

Tips for County Fair Judges - Fruits

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

General County Fair Fruit Exhibiting Requirements

- The exhibitor must have grown the fruit to exhibit it.
- Counties often require that the fruit variety be written on the entry tag.
- The size of an exhibit varies with the fruit. Strawberry and raspberry exhibits, for example, will have ½ to 1 pint covered with plastic wrap. Apple exhibits often have five specimens on a plate, while grape exhibits will usually have three bunches on a plate.
- Fruits may or may not be fully mature at fair time, depending upon the location of the fair and the time of year that the fair is held. If you are a judge, you need to be aware of these factors and be flexible in your expectations. Don't expect an apple exhibit at an August fair, for example, to have mature specimens.
- Some county fairs feature classes for Wisconsin nuts, including hickory, butternut, and walnut. Nuts are to be taken from last fall's harvest, cracked, and placed in plastic bags.

Judging Criteria for Fruit Exhibits

Exhibits must be from this year's crop. It is important that fruit specimens be handled carefully by the exhibitor and the judge to prevent bruising and damage. Fruit should not be polished but washed and wiped free of dust or residue before judging. Use these criteria when judging:

- *Condition:* Condition of fruit is most important. Exhibits should not be misshapen or damaged by insects, disease, or mechanical handling. Fruit should be clean, but not polished.
- *Uniformity:* All fruit should be of a similar size, color, shape, and maturity. Stems should be intact. There should be no leaves or foliage attached to the fruit.
- *Color:* All fruit should be free of blemishes and have a good color, typical of the variety.
- *Size:* The best size is medium – not too large or too small.
- *Trueness to Variety:* The fruit should be true to the variety in size and color.