# Methods of Judging

## Judging Systems

There are basically two systems of judging that are commonly used in fair judging, the American System and the Danish System. Check with the superintendent or agent in charge before you begin judging to clarify which system you will be using and how many placings you will be required to make.

**American System** - Exhibits in this system are compared against a standard of perfection, as well as against the other entries in the competition. All exhibits in a particular class are looked at and ranked with only one selected for first place, second place, third place, etc. If there are no high-quality exhibits, at the judge’s discretion, exhibits may be placed in the appropriate position, even if it is second or third place.

* **Mariposa county uses the American System for judging all entries, except juniors.**

**Danish System** - In this system all exhibitors receive a ribbon. All exhibits are grouped according to quality, and there may be multiple entries that get the same ranking and ribbon. Quality may vary from excellent to fair, and ribbon categories may be blue, red, white and/or yellow. In this system of judging, exhibits are not in competition with or compared to each other.

There is no formula to determine the number of ribbons to be given in the Danish

System. Quality determines the ranking for blue, red, white and/or yellow ribbon. A blue ribbon is generally recognized and used for excellence. Red ribbons are given for an adequate exhibit that does not meet all the standards. White and/or yellow ribbons are given when the exhibit is below standard quality and improvement is definitely needed. Under the Danish system, participation ribbons are given to recognize the efforts of the exhibitor.

* **Mariposa county uses the Danish System is for judging junior level entries.**

**Types of Judging**

There are two types of judging commonly used in county fairs and competitive events – open judging and closed judging.

**Open judging** is an open assessment by the judge before a group about the items in the exhibit. The exhibitors may be present. All exhibitors benefit from the discussion in open judging, although extra care must be taken so that the judge’s comments do not embarrass exhibitors or cause unnecessarily hurt feelings.

**Closed judging** is done in a private area, where only the officials. are allowed until the judging is completed. This is usually done when there are a large number of items in the exhibit, and/or when there is not enough room for spectators to listen to open judging. The judging is conducted prior to the opening of the event.

In some judging situations, score sheets are provided for judges to record comments for the exhibitor about the qualities desired and standards used for judging.

* **Mariposa county conducts closed judging for all entries.**

**Awards / Prizes**

Blue prize ribbonBest of Show – the ultimate prize in each category

Blue prize ribbonBlue - excellent; exhibit most nearly meets the standard (does not indicate perfection). Example of a numerical score = 90 -100.

Blue prize ribbonRed - good; relative to pre-established standards, a few specific shortcomings have been identified. Example of a numerical score = 80-89.

Blue prize ribbonWhite - fair; many improvements are needed in order for the exhibit to meet the pre-established standards. Example of a numerical score =70-79.

Blue prize ribbonNo award - far below standards expected for that exhibit. Example of a numerical score - 69 - below.