



# Poultry Showmanship

## Notes

A poultry show person is one who has learned the art of selecting, fitting and presenting poultry to an advantage at a show. The confidence and ability displayed by the member and the bird's response suggests the amount of previous work done with the bird. The appearance of the bird and knowledge of the show person in response to questions about parts, defects, disqualifications, diseases, breed, and variety characteristics of the bird shows an ability to select and fit for show.

### Appearance

Although your bird may not be the ideal specimen and confirmation will not be judged in the showmanship class it should still be clean, healthy and free of disease.

### Holding Your Chicken

Place your left hand beneath the body with the index finger between the legs and the remaining three fingers grasping one leg and the thumb the other. The bird's head should be tucked under the elbow with right hand placed on the back. Do not place the bird on the table until the judge asks.

### Exhibiting Your Chicken

When showing the bird, hold it in the hand with the bird resting along the flat of the arm from the wrist to the elbow. The hand holds the legs tightly in order to avoid escape by the bird. The other hand can be used to stroke the bird along the back or to open the wing or turn the head, etc., as requested by the judge. Poultry are exhibited on a table. Pose the bird on the table. It is most natural to place the bird on the table facing your left. Pose the bird to show it to advantage. This varies from one breed to the next. In general be sure the bird is standing erect and is alert; also be sure the bird is standing squarely.

While your bird is standing on the table and you are awaiting instruction from the judge, if necessary you may place a hand in front of the bird to prevent it from walking away. With adequate practice though, this should not be necessary. At the same time, never place your hands behind your back because a chicken is an animal and it is impossible to predict what an animal is going to do, especially in an unfamiliar setting. Therefore it is best to leave your hands at your sides or on the edge of the table. You should have the chicken placed on a piece of carpet approximately 30 X 45 cm (12"x18") to help the bird maintain footing

### Showing Your Bird to the Judge

**Head** - Holding in the left hand at shoulder height, show both sides of the head. Use right hand thumb or index finger on beak to turn head, while also turning left hand slightly when showing the other side of the bird's head.

**Wings** - Spread wings to show feather pattern and condition as well as the top and bottom of the wing. Remember, the right wing is the bird's right wing and left wing is the bird's left wing.

**Under colour** - Show under color of back and body feathers.

**Width of Body** - Show width by using span of right hand, between thumb and middle finger over the back.

**Breastbone** - Show breastbone by turning the back of the bird against your body with left hand. With right hand, grasp legs and pull to your right while sliding left hand to breast to expose breast between fingers of the left hand.

**Feet and Legs** - Show feet and legs by placing bird against your body with head up, using left hand. With right hand, show feet and spread toes.

*Note: When asked to show a part to the judge continue to do so until instructed to show another part or place bird back on the table (even if the judge is not looking at your bird).*



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### The Show person

Be neat and appropriately dressed for the occasion. A white lab coat is the standard dress code although a white shirt is acceptable if a lab coat is unavailable. Hard-soled shoes are desirable; rubber boots or boots half laced should not be used. Sun Safety hats are permitted to be worn by 4-H members while showing in 4-H classes in outdoor rings. Nothing should be worn that focuses attention on the handler rather than the animal. He/she should not chew gum.

Carry out actions in a confident manner always being considerate of your bird, fellow show people and the judge. The judge should have your attention at all times (always keep your eyes on the judge). Explicitly follow the directions of the judge.

Do not fuss inappropriately with the animal when it is properly posed. Make sure the animal looks its best from the time it enters the ring until it leaves. Recognize the conformation faults of the animal and show it in a manner that will minimize these faults.

**Questions the Judge May Ask**—Be prepared to answer questions about your bird with reference to:

**Parts** - The judge may ask you to show any part of the bird, not just those listed above. For a detailed list of parts see the leader's manual. When showing any part lift your bird from the table and show the part to the judge, do not simply point to the part while the chicken stands on the table.

**Defects and Disqualifications** - The judge may ask the member to list a number of defects and or disqualifications. They may ask for permanent or non-permanent disqualifications. When asked for these, it is best to indicate breed specific defects and disqualifications as this shows your knowledge of the breed, unless specifically asked for general defects and or disqualifications.

