

REASONS

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What are oral reasons?

Reasons are accurate, concise statements that clearly depict differences between given pairs of animals. Good reasons use comparative terms to point out differences and resort to description only when comparison will not bring out points desired.

In the show ring the Judge should be comparing each animal, except the first, to the animal placed above. This differs from classification to the extent that in classification all animals should be compared to the ideal of the breed in question. On many occasions one will start a class with the animal nearest the ideal, but it may still be only slightly above average. You then must compare your next dairy goat to this one.

Why oral reasons?

Correct oral reasons make a good show more outstanding. People show livestock for several reasons: (1) Most people show to help promote and sell their livestock; (2) Many show to display the fruit of their efforts as breeders to demonstrate their contributions as a breeder, and/or (3) Others may merely enjoy good competition and gain satisfaction from competing with others.

Reasons are important to the above people because they will make a show more informative and help keep the attention of the ringside. We hope that some potential buyers are on the ringside. People at ringside like to feel that they are second guessing the Judge. The Judge's reasons will support or discount their selections and can be informative if discreetly presented.

Reasons are most important to the Judge. Regardless of how many rules, regulations or guidelines are set for judging a particular species of livestock, it is up to the Judge to analyze and make final placings. No two people will see exactly alike in all situations. If this were not true, one major show per year would suffice. Animals change from week to week, particularly those coming into heavy lactation or going dry.

Most well-informed breeders know when they enter the ring (and get a look at the competition) about where they will stand. In my opinion, good breeders have to be accurate judges of their own livestock in order to make progress.

Accurate reasons permit the Judge to logically relay his/her thoughts and evaluations to the exhibitor and the ringside. As long as you judge animals and look for comparative reasons, as you judge, your reasons will have logic and people will follow you regardless as to whether they agree completely with your exact placings. One bit of philosophy to keep in mind when giving reasons is this: If you cannot find something good to say about an animal, let's not say anything; the meaning is implied.

What are the ingredients to make a good set of reasons?

1. **Accurate observations of animals shown.** Evaluate all animals before you start the placings. Quick analysis is essential but do not make a horse race out of a show. I do not advise taking so much time that breeders become worn out and the ringside loses interest. Keep in mind that the exhibitor has spent considerable time and effort preparing for the show and deserves the above courtesy. Select the animal that most nearly meets breed standards and by comparison build your line up. Stay with the same type until logical reasons require you to change.

2. **Use proper terminology.** Correct reasons require the use of specific terms relating to the area of the animal you are comparing. This requires a Judge to be familiar with the scorecard and the areas that belong in the respective breakdowns. Such terms as *pasterns*, *withers*, *crops*, and *point of elbow* refer to a definite area and are therefore very definitive when used properly in reasons.
3. **Organization.** When organizing your reasons try to put yourself in the place of the people listening. They are the ones who will either readily follow your reasons or become confused and/or even disgusted. Keep in mind that many people know a considerable amount about the livestock being judged and are interested only in the real differences. If differences and reasons for placing are in the mammary system, start your reasons in this area; this will hold true for body conformation, dairy character, feet and legs, style and symmetry and so forth. Use specific terms to drive home your points in any area and thereby avoid generalizations. Avoid opening yourself up to questions by stressing minor points which have little or no bearing on your decision.
4. **Make your reasons forceful** enough to attract and hold people's attention. Speak into the microphone, when one is available, with confidence. Remember if you are not confident of your placings, you will find it difficult to convince others. Satisfy yourself and you will satisfy others.
A most important consideration is to judge the livestock, not the leaders. Occasionally Judges have been criticized for placing the leaders because their reasons were not forceful enough to convince people otherwise. An additional statement is in order; that it, never knowingly defeat good animals regardless of how many blue ribbons a breeder has won just to give someone else a chance to win a blue ribbon.
5. **Poise.** People soon evaluate a Judge as to whether he/she is a polished Judge or a livestock person by the way he/she goes about his/her job of judging. People like a sincere, confident Judge, but often despise smart alecks who bend over backward to impress people with their abilities. Never as a Judge lose your temper and resent questions from breeders or the ringside. Remember, you are the Judge for the day and are in the driver's seat. This does not mean you cannot and should not still respect other people's rights or privileges.

Reasons and Judges giving them are evaluated by the following points:

- a. Accuracy of observation
- b. Terminology
- c. Organization—do they make sense?
- d. Forcefulness or confidence
- e. Poise