

Livestock Evaluation

Rule years 2027–2030 · Revision 1 · Published October 10, 2026

0. General Rules & Eligibility

Career Development Events are governed by the NAEA CDE Committee. All events follow [CDE General Rules and Eligibility](#).

Qualification for this event

District qualification	Top 20% of schools per district (Junior); top 30% (Senior)
Students per team	4
Grades	9–12 (Junior 9–10; Senior 9–12)
National qualifying event?	Yes+WNR (Senior Division only)
Timeframe	FFA Convention
Host	UNL Animal Science Dept.
Event Superintendent	Cal Schultz

WNR = Nebraska's runner-up team is eligible to participate in the [Western National Roundup](#) in the respective events. The third-place team is eligible if the runner-up team does not attend. Teachers are responsible for registration and coordinating teams; information is not sent to the state.

1. Overview

The Livestock Evaluation CDE gives students the opportunity to identify, evaluate, and discuss differences between breeding and market livestock, and to apply livestock industry knowledge and production priorities by evaluating and selecting beef cattle, swine, sheep, and meat goats.

Objectives taught in Intro to AFNR, Animal Science, and Large Animal Management will help prepare students for this event.

Note: See Section 2, Eligibility, and Section 4, Event Format, for distinctions between Senior and Junior Divisions.

Objectives

- Analyze historic and current trends impacting the animal systems industry
- Classify, evaluate, and select animals based on anatomical and physiological characteristics
 - Classify animals according to taxonomic classification systems and use
 - Apply principles of comparative anatomy and physiology to assess within animal systems
 - Select animals for specific purposes and maximize performance based on anatomy and physiology
- Speak using strategies that ensure clarity, logic, purpose, and professionalism in oral reasons
- Produce clear and reasoned oral communication by writing and presenting oral reasons
- Evaluate a class of livestock, using resources provided, to arrive at a decision placing/ranking the livestock from best to worst in the class

- Apply principles of animal reproduction to achieve desired outcomes for performance, development, and/or economic production.
 - Evaluate animals for breeding, soundness, and readiness
 - Apply scientific principles to select and care for breeding animals
- Students' knowledge will be measured in:
 - Making accurate observations of livestock
 - Instilled understanding of desirable selection, production, management, and marketing techniques for livestock
- Reference and use performance data-based industry standards (i.e., EPDs) when selecting and evaluating livestock
- Accurately communicate using livestock, industry, and consumer terminology in oral reasons
- Develop employability skills for agricultural career choices, such as: ability to verbally defend a decision, animal industry knowledge, decision-making, oral communication, organizational skills, problem solving, self-confidence, self-discipline, self-motivation, and teamwork

2. Eligibility & Team

Open to students in Grades 9–12 (Junior 9–10; Senior 9–12). Teams are 4 students. Top 20% of schools per district (Junior); top 30% (Senior) advance. Only the Senior Division is national-qualifying — the Junior Division is not. Divisions: Junior Division, Senior Division.

- **Junior Division** - Each team consists of four individuals who are currently high school freshmen or sophomores. High school juniors and seniors are not eligible for the junior division.
- **Senior Division** - Each team consists of four individuals who are currently high school freshmen, sophomores, juniors, or seniors.
- In addition, four alternates may be pre-registered for the event. Thus, no more than 8 potential contestants may be pre-registered for either division. Teams may substitute PRE-REGISTERED alternates for PRE-REGISTERED team members the morning of the event. No other substitutions will be allowed. Unless substituted for pre-registered team members, alternates will not judge.
- To avoid issues with registered team members or alternates at registration, an advisor or their designee **MUST** accompany each team to registration/check-in.

3. What to Bring

Attire

- It's recommended that FFA members wear Official FFA Dress. Non-FFA members should wear professional dress. Boots are encouraged because of the event's livestock-centric nature. Hats, T-shirts, and/or jeans are discouraged.

Supplies

- Pen or Pencil—Scoring Sheets **can** be marked in pen or pencil.
- CLEAN Notebooks (such as Steno Pads) for taking notes to aid in study and preparation for questions and reasons. Paper may be "pre-gridded" to facilitate note-taking; however, pre-written notes and supplementary materials (terms, pictures, formulas, etc.) are **NOT allowed** and may result in disqualification from the event.
- Absolutely **NO electronic devices**, including cell phones, electronic notebooks, readers, tablets, smart devices, smart glasses, Meta glasses, smart watches, Apple Watches, etc., may be used during this event.

Please assign ONE member to be the contact person for each team. The contact person is to be the ONLY member with a device inside the contest.

4. Event Format

Timing

- A. All portions of the contest are completed individually.
- B. Schedule for the day:
 - I. 6:00 am - 6:30 am - Event check in (Advisor/Chaperone must accompany teams)
 - II. 6:30 am - 7:00 am - Contest instructions
 - III. 7:00 am - Contest takes place
 - 1. Senior Division is estimated to end by 2:00 (lunch included)
 - 2. Junior Division is estimated to end by noon (no lunch included)
- C. Animal Science will be providing lunch for the contestants. (Teachers will be asked for their students' pizza selection during convention/contest registration) and there will be bussing provided from the Animal Science Complex to PBA at the conclusion of the contest. There will be a charge per Senior Division team, in addition to the existing CDE fee, to cover lunch.
- D. Because of the length and continual nature of this event combined with the number of contestants involved, it is NOT possible for us to accommodate any individual scheduling adjustment requests. Contestants must be able to commit to the entire timeframe of this event. If a scheduling conflict exists with another event for which the contestant is registered, that contestant should contact the superintendent of the other event to see if a scheduling adjustment is possible.