**Diseases** - The judge may ask the show person to name a number of diseases poultry are susceptible to or questions about a specific disease.

**Breed and Variety Characteristics** - The judge may ask specific questions about the breed and even variety of breed you are showing. Be sure to be prepared to answer any questions pertaining to the breed and variety you are showing. Some examples include standard weight for a pullet and a rooster or the origin of your breed. Much of this knowledge can be found in the standard of perfection book.

**Note:** *The judge is not limited to asking only questions about your bird, they may ask you questions about other birds being shown in the same class.*

### Switching Birds

You may be asked to temporarily switch birds with another show person in the class. If this is the case, be sure the judge or the member you are switching with is in control of your bird before leaving it. Once you reach your new bird re-adjust it so as to show it to its best advantage, which may be different than the breed you are showing. Even if the bird is already standing well, still make a slight adjustment to show the judge you are knowledgeable about this breed. Be prepared to answer any questions the judge might ask about this different breed and do so confidently.

### Changing Spots

Any time you move from one spot to the next on the table (hopefully up) pick up your bird and hold it as described earlier, pick up your mat and walk to your new spot on the table. This is an excellent opportunity to discretely shake any manure from your mat Place your mat and bird on the table and pose your bird to its best advantage. Be sure to keep your eyes on the judge while all this is happening.

### At The End of the Class

Carry bird away and return to coop, placing head first into the cage. Do not stop showing your bird until it is off the table and you are on your way to the cage. Always be a gracious winner and loser. The judge's decision is final and should be respected.



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### Special Note to Poultry Members:

It is acceptable to show a pullet as opposed to a rooster although roosters often pose much better and are much 'showier'. In some cases though the rooster may be too large for a younger member to comfortably show and if this is the case it is best to show a pullet.

Although it is acceptable to use either hand (right or left) to hold the bird and to use either hand to show the head, wings, etc., members are encouraged to use their left hand to hold the bird. Members who hold birds with their right hand are reminded that when posing the bird, all birds should be facing the same direction; and if using the opposite hand, showmanship skills may appear to be rougher.

**REMEMBER >** Members are responsible for care, preparation and exhibition of 4-H project animals. 4-H club 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.

### Poultry Showmanship Score Card

#### 1. Appearance of animal:

- |                        |        |                  |
|------------------------|--------|------------------|
| a. Cleanliness         | ___ /5 |                  |
| b. Fleshing and finish | ___ /5 |                  |
| c. Feather condition   | ___ /5 |                  |
| d. Tame and manageable | ___ /5 | _____/20 Percent |

#### 2. Appearance and attitude of showperson:

- |  |         |                  |
|--|---------|------------------|
| a. Clean and neat                                      | ___ /5  |                  |
| b. Considerate of other exhibitors                     | ___ /5  |                  |
| c. Follows judge's instruction                         | ___ /5  |                  |
| d. Handles animal gently, appropriately, considerately | ___ /10 | _____/25 Percent |

#### 3. Showing the animal:

- |  |        |                  |
|--|--------|------------------|
| a. Picked up correctly                 | ___ /5 |                  |
| b. Carried properly                    | ___ /5 |                  |
| c. Poses the animal correctly          | ___ /5 |                  |
| d. Displays and examines various parts | ___ /5 |                  |
| e. Returned properly to the pen        | ___ /5 | _____/25 Percent |

#### 4. Knowledge of the animal (questions or statements):

- |   |        |                  |
|---|--------|------------------|
| a. Knows general breed information                          | ___ /5 |                  |
| b. Knows the nomenclature (correctly names the major parts) | ___ /5 |                  |
| c. Can define disqualification and give examples            | ___ /5 |                  |
| d. Can define defect and give examples                      | ___ /5 |                  |
| e. Can identify strong and weak points of the animal        | ___ /5 |                  |
| f. Can give sex, weight, and purpose of animal              | ___ /5 | _____/30 Percent |

**Total Score** \_\_\_\_\_/100 Percent