GRADING ORAL REASONS FOR 4-H AND FFA CONTESTS
Created by Tony Seykora, UMN; Revised by Isaac Haagen, UMN, 2025

I. Score Card

1. Content (accuracy and completeness) 30 points
   - Accurately compares the two animals for each placing.
   - Presents important differences first (those that clearly influenced the decision) in an organized manner.
   - Uses a "positive" approach with comparative terminology.
   - Provides appropriate grants for the lower-placed animal.

2. **Delivery** 20 points
   - Uses proper terminology, grammar, and pronunciation.
   - Speaks convincingly with moderate speed.
   - Is sincere and courteous.
   - Completes reasons in the allotted 2 minutes.

TOTAL POINTS 50 points

II. Benchmarks for Scoring Reasons

Score	Range	Description
10		Showed up
20	Poor (<=30)	Identified the class and said their placings
25		Incomplete set of reasons and lacked both terminology and accuracy -OR- Read notes
30	Good (31-39)	A full set of reasons, but reasons lacked proper terminology and accuracy -OR- Used notes extensively
35		Either accurate but lacked terminology and style -OR- Good terminology and style but lacked accuracy -OR- failed to give grants
40	Very Good (40-45)	Accurate with good style and terminology but may have missed 2-3 key points
45	Excellent (45-50)	Very complete with style, accuracy, and good use of terms
50		Like an EXCELLENT collegiate set

III. Guidelines for Oral Reasons Evaluation

1. The maximum score is 35 if a contestant reads their notes. Generally, 3-4 points are deducted each time a contestant glances at their notes. Contestants who use notes rarely score above 35, with 39 being about the top score for someone who had to glance at their notes.
2. The placing score should not influence the reasons score. If a contestant places a class quite differently from the official, but has valid reasons, they can still score a "50" on reasons.
3. Maintain a friendly attitude that will be encouraging to the contestant.
4. Ask questions only to clarify a point of misunderstanding or to determine if the contestant really saw the class. Avoid trivial questions.
5. Avoid gestures which indicate disagreement with what the contestant has stated.
6. Avoid mannerisms which may disturb the contestant.
7. There is no required closing for reasons. A statement about the bottom cow is as acceptable as, "Therefore, I placed this class of Holstein cows, etc.".
8. There is no credit or penalty for... "Thank you. Are there any questions?". This may be part of the contestant's own individual style.

Distribution of Recent Contests on Reverse Side

RECENT DISTRIBUTIONS FROM STATE 4-H AND FFA CONTESTS

	Average	Low	High	Two-thirds within this range
State FFA Contest	32	20	48	27-39
State 4-H Contest:				
Juniors (2023)	33	28	43	30-37
Juniors (2024)	37	25	45	32-41
Juniors (2025)	39	30	45	34-43
Seniors (2023)	37	19	48	32-43
Seniors (2024)	37	20	49	31-43
Seniors (2025)	39	25	50	34-45