

Appendix D.

Sample Score Sheets with Suggested Points

- Canned Fruits, Tomatoes and Vegetables
- Canned Juices
- Jellies
- Jams and Other Sweet Spreads
- Preserves
- Pickles and Fermented Foods
- Flavored Vinegars
- Barbecue Sauces
- Meats, Poultry and Seafood
- Dried Foods

The sample score sheets in this section contain suggested point distributions among characteristics of the food being judged. There are indications for safety as well as quality spread throughout the score sheet. More information on how to judge characteristics that are related to safety and quality may be found in “Basics of Acceptable Entries,” pages 10-17.

It is important to pre-determine what the point breaks will be for assignment of ribbons – e.g., blue ribbon for 90 and above, red ribbon for 80 to 89, and yellow ribbon for 70 to 79. If multiple judges are used, it will also be important to decide if each person will judge and fill out a score sheet independently, or if discussion among judges will be allowed before scores are finalized.

In many fairs, especially when rules clearly state that USDA recommended procedures and processes must be used, products are disqualified and not judged if they have not been properly prepared and processed. Incomplete or missing labels are another reason for disqualifying products, particularly if the judge cannot tell if an appropriate recipe and processing method has been used. This practice reinforces the rules and eliminates the possibility of a rewarding a potentially unsafe food with a ribbon and/or premium. It is recommended that issues regarding the disqualifying of entries be discussed among event organizers and judges prior to the competition. Ideally, advertised fair rules and premium books should clearly describe judging criteria and expectations. Additional recommendations for disqualifying or not judging foods are contained in “Basics of Acceptable Entries,” pages 10-17.

Canned Fruits, Tomatoes and Vegetables

Characteristic	Points	
Pack Acceptable processing method used with correct altitude adjustment made; correct preparation procedures followed; correct type of pack (hot, raw) for processing method.	40	
Jar filled to appropriate headspace.		
Liquid covers all solids; no floating pieces.		
Good proportion of solids and liquids.		
Free of fancy packs that interfere with heat penetration.		
Quality of Product Pieces uniform in size and shape when appropriate.	30	
Fresh, natural color to foods; characteristic of cooked product.		
Pieces retain shape; firm yet tender; free of mushiness; clean cut edges to cut pieces; no split skins on beans or peas.		
Free from discoloration, blemishes, bruises, brown or black spots, insect damage, mold, or other defects.		
Free of strings, fibers, unapproved stems, peels, cores and pits.		
Characteristic of optimum maturity.		
Quality of Liquid Free from unnatural cloudiness or bubbling.	20	
Free from any or excessive sediment, floating food tissue, unintended seeds, peels, or other particles.		
Free from large amounts of trapped air.		
Container Vacuum-sealed.	10	
Clean, clear glass standard canning jar.		
Appropriate size jar for product.		
New lid and band free of rust; screwband clean, unbent and easily removed.		
Label clean, neatly placed and contains name of product, date processed, processing method and time.		
Comments		

Canned Juices

Characteristic	Points	
Pack Acceptable processing method used with correct altitude adjustment made; hot packs used.	20	
Jar filled to appropriate headspace (¼ inch).		
Color Fresh, natural color representative of fruit or vegetable; no artificial coloring.	20	
Color uniform throughout.		
Free from bleaching or excessive darkening.		
Clarity <i>Fruit juice:</i> Bright and clear; no crystals. <i>Tomato juice:</i> Bright.	25	
Free from cloudiness, bubbling, or mold.		
Free of strings, fibers, seeds, stems, peels, cores and pits.		
Consistency Flows freely, not too thick as if concentrated or heavily sugared; characteristic of the fruit used.	20	
Free from any or excessive sediment, no foreign matter (floating food tissue, unintended seeds, peels, or other particles).		
No separation or layering.		
Container Vacuum-sealed.	15	
Clean, clear glass standard canning jar.		
Appropriate size jar for product.		
New lid and band free of rust; screwband clean, unbent and easily removed.		
Label clean, neatly placed and contains name of product, date processed, processing method and time.		
Comments 		

Jellies

Characteristic	Points	
Pack Processed in boiling water canner with correct altitude adjustment made; no paraffin allowed.	10	
Jar filled to appropriate headspace (¼ inch).		
Color Fresh, natural color representative of dominant fruit	20	
Color uniform throughout		
Clarity Free from cloudiness and fruit pulp (exception: pepper jelly)	25	
Absence of crystals		
Free of bubbles		
Free of foreign matter (peel, seeds, etc.) and mold		
Consistency Firm enough to hold shape	25	
Tender, not too stiff or tough – “quivery”		
Stays in one mass when shaken loose from jar; does not break		
No separation or layering		
Holds sharp edge when cut		
Container Vacuum-sealed	10	
Clean, clear glass standard canning jar		
New lid and band free of rust; screwband clean, unbent and easily removed		
Label clean, neatly placed and contains name of product, date processed, processing method and time		
Flavor/Odor Natural flavor of the fruit; not overcooked, overly sweet or tart; no scorched flavor. No scorched or musty odor.	10	
		if not tasted, split points between clarity and container.
Comments 		

