

2026 Ozark Empire Fair Judging Guidelines

Judging Guidelines are provided as reference for exhibitors and judges. Guidelines for all divisions are listed together in alphabetical order. Example: the guideline for **Cookies** applies to cookies baked for Youth Departments, Girl Scouts, and Challenged Adult competitions as well as for Foods Department. Judging stickers have been created to better educate exhibitors on judging reasoning. Note: Typically, the following would apply: 100 – 90 pts = 1st place, 89 – 80 pts = 2nd place, 79 – 70 pts = 3rd place, below 69 pts no place will be given. In the event of several scores in the 90's, the highest will receive 1st, next highest 2nd, and so forth. In the event of a tie for a place, the judge will choose places based on judge's preference.

ANTIQUES

- 45**Condition of the item** – item has been well preserved and mark (if any) is still visible
- 20**Presence of all original parts of an item**
- 20**Color, clarity**
- 15**Uniqueness**

ARTWORK

- 40**Workmanship** - techniques correct and consistent, composition balanced
- 30**Creativity and suitability** - originality of subject or presentation of subject; choice of color combinations; medium and techniques suitable to subject
- 20**General appearance** - neat, clean, finishing techniques (frame, mat, etc.) suitable to subject and medium
- 10**Difficulty of project**

BREADS: see Quick Breads or Yeast Breads

CAKES

- 35**Flavor** - delicate and pleasing, well-blended
- 35**Texture** - cakes with butter/shortening: tender, moist, fine even cells, light cakes without fat: tender, feathery, resilient, fine even cells
- 30**Appearance** - shape: straight sides, slightly rounded top crust: smooth, uniform color, not cracked or sticky frosting: glossy, smooth, not too thick, suitable to cake filling: minimum ¼", fluffy, good flavor, suitable to cake

CANDY

- 30**Flavor** - well-blended, pleasing, characteristic of type of candy
- 30**Texture** - velvety and smooth (depending on type), not grainy, well-blended, nuts evenly distributed
- 20**Consistency** - firm, not hard or soft, should hold shape
- 20**Appearance** - size and shape uniform and consistent with type of candy, good color

CANNING: BUTTERS, JELLIES, PRESERVES, JAMS, MARMALADES

- 50**Product** - absence of defects (seeds, peel); quality and maturity of fruit; color clear, bright, typical of fruit used; proper consistency: jelly tender to firm, retains shape without weeping, no crystals; preserves: thick, fruit tender, plump, whole small fruits or uniform pieces, fruit evenly distributed; butters retain moderately mounded mass with no separating of liquid; jam holds shape but less firm than jelly; marmalade tender with pieces of fruit evenly distributed
- 25**Flavor** - characteristic of fruit used, without excessive sweetness or spices
- 15**Pack** - headspace: ¼"; no air bubbles
- 10**Container** - tightly sealed, clean, neatly and properly labeled

CANNING: FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- 65**Product** - absence of defects or blemishes, quality and maturity of food chosen to can, pieces of food uniform, color as nearly that of standard cooked product as possible, free from foreign matter or undue discolorations, tender without overcooking
- 25**Pack** - proper headspace: ½" for fruits and tomatoes, 1" for vegetables; liquid covers product, no air bubbles or excess liquid; liquid clear with little cloudiness; pack neat and uniform (fancy pack not practical)
- 10**Container** - tightly sealed, clean, neatly and properly labeled

CANNING: PICKLES AND RELISHES

- 65**Product** - absence of defects or blemishes; quality and maturity of cucumbers or other vegetables and fruits; uniform size of pickles or chopped vegetables; color characteristic with no darkening; vegetable pickles and relishes: uniformly firm and crisp, not shriveled from excess salt, acid or sugar; fruit pickles: tender, plump, unbroken skins or flesh, firm, not shriveled or overcooked
- 25**Pack** - headspace: ¼"; liquid clear with no scum; liquid covers product with no air bubbles or excess liquid; pack neat and uniform
- 10**Container** - tightly sealed, clean, neatly and properly labeled

COOKIES

- 50**Flavor** - well-blended, natural flavor of ingredients
- 30**Texture** - tender, small even cells, not crumbly or hard, consistent with type of cookie: thin cookie crisp; drop cookie soft; bar cookie moist
- 20**Appearance** - shape regular, color uniform, free from darkened edges

