

Tips for County Fair Judges

If you want to be a county fair photo judge, the State 4-H Office and the Wisconsin Association of Fairs are developing a series of online training courses for county fair judges. For more information contact Wayne Brabender at wayne.brabender@ces.uwex.edu.

Wisconsin 4-H recommends that you use the following four criteria to judge photo entries at county fairs.

Photo Composition – A photo with good composition has only the elements necessary to tell the story. These elements – main subject and supporting elements – are arranged in a pleasing, logical, and balanced way to tell the story. Distracting or unnecessary elements should not be present. In photos good composition, the subject will dominate an appropriate foreground and/or background. Remind youth of traditional compositional “rules,” such as, rule of thirds, framing and leading line. Encourage them to fill the frame, get close to the subject, keep the background simple, and change the angle – all the things that make for more interesting photos.

Storytelling Ability – A photo with this quality has an interesting, clear message – a central idea, given simply, that you can grasp quickly and easily. It keeps your attention when you look at it a second or third time.

Technical Quality – Print or slide quality depends on camera technique, film exposure, processing and printing. A quality slide or print shows detail in all areas important to the message. Overexposure or underexposure results in lost detail.

Mounting Technique – A quality photo exhibit is well designed, clean, simple, structurally sound and pleasing to the eye.

How much weight does each of these criteria carry when you evaluate a photo? 4-H recommends that you score them like this: Photo Composition, 35%; Storytelling Ability, 35%; Technical Quality, 20%; and Mounting Technique, 10%.