

has fewer jobs to offer than in the past, circumstances in the general economy should combine with the concerns of our young people to create a situation where students are literally knocking down the doors of our employment offices to obtain a Federal career. Only a few years ago government recruiters were not particularly welcome on many campuses and their visits in search of talent were something less than productive. This situation perhaps, points up the dangers of one of my personal pet-peeves. I'm sure you've heard it noted before that one or more recruiters are particularly successful on campuses because of the special assistance they've received from certain professors. Hopefully each of us here takes our profession seriously enough we don't fall into the "personal choice" trap.

On the contrary, we should be ready to acknowledge to students the multitude of career opportunities which lie in both the public and private domains. From a professional perspective, which career the student chooses is no reflection on us, but rather is based on his own individual needs.

Without belaboring the point or being overly redundant on what some of my previous colleagues have stated regarding the type of graduates they seek, I would like to cover a few of the concerns of the Federal employers in USDA. Our Agencies generally look for persons who have some combination of traits (e.g., course work, grade average or trend, work experience, interest, attitudes, evidence of adaptability, and willingness to relocate) that gives them the impression this would be an employee who will grow in his job and do it well.

There is, of course, a list that could be compiled ad infinitum on other things that employers seek. Extracurricular activities related to the professional field or which give evidence of leadership, recommendations, appearance, etc., are all considered. But in the end it all boils down to technical competences plus an apparent ability to work well with people, plus a specific interest in us.

In a number of basic areas higher education is apparently not doing as well as it should. We, in personnel management, con-

tinue to receive comments that many college graduates are unable to communicate well, either orally or in writing. A closely associated deficiency has been in the area of personal relations. Yet these two things are fundamental to getting any job done through people.

Other management comments relating to students preparation for the job market include an uncertainty as to what they want to do and generally possessing unrealistic expectations about their first job.

In terms of the employment environment our recruiters find that most students are not familiar with Federal hiring procedures, nor with the Agencies themselves to which they make application, nor with the kind of jobs likely to be found with that Agency. As a result, these students lack eligibility on the appropriate Civil Service Examination and employment discussions must be hedged to take this fact into account.

All this suggests that universities, 4 year colleges and junior colleges need to pay closer attention to the needs of their students. Career counseling, job information, and assessments of each individual's strengths and weaknesses, or lack of them, are elements critical not only to the student's relative success, but to society's as well. Are these elements that your institutions can afford to overlook and still fulfill a meaningful role in a modern technological society?

Wrapping It Up

Earlier I mentioned that there were a number of changes affecting agriculture which have already occurred or loom on the horizon. The rapidity and quantity of these alterations make it difficult to judge exactly where we are headed and what they portend for career choices and preparation. There are some threads, however, that seem to flow through these whirlpools and eddys. Hopefully, I've succeeded in highlighting a few of them for you today.

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AN ANALYSIS OF INTERCOLLEGIATE MEAT AND LIVESTOCK EVALUATION CONTESTS

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For many years intercollegiate meat and livestock judging contests have played a principal role in:

- (1) providing experience and competition for students venturing into the field of meat and livestock science,
- (2) innovating an arena for the application of continually changing trends and desires of the meat and livestock industry and the consumer, and
- (3) initiating an interest in modifying and expanding college meat science curriculums.

Kelly (1971) surveyed changes, combinations and reorganization of meats, livestock and live animal-carcass evaluation contests. The interest in this subject is a result of:

- (1) an acceleration in livestock and meat science research and expanded efforts to devise more desirable methods for the standardization and evaluation of livestock,
- (2) the inclusion of live animal-carcass evaluation contests into the spectrum of intercollegiate judging events, and
- (3) the specialization of livestock and meat science brought about by various technological advances.

Surveys have been conducted consisting of opinions of livestock and meat judging coaches, government personnel, livestock and meat science professors and researchers and other

interested persons. Findings in these surveys (Bray, 1967; Lidvall, 1967; Miller, 1967; and Ritchie, 1967) indicated that livestock and meats contests should continue to operate separately, because in some cases meats contests deal more specifically with subject matter more important to the meat packer whereas the livestock contests can be more applied to livestock production. In many cases time and facilities may be a limiting factor for either type contest.

The purpose of this survey dealt with the following:

- (1) methods for improving existing judging contests,
- (2) opinions related to the formation of intercollegiate meats or livestock evaluation contests in the western states, and
- (3) the role of live-animal-carcass evaluation contests as related to intercollegiate meat and livestock evaluation contests.