CREATIVE HOBBIES

- 40**Workmanship** - consistent use of proper techniques, attention to detail, neatness of work (paint applied evenly and cleanly, no visible glue, etc.), balance of design and color, finishing techniques well done (sanding and staining or painting of woodwork, etc.), workmanship appropriate to age of exhibitor
- 30**Suitability of design, color, construction materials** - creativity of design, choice of construction materials (wood type for woodwork projects, decorations for clothing, etc.), pleasing color combinations, type of construction materials appropriate to use of finished item
- 20**General appearance** - neat, clean, finishing techniques enhance finished item
- 10**Difficulty of project**

DECORATED CAKES

- 40**Overall Appearance** - balance, color harmony, consistency of pattern
- 35**Artistic Quality** - originality, difficulty of techniques, overall eye appeal
- 25**Neatness** - texture of icing, uniformity of repeat pattern

DECORATIVE PIES

- 40 **Overall Appearance** - balance, decorative harmony with pie flavor, consistency of pattern
- 35 **Artistic Quality** - originality, difficulty of techniques, overall eye appeal
- 25 **Neatness** - appearance of crust, uniformity of pattern, evenly baked

DEHYDRATED FOODS

- 50 **Quality of dehydration** - dry enough for safe long-term storage, uniform dryness of pieces, choice of product to dry
- 50 **Appearance** - consistent with pre-treatment used, uniform size of pieces

DOLLS

- 40 **Workmanship** - consistent use of proper techniques, attention to detail, facial features natural looking, body parts proportional, finishing techniques well done, clothing well-constructed
- 30 **Suitability of design, color, construction materials** - originality of design, construction materials and colors to suit finished product, clothing and accessories to suit type of doll
- 20 **General appearance** - neat, clean
- 10 **Difficulty of project**

GARDEN

- 40 **Quality** - in best and prime eating condition (NOT necessarily biggest)
- 25 **Condition** - clean, free from blemishes
- 20 **Uniformity** - all specimens uniform in size, ripeness, shape, color
- 15 **Typical of variety**

HONEY, BEESWAX

- 30 **Well-formed block** - no air bubbles, uniformity of appearance
- 30 **Free from foreign material** - pure wax free of damage and impurities, clean
- 25 **Light in color** - between straw and canary yellow
- 15 **Aroma**

HONEY, COMB

- 30 **Clean with uniform cappings** - freedom from granulation and pollen, uniform appearance and color, no watery cappings
- 25 **Neatness of Packing** - cleanliness of section and frame
- 25 **Quality of Cut Edges**
- 20 **Neatness of Cut Edges**

HONEY, EXTRACTED

- 30 **Flavor and Aroma**
- 25 **Body** - density
- 15 **Color**
- 15 **Clearness**
- 15 **Freedom from impurities and crystals** - no foam

LEATHER CRAFT

- 40 **Workmanship** - techniques correct and consistent; appropriate depth of carving or stamping; finishing techniques well done
- 30 **Creativity and suitability** - originality; choice of leather for project; carving and stamping techniques; choice of finishing techniques
- 20 **General appearance** - neat, clean, well balanced
- 10 **Difficulty of project**

METAL CRAFT

- 40 **Workmanship** - techniques correct and consistent; tool marks minimal; finishing techniques well done
- 30 **Creativity and suitability** - originality; choice of metal for project; metal work techniques; choice of finishing techniques
- 20 **General appearance** - neat, clean, well balanced
- 10 **Difficulty of project**

NEEDLEWORK: EMBROIDERY, NEEDLEPOINT, CROCHET, KNITTING, ETC.

- 40 **Workmanship**: stitches made correctly, tension even, finishing techniques correct and neat (clothing buttonholes, fringe, etc.; embroidery or needlepoint no visible carry-overs, etc.)
- 30 **Suitability of design, color, yarn/thread**: choice of yarn/thread type and color appropriate to pattern and function, trim (buttons, etc.) suitable for pattern and use.
- 20 **Overall appearance**: neat, clean, properly blocked, finished appropriate to pattern and function (frame, pillow backing, etc.)
- 10 **Difficulty of project**

PHOTOGRAPHY

- 40 **Technique** - focus, lighting, color balance, depth of field, angle, developing and printing
- 40 **Composition** - photo captures the mood/spirit/life of the subject so viewer knows more about the subject after looking at photo, balance of elements (subject is the most prominent element of photo and background does not detract from subject)
- 10 **Overall appearance** - clean, photo securely attached to mat, mat color/style enhances photo
- 10 **Choice of subject**