Jams and Other Sweet Spreads

Characteristic	Points	
Pack Processed in boiling water canner with correct altitude adjustment made; no paraffin allowed. Jar filled to appropriate headspace (¼ inch).	10	
Color Fresh, natural color representative of dominant fruit; fruit pieces are translucent. Color uniform throughout. Free of discoloration, especially from scorching.	25	
Clarity Translucent and not “muddy” or cloudy looking, even though there is no separated jelled juice. Absence of crystals. Free of bubbles. Free of foreign matter (peel, seeds, etc.) and mold.	20	
Consistency Soft enough to spread; not runny or overly thick; not gummy or sticky. Fruit pieces are tender and hold their shape. Pieces of fruit are uniform in size. Fruit pieces evenly distributed throughout container. No separation or layering.	25	
Container Vacuum-sealed. Clean, clear glass standard canning jar. New lid and band free of rust; screwband clean, unbent and easily removed. Label clean, neatly placed and contains name of product, date processed, processing method and time.	10	
Flavor/Odor Natural flavor of the fruit; not overcooked, overly sweet or tart; no scorched flavor. No scorched or musty odor.	10	if not tasted, split points between clarity and container.
Comments 		

Fruit Preserves

Characteristic	Points	
Pack Processed in boiling water canner with correct altitude adjustment made; no open kettle canning.	25	
Jar filled to appropriate headspace (¼ inch).		
Liquid covers all solids; no floating pieces.		
Good proportion of solids and liquids.		
Quality of Fruit Pieces uniform in size and shape.	25	
Fresh, natural color to fruit; uniformly translucent and characteristic of cooked product.		
Pieces retain shape; firm yet tender; free of mushiness; clean cut edges to cut pieces.		
Fruit free from discoloration, blemishes, bruises, brown or black spots, insect damage.		
Quality of Syrup Syrup or jellied juice is clear, and bright in color. Syrup in most preserves appears thick to “heavy” like honey and surrounds all fruit.	25	
Free from any sediment, unintended seeds, peels, or other particles such as fibers, core and strings.		
Free from foam or large amounts of trapped air; few bubbles.		
Container Vacuum-sealed.	15	
Clean, clear glass standard canning jar.		
New lid and band free of rust; screwband clean, unbent and easily removed.		
Label clean, neatly placed and contains name of product, date processed, processing method and time.		
Flavor/Odor Natural flavor of the fruit; not too sweet or strong from overcooking. No scorched or musty odor.	10	
	if not tasted, split points between pack and quality of fruit.	
Comments		

Pickles and Relishes

Characteristic	Points	
Pack Processed in boiling water canner with correct altitude adjustment made; no open kettle canning.	30	
Jar filled to appropriate headspace (½ inch).		
Good proportion of solids and liquids; neatly packed.		
Liquid covers all solids; no floating pieces.		
Quality of Product Color Even color, characteristic of cured or cooked product. No artificial coloring except for a few specialty cucumber or apple ring pickles. Sauerkraut is off-white to light straw, translucent.	20	
Color and translucency uniform throughout the jar.		
Free of discoloration, blemishes on food pieces.		
Fermented pickles and sauerkraut completely cured.		
Texture/Consistency Pieces appear plump, not shriveled or shrunken. No internal holes in pickles.	20	
Firm for pickles and sauerkraut. Softer for some relishes and chutneys.		
Food pieces cut or chopped attractively, not too fine in relishes. Evenly distributed throughout container. No separation or layering.		
Spices and seasonings not overwhelming; attractive in pack.		
Quality of Liquid Clear, no unnatural cloudiness, free of bubbles.	20	
Free of trapped air bubbles; no active bubbling.		
Free of sediment and foreign matter (stems, cores, peel, seeds, etc.) and mold.		
Container Vacuum-sealed.	10	
Clean, clear glass standard canning jar; appropriate size jar for available processes.		
New lid and band free of rust; screwband clean, unbent and easily removed.		
Label clean, neatly placed and contains name of product, date processed, processing method and time.		
Comments 		

Flavored Vinegars

Characteristic	Points	
Pack Attractive, neat, space well used.	15	
Jar or bottle filled to appropriate headspace (¼ inch).		
Sufficient liquid to cover added herbs or fruit (if present).		
Vinegar has not been diluted (full strength vinegar is used).		
Appearance Color of vinegar – uniform, typical of product and attractive for serving.	30	
Added ingredients – good color, attractive size, pleasing fresh appearance.		
Free from any or excessive sediment, no foreign matter (floating food tissue, unintended seeds, peels, or other particles).		
No artificial coloring.		
Clarity Clear, not cloudy.	30	
No signs of spoilage (molds, bubbling, etc.).		
Container Label clean, neatly placed and contains name of product. Contains date processed, processing method and time or method of sealing.	15	
<i>If canning jar used:</i> Clean, clear glass standard canning jar; no cracks or chips. Recommended lid with good vacuum seal. New lid and band free of rust; screwband clean, unbent and easily removed.		
<i>If bottle used:</i> Clean, clear; no cracks, chips, haze or rust. Caps or corks appear clean and new. Caps are non-corrodible metal or plastic.		
Flavor Pleasant odor – fresh, “sharp” vinegar odor; absence of mustiness or yeasty odor.	10	
Pleasant for product .		
Subtle blend of seasonings and flavor.		
if not tasted, use points for aroma; if not opened, split points between pack and appearance.		
Comments		

