



Poultry Preparation:

- A month prior to the fair, dust your birds for mites and lice
- Limit the direct sunlight that your birds have, especially if they are light colored.
- Handle your birds often, especially the bird you plan to use for showmanship.
- Bathe your birds two to three days before the fair
- Trim your bird's toenails and beaks as needed. This can be done with a human or dog nail clipper.
- Apply a small amount of mineral oil or baby oil to your birds comb and wattles the day of the show, being sure to rub in well.

Poultry Showmanship:

This following is intended to accompany the Poultry Showmanship score sheet, found at iGrow.org.

1. **Exhibitors Appearance and Introduction** – Exhibitor should be well groomed and in proper attire. This includes closed toe shoes, a white, long sleeved button up shirt with your State Fair T-shirt over it, and long pants.

The exhibitor should be attentive to the bird and the judge, with good eye contact and should not chew gum or food. Introduce yourself, including your name, age, club, county and years in the Poultry Project area. Provide the basic information on your bird, including its breed, class, gender and age.

2. **Grooming and Condition** – The bird should have a pleasing appearance, with smooth plumage, clean and free of parasites and disease. The beak, head, feathers, legs, feet and nails should be free of dirt, mites or any other foreign matter.
3. **Proper Carrying** – Bird should be kept balanced and upright on the palm of the hand with its head between the arm and body, or if small, against the carriers body. The other hand should hold the legs.

Examination of Bird: As you examine your bird, discuss what you are looking for and how this compares to your bird.

4. **Pose** – Pose the bird by setting it on the table in an alert position with its tail fluffed, head and beak raised, feathers smooth and wings in a normal position. The bird should be facing the judge.

5. **Examination of Head, Wattle, Etc.**

- Present the comb: side sprigs and split comb should be noted for breed character and general good health.
- Present the eye: point out that they are clean, clear and free moving
- Present the beak: beak should be clean, not crooked or distended and be normal for breed type
- Present the ear: note the color, American and English breeds should be enamel white, and Mediterranean breeds should have red on 1/3 or more of the lobes.

6. **Wings, color pattern, condition of feathers, check for lice or mite damage**

- Condition of feathers and color patters: Start from the head, go to the hackle, back and tail. Explain the color and uniformity of feathering, and point out any broken, missing, or twisted feathers. Check for lice or mite damage.
- Wings: Open left wing and check the primary and secondary feathers for signs of molting. Take a closer look at the skin on the inside for mites. Repeat steps for right wing. Discuss the color, feather quality, if they are molting, and if there is a split wing.

7. **Show width of back, under color**

- Show width of back- use your thumb and index finger of your free hand, and place it across the bird's body directly behind the base of the wings to determine width and shape of the body
- Present the cape or hackle
- Under color- use your finger tips to gently pull the tops of feathers against the grain.

8. **Check keel bone, breast, feather color, and under color**

- To roll the bird, use a cradle hold and keep the bird's wings next to its body to avoid flapping and damage to plumage. Present the underside to the judge.
- Present the breast, sickle, hock, abdomen, and fluff.
- Body – Use your free hand to measure the width of body, abdomen, and vent. Vent area should be clean.
- Breast & keel bone – with your free hand, measure the breast bone and examine the keel bone for straightness, breast blisters, indentations or other defects.

9. Feet, toes, shank

- Examine the bird's feet, toes & shank. Place free hand on back of bird and turn upside down. Look at the color on front and back of shanks and feet, counting each toe. Note color, cleanliness and defects.

10. Tail, proper carriage, condition

- Examine the tail for proper carriage and condition

Exhibitor Knowledge – The exhibitor should use proper terminology, be knowledgeable of the breed exhibited and the Poultry Project and have confidence handling the bird.

11. Knowledge of Breed – Exhibitor should be

knowledgeable about the breed he/ she is showing, including disqualifications for the breed, coloring, feathering, etc.

12. Knowledge of Poultry – Exhibitor should be

knowledgeable about poultry in general, including, poultry care, diseases, etc. Exhibitor should be familiar with the parts of a bird (including beak, comb, wattles, eyes, earlobe, ear, hackle feathers, neck feathers, breast, back, saddle, cushion, tail, tail feathers, wing, flight feathers, covert feathers, thigh, leg hock joint, shank, spur, and toes.)

13. Confidence in answers – Exhibitor should be confident in the answers he/she provides.

Resources for exhibitors:

American Poultry Association – *American Standard of Perfection*

As of 2016, the most recent edition is the forty fourth. This resource provides the class and specifications for each breed of poultry.

Available from: <http://www.amerpoultryassn.com/>

National Pigeon Association – *NPA Book of Standards*

Available from: <http://www.npauasa.com/>

South Dakota Animal Industry Board – Avian Health

Webpage <https://aib.sd.gov/poultry.html>

Poultry curriculum available from the National 4-H mall

<http://www.4-hmall.org/Category/poultry.aspx>