

NATIONAL SHOW RING CODE OF ETHICS

This code of ethics applies to anyone exhibiting animals at livestock shows in the United States. It includes juniors as well as Open Class exhibitors who compete in structured classes of competition. All classes of livestock offered at the livestock event are included: Cattle (beef and dairy), Goats (angora, Boer, dairy, meats, cashmere), Equine (donkey, horses, and mules), Llamas and other specialty animals, poultry, rabbits, sheep, swine, and any other livestock classes offered. This "National Show Ring Code of Ethics" will be enhanced with additional rules and regulations which individual fairs and livestock shows impose on the local, county, state, regional, and national levels.

The following practices or procedures are unacceptable and are defined as being deceptive, fraudulent, unethical and inhumane in the care, fitting, preparation and showing of all classes of livestock of all classes of livestock: The use of any illegal drugs is prohibited. Legal or illegal substances used to phenotypically alter the appearance of an animal entered in livestock events is prohibited (see rule #4). Use of illegal drugs is considered a premeditated act! Furthermore, any information obtained on the practice of illegal alteration of an animal will be turned over to the proper authorities for criminal prosecuting. This is a ONE-STRIKE-AND-YOUR-OUT POLICY! Exhibitors will forfeit any premium, awards, or auction proceeds and will be prohibited from further competition at shows in the United States, as well as being subject to criminal prosecution if proven guilty.

The following is a listing of guidelines all exhibitors must follow to enter livestock at organized competitive events:

1. All exhibitors must have viable proof (junior division) of ownership available to prove length of time animals have been owned. Market Animals (beef, sheep, swine, and goats) must be owned and under exhibitor's daily care according to established rules and regulations for the Fair or livestock exposition. This also includes all small market animals (rabbits and poultry). The official ownership date is the date shown on the bill of sale, unless the animal was bred by the exhibitor, in which calving or birthing records must be shown (local rules may determine ownership requirements for non-market animals). Registered breeding livestock must show the exhibitor as the sole owner of the animal on the breed association papers or certificates.
2. No exhibitor may show an animal which has been previously sold at an auction or sale as a market animal through another fair, livestock show, whether or not there is an actual change of ownership (progressive level shows excluded). Any method used to misrepresent the age of an animal for a class in which it is shown is deceptive and considered illegal. Showing an animal for another individual by claiming ownership in order to show in a specific livestock class or event is prohibited. False ownership is illegal.
3. Junior exhibitors are expected to care for and groom their animals while at the Fair or livestock show (individual consideration will not be given in extenuating circumstances. Adults will not be allowed to physically assist in the preparation of the animal while at the show. Verbal instruction will be allowed, but no physical assistance is permitted. Physical assistance may be rendered by other junior-aged members in good standing in the 4-H and FFA programs. Any violation of this rule will result in immediate disqualification from the show.
4. Treating an animal internally or externally, with any irritant, counter-irritant, or other substances used to artificially change the confirmation or appearance of an animal for show is considered unethical, inhumane, and is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to: the use of graphite powders, hemp, artificial hair coloring, common products such as fly spray, ointment or liniment used to the point that it is irritating (unless required to reduce edema at time of calving) or similar type products. The use of dyes, spray paint or other artificial coloring which result in altering an animal's true and natural appearance and/or color is prohibited. Adding false hair or hair-like, fleece or skin at any point, spot, or area of the animal's body is illegal and result in immediate disqualification. Any Liquid or substance not considered part of an accepted and normal diet for livestock is deemed illegal and inhumane. For example, the use of alcoholic or carbonated beverages as a drench or filler etc.
5. The use of tranquilizers, sedatives, or depressants which alter the physical or physiological state of the animal is illegal; Exceptions to this rule would be a licensed, certified veterinarian's treatment for a recognized disease or injury, or recommendation for tranquilizing breeding animals in heat that might compromise the safety of others. The drugs must be approved by the Food and Drug Administration for use in meat producing animals. All exhibitors shall advise show management of any drugs and/or medications administered to an animal that might be detected at the time of showing or at meat inspection. The name of the drug, its purpose, the person who administered the drug, time and date of administration shall be presented to show management prior to the showing and sale of the animal. Failure to report this information to the show management will result in severe penalty and/or disqualification. Any use of drugs or substances not approved by the Food and Drug Administration is strictly prohibited. All animals entered into livestock competition shall be subject to testing for foreign substances that exceed acceptable levels established by the FDA, FSIS, USDA, or EPA. During the livestock events, in the case of animals requiring treatment, all medications shall be administered by a licensed veterinarian and the livestock show officials shall be notified.

6. Surgery, injection, or insertion of foreign material under the skin and/or into the flesh of an animal to change the natural contour, conformation, or appearance of an animal's body is illegal. This includes vegetable oil, silicon, or any other substance used to alter the shape of the animal. Accepted practices of physical preparation which are allowed include, clipping of hair, trimming of hooves, dehorning, or removal of ancillary teats.
7. The balancing of the udder by abnormal means that includes the use of a mechanical contrivance or the injection of fluid or drugs, setting the teats, and/or occluding (sealing the ends) with a mechanical contrivance or with the use of a chemical preparation is illegal. Treating or massaging the udder or its attachments with an irritant or counter irritant is prohibited.
8. The use of inhumane fitting, showing and/or handling practices or devices shall not be tolerated. For example, breaking of tails, striking of the animal to cause swelling or for bracing purposes, use of an electrical contrivance, or use of overly severe bits is not accepted.
9. Direct criticism or interference with the judge, show management, other exhibitors, breed representatives, or show officials before, during, or after the competitive events is prohibited.
10. At the time an animal is sold at auction at the livestock show, the exhibitor shall be held directly responsible for animals that are rejected at the processing center due to the presence of foreign residues. The seller may be liable to the buyer for an amount equal to three times the purchased price and may also be liable for attorney's fees and civil penalties. Show management may share acceptable intelligence and evidence information with FDA and USDA. If for any reason, any part of a meat animal must be removed by the FDA and USDA inspectors, the market price will be discounted.
11. Show management reserves the right to require animal health certificates. Health inspectors and diagnostic tests may be made before or after animals are on the livestock show premises for exhibitor and animal safety, or to inaugurate disease control procedures which may become necessary in emergencies as determined by animal health officials.

Any violation of "The National Show Ring Code of Ethics" or specific rules as designated by individual fairs and livestock shows will result in forfeiture of premiums and award, disqualification, and may result in probationary status and/or loss of eligibility for future participation in organized livestock competition.

Possible civil penalties may be imposed by the proper authorities, based on evidence provided by the livestock show, of exhibitors in violation of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act or the animal mistreatment, neglect, and abandonment laws that apply on the local state and national levels.

The decision of the livestock show management will be final.

Other cooperating shows (The International Association of Fairs and Expositions, The American Livestock Show & Rodeo Managers Association, and Western Fairs Assn.) will be notified of the action taken by the show management, which may affect the eligibility of the individual, group, or sponsoring organization for participation at the other shows who are also members of these organizations.

By making entry in a livestock show or event you are verifying you have read "The National Show Ring Code of Ethics" and understand the consequences of the penalties involved for illegal, unethical, inhumane, and unfair practices of competition. You also verify that you and your family may be prohibited from future participation in organized fairs and livestock shows in the United States, and could face penalties if implicated in any of the aforementioned acts.

Exhibitor Signature

Date