PIES

- 40 **Crust** - texture flaky, tender; flavor agreeable, no strong taste of fat or salt
- 40 **Filling** - characteristic flavor, not over or under sweetened or spiced; consistency: fruit thick, firm and tender, neither too dry nor too juicy
- 20 **Appearance** - color; shape

QUICK BREADS

- 30 **Shape, Color, Volume** - well proportioned, evenly rounded or flat top (depending on type); uniformly brown, light weight in proportion to size
- 30 **Crumb** - well raised and equally light throughout; moist, elastic, tender; medium fine; round even cells, flaky lightness; no tunnels; not dry or soggy; nuts or fruit well distributed
- 30 **Flavor** - blended flavor of well baked ingredients; free from flavor of fat, baking powder, salt
- 10 **Crust** - crisp, usually rough surface; tender, thin, no cracks

QUILTING

- 45 **Workmanship** - top (precision of cutting and stitching); quilting techniques; binding/edging (precision and finishing techniques)
- 45 **Design** - choice and use of pattern for top and borders; choice and use of quilting pattern; choice and use of color; suitability of materials to design and function; originality or use of traditional pattern
- 10 **General appearance** - total impact, neat, clean

RESIN ART

- 40 **Workmanship** – Clean preparation and construction of the model. No mold lines, no gaps or bubbles (unless intentional). Consistent application of painting style.
- 30 **Artistic Application** - originality; choice of materials and colors for project; resin art techniques; choice of finishing techniques
- 20 **Theme/Narrative/Emotion** – entry is able to tell a story, add character to exhibit, or convey an atmospheric feeling to the viewer.
- 10 **Difficulty of project**

SEWING

- 40 **Workmanship** - stitches even length and tension, fabric cut on grain, plaids/stripes matched, seams finished, finishing techniques (buttonholes, hems) correct and neat
- 30 **Suitability of design, color, fabric** - fabric color and print suitable to pattern, type of fabric (silk, wool, etc.) suitable to pattern or use of garment, trim (buttons, zippers, etc.) suitable for fabric and pattern
- 20 **General appearance** - neat, clean, pleasing color combinations
- 10 **Difficulty of project**

SOAP

- 30 **Scent** – Fragrance is appealing, not overpowering.
- 30 **Color** – Pigment is evenly distributed.
- 30 **Texture** – Texture is pleasant to the touch. If soft, the soap leaves a fingerprint. If hard, no fingerprint impression is left. Not too oily, greasy, or flakey.
- 10 **Overall appearance** – Appearance of soap is attractively presented with ribbon, wrapping, size, shape, etc.

TURNING

- 40 **Workmanship, Execution** - understanding and use of materials, turned clean, no flaws showing, finish complete, incorporation of materials (wood, stone, bone, etc.), variation of technique
- 30 **Originality, Creativity** - own idea, uniqueness, choice of medium
- 20 **Overall appearance** - use of color and form, pleasing to the eye
- 10 **Difficulty of project**

WEAVING

- 40 **Workmanship** - correct techniques, even tension, even selvages
- 30 **Suitability of design, color, fiber** - choice of fiber type and color appropriate to pattern and function, originality, creative planning
- 20 **Overall appearance** - neat, clean, appropriate finishing techniques
- 10 **Difficulty of project**

WOODCARVING

- 40 **Workmanship, Execution** - understanding and use of materials, cut clean, no glue showing, finish complete, colors complementary, shading and contrast, high contrast on stylized pieces
- 30 **Originality, Creativity** - own idea, uniqueness, realistic carving proportions correct
- 20 **Overall appearance** - use of color and form, pleasing to the eye, habitat (birds, fish, etc.) compatible and natural
- 10 **Difficulty of project**

WRITING

- 45 **Originality**
- 40 **Technique** -how well the reader can "see" the picture you "paint" with words, organization, style, proper use of English and punctuation, poem: proper line and syllable count and proper rhyme for type of poem
- 15 **Presentation** - neatness

YEAST BREADS

- 30 **Flavor** - blend of well-baked ingredients, free from sourness
- 25 **Texture** - tender, free from dryness or doughiness
- 15 **Grain** - fine cells, evenly distributed
- 15 **Crust** - uniform browning, free from cracks and bulges
- 15 **Color** - characteristic of ingredients used, free from dark streaks