Materials and Methods

Two-hundred twenty-nine questionnaires consisting of ninety-two questions as shown in Table 1 (see appendix) were utilized in this study. The questionnaires were sent to various universities and colleges, government agencies, industry personnel, and other interested organizations and persons. The data were expressed in terms of percentages in favor of each specific question. A space was provided on the survey forms for respondents to offer extra suggestions or comments where strong opinions existed. These responses are reported but no attempt has been made to identify the sources of comments or opinions given as justification for answers received to questions.

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Results and Discussion

Questionnaire Response. Table 2 (see appendix) represents the results in percentages pertaining to specific segments of the meat animal industry. Eighty-nine of the two-hundred twenty-nine questionnaires dispatched were returned. This return represented 38.9 percent received by individuals of different facets of the livestock and meat industry. Twenty-nine of 31 (93.5%) educational institutions receiving questionnaires participated in the study. Twenty-two meat judging coaches, 19 livestock judging coaches, 12 USDA employees, 16 retired meat judging coaches and 20 meat and animal science professors and researchers participated in the study. The following resume consists of data and comments of significant questions in the survey.

Existing Meats Contests. Fifty percent of the respondents (Figure 1, Question 1) were satisfied with existing meats judging contest. Data summarized on Table 2 (Question 1) indicated that 77.3 percent of the current meat judging coaches are satisfied with the existing contests, while only 33.7 percent of the retired meat judging coaches and only 27.3 percent of the meat and animal science professors and researchers indicated an affirmative response. The reasons for this contrasting response was not revealed in this study, but the results suggested that there is need for more direct communication between the current coaches and the other industry personnel. This could alleviate apparent misunderstandings related to the goals of meats and livestock evaluation contests or contribute to improving these programs if the latter is needed.

Number of Team Members. The data (Question 2) suggested that current coaches are reluctant to change the number of persons comprising a meats judging team, probably because established contests are geared to presently expected numbers. These data indicated that other meats industry personnel feel that the number of team members should be changed. Those in favor of the change from the present number of four participants (National Livestock Meat Board, 1969) to five members to comprise a meats team indicated that some uniformity should be developed between meats and livestock contests. This would create a more uniform interaction of participants in contests of both types. It would allow more student participation. In spite of the reluctance of meats coaches to make this change, the high cost of education seems to encourage maximum participation and utilization of educational facilities. The increase in number of team members would be a step in this direction.

In an effort to encourage more student participation, some educators have advocated increasing team size to ten (Table 1, Question 4) with the high 4 or 5 scores counting toward the team average. Meats judging coaches (current and retired) were more in favor of a larger increase than any other segment studied; however, there was an overall negative attitude toward this change. Some specific contests have allowed institutions to enter two teams and alternates; thus allowing more student participation. Obviously, this practice is limited to the extent of the facilities and capabilities of the personnel in charge of the contests.

Lamb Carcass Yield and Quality Grading. Lamb carcass quality grading was recently dropped from the meat judging program. Of all individuals questioned, 65.8 percent (Table 3, Question 5) were in favor of continuing lamb grading as a part of the meats evaluation programs. Of the specific groups polled (Table 2, Question 5) 100 percent of USDA personnel and meat or animal science professors in teaching or research were in favor of continuing lamb grading. Sixty-six percent of the retired meats coaches were in favor of the continuation. In contrast to those strongly in favor of continuing lamb grading, 68.2 percent of the current meat judging coaches were against continuation of lamb carcass grading in contests. The data showed a strong lack of agreement among those who develop usable guidelines for meat evaluation and those coaches who are currently passing this information forward to students. Obviously, many trained individuals question the validity of lamb carcass grading; however, the lamb industry still relies on the standardized marketing of its products since two-thirds of commercially marketed lambs are

Federally-Quality-graded. Reasons for a large number of negative votes by some meats coaches were apparently because of: (1) the belief that deletion of lamb carcass grading shortens contests; (2) the belief that lamb standards are in error; (3) the belief that the lamb industry is becoming relatively unimportant compared to other livestock industries and (4) localized slaughter of lambs has made it difficult to obtain lamb carcasses for some contests.

Results from Question 6 (Table 1) concerning yield grading of lamb carcasses, indicated the same pattern of negative thought for the current meats judging coaches and this in contrast to other animal science personnel. As indicated by the overall response (Figure 1, Question 6) most meat animal industry personnel and animal scientists are in favor of keeping lamb yield grading a part of the meat judging program.

