare livestock for their merit and value as either breeding or market animals
- ✗ Look at an animal and determine desirable characteristics and faults
- ✗ Improve your livestock project by selecting more desirable animals and gain an appreciation of their value for a particular purpose
- ✗ Make decisions and defend them in a logical, well-organized manner
- ✗ Make complex decisions based on available information
- ✗ Develop confidence
- ✗ Develop oral communication skills
- ✗ Appreciate the opinions of others

BREEDS OF LIVESTOCK

Before learning to compare animals of the same breed, you need knowledge of the most popular breeds. This manual outlines distinguishing characteristics of the major breeds within each species: beef cattle, hogs, and lambs. Use the pictures under each species as a reference.