

# “Do” Sheet Assignments for Mississippi 4-H Livestock and Horse Shows



Mississippi State University Extension Service personnel have a longstanding, proud, and successful history of providing stellar leadership and direction in conducting 4-H livestock and horse shows. This rich heritage and expectation of dedicated service to young people all across our state continues today.

Our impact at these shows is noticed by many youth, families, and other patrons of the shows, and it is critical that we put our best efforts into each event at all shows at all times. Your involvement in 4-H livestock and horse shows can vary. This means that you, as a 4-H agent or Extension employee with 4-H responsibilities, assist in assignments as directed by show managers (following approval of Research and Extension Center heads) in order to do your part in each show. Make every attempt to be prepared and willing to work at these shows because they are your shows.

Each assignment has a direct impact on the show, so no assignment should be considered inferior to another. When coming to work at the show, wear comfortable shoes with a collared shirt tucked in at the waist, and have a good attitude about working that day. Many people inside and outside of the show ring notice your appearance and actions, and it is of utmost importance to convey professionalism at all times.

While working an assignment, leave your cell phone off! If you must take a call, have someone take your place for a short time until you can return. The last thing anyone wants is for an injury to take place because of negligence of our workers.

Always arrive for your assignment 15 to 30 minutes early to familiarize yourself with what is expected of you. If an emergency arises that prevents you from fulfilling your assignment, notify the show office or person in charge of the job to which you are assigned. It is always important to communicate with each other so everyone knows what is going on rather than have people misinformed.

Following are assignments and expectations relative to these duties.

## **Inspection (Drug Testing) Committee**

This committee works with Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine personnel to collect urine samples from all livestock that qualify for the Sale of Champions at the Dixie National Junior Round-Up. In addition, a percentage of random samples are taken from all livestock species at this show. Those assigned to this committee collect a urine sample in the presence of the exhibitor and/or his or her family and take the specimen to the veterinarian or technician, who seals the vial and completes paperwork for that collection.

## **Animal Weigh-in**

Market animals (steers, lambs, goats, and hogs), commercial beef heifers, commercial meat goat does, and commercial dairy heifers are weighed in at the designated scale for the show. At this location, animal health records are reviewed, changes can be made to showmanship participation, and the weight of the animal is recorded.

You may be assigned to work an entry or exit gate, read the scale, record paperwork, or other jobs related to processing entries. For this crew, one person should write the weights on the weigh-in printouts, and another person should write the animal's number and weight on a separate notepad. These copies of animal weights are often needed to review when discrepancies are discovered.

## **Animal Check-in**

Beef breeding animals, dairy cattle, and dairy goats are checked in at the show office. These entries must have an original registration certificate submitted along with the health record.

Assignments for animal check-in include checking the registration certificate with the submitted entry information for each animal to make changes to the entry, if needed. Specific items to check on registration certificates include current ownership; date of ownership transfer; and the animal's breed, date of birth, sex, registration percentage, and registration number. An example would be if the animal's registration number or date of birth were

typed incorrectly, possibly changing the class in which the animal should compete. In addition, changes to showmanship participation are made at this time. Be sure exhibitors confirm that any animal entered but not checked in is not showing and must be scratched from the show program. Initial your work.

## Office Help

If assigned to work the office, you will have a variety of tasks, depending on what is going on throughout the day. Assignments may include copying show programs, sorting back numbers by county, handing out show programs and back numbers, answering questions about shows from exhibitors, and other types of work. This is a fast-paced assignment involving coordinated efforts of everyone working. Be familiar with all show rules and procedures, and know to which member of show management specific questions and/or situations should be directed.

## Paddock

Those working the paddock have the task of checking exhibitors and their animals before calling them into the show ring. Check the exhibitor's number against an official show program as he or she checks in to determine any who may be late to the class. Then make the ring stewards and announcer's table aware of those missing so an attempt can be made to call for those exhibitors not present.

Sometimes microphones are available for the paddock crew to call missing exhibitors. Also match the animal's ear tag or paint tattoo with the official show program to make sure it is the correct animal for the class about to be judged. Finally, check the exhibitor's attire to be sure it is appropriate (such as collared shirt, shirt tucked in at waist). If the 4-H'er's attire is not permissible for entering the show ring, require the 4-H'er to correct the problem or be disqualified.

## Ring Steward

Ring stewards always need to be professional in the show ring. Workers should be dressed appropriately and be aware of what is going on in the ring at all times. This can be a fast-paced assignment with many moving parts, so it is essential to stay focused on what is happening at all times.

Each worker should have an official show program and pen to keep track of the show's progression and

placings for each class. Before the show, all ring stewards should ask the judge about his or her preference for bringing animals into the class and for moving and positioning animals during the class. It is important for all ring stewards to be present but inconspicuous at the same time. They should help classes run smoothly without interfering with the judge's view of animals at any time.

If you are substituting for someone else during the show, arrive early enough to determine how classes are being moved about the ring to prevent problems when changing workers. Ring stewards must always be watchful of 4-H and FFA youths in the show ring, since sometimes their animals become too much to handle. Use discernment as to when to step in to help control an animal.

A designated ring steward must legibly record the class placings and take them to the announcer's table so record clerks can write them on official show programs that are used for calculating premiums.

## Weigh-back Committee/Retinal Image

All of our market animal classes require top-placing animals to be weighed back before the placing is made official. In this assignment, you may be asked to escort the exhibitor and his or her animal to the scale or a task similar to what was presented earlier in the Animal Weigh-In section of this publication. It is critical this process not delay the show, so try to speed movement of the exhibitor and his or her animal.