Barbecue Sauces

Characteristic	Points	
Pack Acceptable processing method used with correct altitude adjustment made; hot packs used.	20	
Jar filled to appropriate headspace (½ inch).		
Color Bright, attractive color; no artificial coloring used.	35	
Color uniform throughout.		
No darkening at surface.		
Consistency Flows freely, not too watery.	35	
Smooth.		
May round up at edges like a fruit butter.		
Free from any or excessive sediment, no foreign matter (floating food tissue, unintended seeds, peels, or other particles such as dark flecks from scorching).		
No separation or layering; no layer of fat.		
Container Vacuum-sealed.	10	
Clean, clear glass standard canning jar.		
New lid and band free of rust; screwband clean, unbent and easily removed.		
Label clean, neatly placed and contains name of product, date processed, processing method and time.		
Comments 		

Canned Meats, Poultry and Seafood

Characteristic	Points	
Pack Acceptable processing method (pressure for altitude) used; correct preparation procedures followed; correct type of pack (hot, raw) for processes available.	40	
Jar filled to appropriate headspace.		
Meat may or may not be covered by liquid; the more liquid the better. Fish and smoked fish except tuna do not have added liquid.		
Good use of space in jar; full but not crowded pack.		
Meat strips and pieces of fish packed vertically in jars.		
Meat is not to be floured or deep fried.		
Quality of Product Uniform pieces of same to similar size and shape.	30	
Color characteristic of cooked meat and seafood. Raw packed meat chunks and strips may retain a pinkish color. Hot packed meats and their brine or juices should not be pink.		
Free from fat and gristle in meat pieces.		
Free from discoloration, blemishes, bruises.		
Quality of Liquid Free from unnatural cloudiness or bubbling.	20	
Liquid may be slightly jellied except for fish and shellfish.		
Minimal fat layered on top of meats.		
Meat may be packed in water, meat broth or tomato juice. Fish and smoked fish do not have added liquid, except tuna which may be packed in water or oil. Clams may be covered with clam juice or water.		
Free from any or excessive sediment or non-edible particles; raw pack meat will have more sediment than a pre-cooked pack.		
Free from large amounts of trapped air.		
Container Vacuum-sealed.	10	
Clean, clear glass standard canning jar.		
Appropriate size jar for product and available processes.		
New lid and band free of rust; screwband clean, unbent and easily removed.		
Label clean, neatly placed and contains name of product, date processed, processing method and time.		
Comments		

Dried Foods

Characteristic	Points	
Color Characteristic of product. No excessive discoloration.*	30	
Color uniform throughout container.		
Pretreatment, if done, appropriate. Note: game meat should be frozen to destroy parasites before making jerky.		
Size and Shape Pieces in exhibit are uniform in size and shape; leathers uniform in thickness.	10	
Pieces neatly cut; no ragged edges.		
Size suitable for later use.		
Texture Pieces uniformly dry throughout.	40	
<i>Fruits, tomatoes:</i> Leathery and pliable. If the piece of fruit is folded over itself, it springs back. Chewy, not sticky or brittle. Free from cores and objectionable seeds or peel.		
<i>Vegetables:</i> Brittle and crisp; tough or cracking hard. Dry enough to rattle.		
<i>Herbs:</i> Pulverize or become like dust when rubbed.		
<i>Leathers:</i> Leathery, yet pliable. Not sticky, crisp, or brittle. Rolls without tearing or breaking.		
<i>Jerky:</i> Leathery, drier than fruit, but not brittle. Piece cracks but does not break when bent.		
Packaging and Labeling Label is neat, clean and contains name of product, date dried, and method of drying.	10	
Appropriate size and material for product; airtight closure <i>If in jar:</i> No cracks, chips or rust. Lid/band free of dents, rust, corrosion or dents; clean and easily removed.		
No foreign matter or visible moisture.		
Flavor/Odor Pleasant odor and flavor, characteristic of fresh food except jerky. No scorched or musty odor.	10	
<i>Jerky:</i> Not overly salty, smoky or spiced. Free from rancid flavor.		
Comments		

* Light-colored fruits and vegetables will brown when exposed to air. Pretreatments can minimize this browning during drying and storage but should not be required. Discoloration can also result from drying at too high temperatures or for too long, and pieces will almost appear toasted or burned.