Satisfaction of Official Placings. These data (Table 2, Questions 7 and 8) indicated that a majority of all segments surveyed are satisfied with the official placings of meat and livestock team officials. These individuals offered a general feeling that final placings have been consistent with the general trend in thinking of the meat and livestock industry as a whole.

Live Animal-Carcass Evaluation Contests. Educators in animal science realize the importance of training students to evaluate live animals for carcass cutability and quality merit. This has given impetus for contests aimed at teaching students to evaluate live animals as well as the quality and cutability of the product from the same animals in carcass. According to this study (Figure 1, Question 9), 73.4 percent of the participants favored modification of meats contests to include live animals. Also the response was favorable to including some meats or carcass evaluation into current livestock contests. A majority of livestock judging coaches (83.3 percent) were in favor of the above proposal while a small majority (52.9 percent) of meats judging coaches were against it.

Extra Time Required for Live Animal-Carcass Evaluation. According to a study by Kelly (1971) the extra time required for live animal-carcass evaluation contests would discourage participation. These data (Figure 1, Question 10) indicated that 70.1 percent of the schools questioned would not be discouraged in participating because of extra time especially if partial expenses were provided (Figure 1, Question 4). Ninety percent (Figure 1, Question 11) of the respondents indicated that they would favor entering a live animal evaluation contest.

Performance Records. When questioned about the use of animal performance records in contests, most segments surveyed indicated a negative response. Researchers and professors were more in favor (Table 2, Question 12) while livestock judging team coaches and USDA personnel were almost completely negative. Meats judging team coaches as a group lacked universal agreement in either direction on this question as indicated by the one to one response, (Table 2, Question 12).

Curricula for Meats Science Background. Eighty percent (Figure 1, Question 13) of the schools surveyed offered courses in meat grading and selection. Ninety percent (Figure 1, Question 15) of all schools surveyed indicated they offered courses in live animal evaluation. About one-half of all schools (including the 20 percent not offering courses in meat grading and selection) indicated a need for more courses in this area. Also, one-half of the schools surveyed felt that the livestock judging courses should be somewhat more meat science oriented. Three-fourths of the persons responding felt that private industry preferred meat science oriented animal science students (Figure 1, Question 17).

Oral or Written Reasons. For many years it has been the policy of livestock contestants to present formal reasons in an oral manner while meats contestants present their reasons written on standard forms. A slight majority (53%) of all respondents felt that reasons should be written for meats judging contests (Table 1, Question 18). A few feel that oral reasons could be presented in addition to written reasons. Some respondents indicated that specific written questions should be utilized more in either meat, livestock or livestock-carcass evaluation contests.

Contest Location in the West. The concern of many industry personnel in the western part of the United States centers around the acceptance of the livestock-meat evaluation concept at some location in this part of the country (Table 1, Question 19). Ten schools indicated that they would enter a team in a well-organized intercollegiate livestock-meats evaluation contest if it were held at some location west of the Rocky Mountains. Six schools indicated a possible interest. Colleges and universities from all over the country participated in the survey; therefore, distance accounted for much of the lack of interest from some schools. Comments indicated that the month of April would be the best time of the year for those interested schools.

Individual Opinions. The following quotes were reflective of individual opinions of various respondents: "The provision of follow-up kill reports from market classes in the traditional livestock judging contests is needed." "Exploration of funding for financing these contests is needed." "There is a need for more agreement between livestock and meat people. Meats personnel tend to place too much emphasis on the end product and not enough on the economics of production. Livestock men tend to go overboard in the other direction. We need to reach a desirable balance between these two important aspects of livestock evaluation." "Need to continue meat judging contests as such." "Lamb yield grading should be included and lamb quality grading should be continued in meat judging contest." "Move away from comparative judging toward market evaluation and grading." "Evaluation is a better word than judging in the phrase 'meat or livestock judging contests.'" "I like the idea of meat evaluation contests but not to replace present meat or livestock judging contests." "Meat judging is an excellent method to use in developing an interest in the field of meat science."

SUMMARY

Eighty-nine of two-hundred twenty-nine questionnaires dispatched were returned. This return represented 38.9 percent received by individuals of different facets of the livestock and meat industry. Twenty-nine of 31 (93.5%) educational institutions receiving questionnaires participated in the study. Twenty-two meat judging coaches, 19 livestock judging coaches, 12 USDA employees, 16 retired meat judging coaches and 20 meat and animal science professors and researchers participated in the study.