In addition, market steers, market lambs, market goats, and commercial beef heifers may be retinal imaged to verify the animal being shown is the same one that was entered. In this assignment, you may work with a certified retinal imaging technician to help hold the animal so the technician can capture a picture of the animal's retina.

## Trophies/Awards

Before the shows start, several individuals are assigned the task of sorting trophies. These people unpack all trophies, plaques, and other awards to organize them by show. In addition, sponsor labels are placed on the awards so the winners can write a thank you letters to the sponsors.

For those working the trophy table during the show, it is important to appear and act professional at all times. Arrive at the show 30 minutes to 1 hour early

so you can get trophies and ribbons taken from the show office to the show ring and have them placed on the table in an orderly fashion.

If awards or ribbons are missing, ask office management as soon as possible to assist in locating these items. Have an official show program available to keep track of the show and which awards need to be distributed after each class. Always congratulate youth as they exit the show ring, and try to remain out of the way of exhibitors and animals. At times, breed associations may have youth who will hand out awards, but workers should stay close by to make sure proper ribbons and awards are being distributed.

## **Record Keepers**

This is an extremely important assignment. The judge must sign official show programs at the end of the show, and the programs are used to determine premium monies. Several individuals are assigned to work the records table, and it is critical to keep your own set of records. If one person does all of the work and the others simply copy his or her program, it is impossible to determine if errors occurred.

Communicate with ring stewards to get the final placing for each class. Be sure the announcer has a legible copy of the official placings for announcing final results for each class. It is also helpful to record the time shows begin and end, since adjustments in show times may be needed in future years. At the horse shows, it is helpful to write the number of youth who showed in the class (excluding scratches) as well as the number who qualified for state. Sign your name so we can contact you for any clarification needed later. Turn in completed records to show management at the end of the show once all signatures have been obtained.

## **Announcer**

The announcer is directly responsible for maintaining smooth progression of the show and keeping everyone informed of the show's progress and results. The announcer must work with the record clerks, ring stewards, and judge(s) during the show. Periodically during the show, he or she should introduce the judge and tell the crowd about the judge's background.

Announce each class before it comes into the show ring, and then alert exhibitors of the next upcoming class. Upon conclusion of each class, after the judge has given his or her reasons for that class, announce the final placings of the class.

For market animal classes where retinal imaging and/or weigh-back records must be checked for top-placing animals, wait until you receive confirmation that animals made the weigh-back and passed the retinal image verification before announcing final class placings.

For large classes, it is beneficial to the audience for the announcer to read final placings from top to bottom as printed in the show program.

## **Facility Preparation**

It is often necessary for individuals to arrive before the show begins to ensure the show ring is set for that day's show. Ask the show office or coordinator of this assignment what might be needed. For example, at the State 4-H Horse Championships, a crew is assembled to load jumps borrowed from the Mississippi Hunter Jumper Association. These individuals retrieve the jumps and set the course for our over fences classes. A similar crew is assembled to lay out dressage and trail class patterns.

## **Arena Safety Crew**

The arena safety crew is to always be on the lookout for the safety of youth during the show. Make sure all equipment is properly secured and safe for the classes to be judged.

## **Premier Exhibitor Contests**

Held during the Dixie National Junior Round-Up, the five premier exhibitor contests evaluate overall knowledge of contestants in a given species. Your assignment for this contest may vary from overseeing a station and grading papers to setting up segments of the contest. A considerable amount of detail is always needed for these contests, and your promptness and attentiveness is required. Similar assignments are made for the hippology competition during the State 4-H Horse Championships.

## **Judging Contests**

Dairy, livestock, and horse judging contests are held during the Dixie National Junior Round-Up, Mississippi State Fair, and State 4-H Horse Championships, respectively. During these judging contests, you may be assigned as a group leader to stay with a group of youth throughout the contest, collect their placing cards after each class is finished, and line them up for

delivering reasons. Card runners go to group leaders and officials to collect judging cards after each class. Those assigned to work tabulations at the officials' table are needed to sort cards based on contestant number and assist in entering contestant placings in the computer. Animal handlers are needed to lead animals or to work a pen of animals during the judging contest.

## Sale of Champions

The Sale of Champions is held during the final day of the Dixie National Junior Round-Up. There are a variety of assignments for this day, including assisting at a presale social event for youth and parents, buyers, and guests of the sale, and media personnel attending the sale.

Some individuals are assigned to help secure pens for animals before the sale, assist with photographers capturing pictures after the sale, arrange plaques and awards, decorate the sales arena, and other tasks. Each of these assignments is critical to the success of the

sale, as prospective buyers and contributors, along with Mississippi State University administrators and elected officials, are in attendance. It is always important to be hospitable and accommodating to these people. Dress professionally for the Sale of Champions.

Remember that we are working toward a common goal at 4-H livestock and horse shows: to have a smooth, well-run event. We should never forget the most important part of the 4-H Livestock and Horse Project is the youth of Mississippi. They are our most valuable resource, and it is our responsibility and challenge now and in the future to use our leadership abilities to enhance Mississippi youth through their participation in 4-H livestock and horse shows.

If Extension agents take their show assignments seriously and do their best to effectively perform their duties, we will successfully achieve our common goal of conducting a well-run and enjoyable educational event for our youth.

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