Format

- A. The students will compete in the following as part of the contest using a Placing Card (See Appendix):
 - I. Rank 10 classes of livestock (cattle, swine, sheep, and meat goats)
 - II. Senior division will deliver 3 sets of oral reasons – 1 set per species (beef, swine, sheep/goat). The specific classes will be determined the day of the contest.
 - III. The Junior division will deliver only 1 set of oral reasons.
- B. Every effort will be made to maintain an even split in the number of classes for each species and in the number of market and breeding classes students evaluate. The exact split will be dependent on the livestock available.
- C. Card style availability will be announced prior to the State FFA Convention, but it is recommended participants are familiar with both card styles.

5. Scoring & Tiebreakers

Individual Scoring

Senior Division

Component	Detail	Points
Placing Classes	10 Classes × 50 Points	500
Oral Reasons	3 Sets × 50 Points	150
Grand total		650

Junior Division

Component	Detail	Points
Placing Classes	10 Classes × 50 Points	500
Oral Reasons	1 Set × 50 Points	50
Grand total		550

Individual Tiebreakers

A. 1st tie-breaker: Reasons Total Score

B. 2nd tie-breaker: Lower scores on reasons classes

I. Lower-placing scores with higher oral reason scores indicate that a student presented better reasons with incorrect placings.

Team Scoring

Senior Division

Component	Detail	Points
Sum of Individual Scores	4 Students × 650 Points	2,600
Grand total		2,600

Junior Division

Component	Detail	Points
Sum of Individual Scores	4 Students × 550 Points	2,200
Grand total		2,200

Team Tiebreakers

- A. 1st tie-breaker: Reasons Total Score
- B. 2nd tie-breaker: Lower scores on reasons classes
 - I. Lower-placing scores with higher oral reason scores indicate that a student presented better reasons with incorrect placings.

6. Study Resources

Approved study resources

- [UNL CDE Study Materials Folder \(OneDrive\)](#) — Practice materials and examples for this CDE.
- **Selected chapters from Modern Livestock and Poultry Production; 8th edition.** — Animal Reproduction – Unit 10; Beef – Units 13-19; Swine – Units 20-25; Sheep and Goats – Units 26-30
- [National FFA Livestock Evaluation CDE resources](#)
- [EPD Basics and Definitions](#) — UNL Extension guide explaining beef cattle EPDs: definitions, accuracy, and use in sire selection.
- [Economic Indexes for Beef Sire Selection](#) — UNL Extension guide on economic selection indexes for choosing beef sires.

7. After the Event

Advisors and other students are encouraged to attend the debriefing with the contestants following the event at the Animal Science Complex on UNL East Campus

The debriefing will provide the official placings for the contest and answers to questions, at the completion of the Senior Livestock Evaluation Contest. The team and individual awards will be presented at the completion of the CDE debriefing.

List of Appendices

- [Appendix A: Example Placing Card](#)
- [Appendix B: Oral Reasons Scoring Rubric](#)

Contestant No. _____

Class: _____

INSTRUCTIONS:

Place an "X" next to your placing. You may only mark one placing. Answer questions on the back.

Nebraska State Livestock Judging CDE

1-2-3-4	A	
1-2-4-3	B	
1-3-2-4	C	
1-3-4-2	D	
1-4-2-3	E	
1-4-3-2	F	
2-1-3-4	G	
2-1-4-3	H	
2-3-1-4	I	
2-3-4-1	J	
2-4-1-3	K	
2-4-3-1	L	
3-1-2-4	M	
3-1-4-2	N	
3-2-1-4	O	
3-2-4-1	P	
3-4-1-2	Q	
3-4-2-1	R	
4-1-2-3	S	
4-1-3-2	T	
4-2-1-3	U	
4-2-3-1	V	
4-3-1-2	W	
4-3-2-1	X	

Appendix B: Oral Reasons Scoring Rubric

Score	Criteria
45-50 points	Completely accurate, correct organization, excellent delivery
40-44 points	Mostly accurate, correct organization, adequate delivery
30-39 points	Inaccurate in places, improper organization in spots, needs more specific detail, average delivery
20-29 points	Completely inaccurate, prioritization unclear, marginal detail, poor delivery
< 20 points	Minimal effort, did not appear to care or be involved in the event

Subcommittee

Standing subcommittee for this event

Name	School / Organization	Role
Danie Brandl	Ralston (High School)	Chair
Cal Schultz	UNL — Animal Science	Superintendent
Monty Larsen	UNL	Exec liaison
Kaydie Brandl	Lakeview	Member
Casey Harper	Tekamah-Herman	Member
Alan Held	Scottsbluff	Member
Lisa Kemp	Wallace	Member
Samantha Lavene	Bertrand-Loomis (BerMis)	Member
Dasie Nichols	Stapleton	Member
Wade Overturf	Wisner-Pilger	Member
Phil Simpson	Burwell	Member
Emilye Yowell	Meridian	Member

What changed — 2027–2030 rev 1 EDITORIAL

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