Response to this survey was very satisfactory in view of the 91 percent response from educational institutions receiving the questionnaires.

Results from the survey indicated that current meats judging team coaches are satisfied with rules governing present meats contests, while retired coaches and industry people (packers and retailers, etc.) are not. Reasons for disparity between present and retired coaches was not revealed although there was some indication by comments made on survey forms that there is need for more direct communication between current coaches and other industry personnel as to the necessary goals of meats and livestock evaluation contests. All segments of the industry, except current meats coaches, were in favor of five members on a team. In order to increase student participation the suggestion was made to increase team numbers from 5 to 10 but this yielded only limited acceptance. Many were in favor of having both written and oral reasons in both meats and livestock judging contests. Specific written questions as an alternative was also suggested. A large majority of the respondents were in favor of keeping lamb yield and quality grading in meats and/or livestock-carass evaluation contests. Official placings have apparently met the approval of most meats, livestock and industry personnel. Most of these individuals felt that the placings in meats contests have been consistent with current thought in the industry as a whole.

Carcass evaluation contests received overwhelming acceptance as a potential stimulating teaching technique for training students to value carcass cutability and quality merit. Most respondents indicated the extra time required would not discourage participation in contests using the evaluation concept. Few were in favor of using performance records in addition to other criteria. Based on data discussed herein it is concluded that a contest based on the live-animal-carass evaluation concept would receive support if held in the West.

A large majority of the schools surveyed indicated that the school's current curricula included meats and livestock evaluation courses. Some indicated the need for more courses in this area. Most respondents agreed that industry will give preference to graduates with a meat science background.

The results of this survey indicated that meat judging contests will continue to play a role in the application and learning processes of the expanding field of meat science. A majority of persons surveyed felt that meat and livestock contests should continue to operate separately. This agreed with other reports in the literature. The results of the study reported herein give further support that "live animal-carass evaluation contests or clinics" are very much needed.

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APPENDIX

TABLE 1. A SUMMARY OF THE MEAT JUDGING AND EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions: Answer "yes" or "no" with a check mark in appropriate blank.

1. Are you presently satisfied with existing intercollegiate meat judging contests? Yes ___ No ___ .
2. Do you believe that the numbers on an intercollegiate meat judging team should be expanded to five to provide experience for more students in the field of meat science? Yes ___ No ___ .
3. Would you support a modification of the intercollegiate meat judging contest rules so that you could enter a maximum of ten individual participants with the top four high scores comprising a team? Yes ___ No ___ .
4. If the sponsor of such a contest provided room and board at a reduced rate throughout the duration of this contest, would this encourage your participation in this event? Yes ___ No ___ .
5. Should lamb carcass grading be continued in intercollegiate meat judging contests? Yes ___ No ___ .
6. Should lamb carcass yield grading be included in intercollegiate meat judging contests? Yes ___ No ___ .
7. Have you been reasonably satisfied with the official judging committee's placings at the various intercollegiate meat judging contests? Yes ___ No ___ .
8. Do you believe that the overall final placings at the various intercollegiate meat judging contests have been consistent with the general trend in thinking of the meat and livestock industry as a whole? Yes ___ No ___ .
9. Do you believe that intercollegiate meat judging contests should be modified to include evaluation of live animals or vice versa pertaining to intercollegiate livestock judging contests? Yes ___ No ___ .
10. Do you think the extra time required for a live animal-carass contest will discourage participation? Yes ___ No ___ .
11. Would you enter a team in a live animal-carass evaluation contest? Yes ___ No ___ .
12. Should performance records be used in evaluating live animals and/or carcasses? Yes ___ No ___ .
13. Does your school offer a course in meat selection and grading? Yes ___ No ___ .
14. Does your school offer a course in live animal-carass evaluation? Yes ___ No ___ .
15. Should more meat science courses be offered at your school? Yes ___ No ___ .
16. Do you believe that the livestock courses being taught at your institution should be more meat science orientated? Yes ___ No ___ .
17. Have you noticed a greater demand from private industry, USDA, etc., for more meat science graduates or students with a meat science background? Yes ___ No ___ .
18. Should intercollegiate meat judging reasons be oral and/or written? Yes ___ No ___ .
19. If a well organized intercollegiate meat judging contest is held at a location west of the Rocky Mountains, would you support this contest by entering a team? Yes ___ No ___ .

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 16)