



4AJ-08PO

Kentucky 4-H Poultry: Giving Oral Reasons

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Oral reasons are an important part of a poultry judging contest. Participants have the opportunity to defend their placings of an egg production class. In addition, oral reasons are an important tool in the development of organization and communication skills, which in turn will build self-confidence.

Oral reasons are evaluated on a number of criteria including: appearance and delivery (24 percent of the final score), proper use of terms (20 percent), accuracy of statements (20 percent), and completeness of coverage (36 percent).

Appearance

The participant giving oral reasons should stand on both feet and face the judges. They should stand straight without putting their hands in their pockets. Excessive use of the hands during the presentation of reasons can be distracting. One method to prevent this is to clasp both hands behind the back. The judges will be sitting about 5-6 feet from the person giving a set of oral reasons. It is important the participant stand reasonably still. Constant rocking back and forth can be distracting. No caps or hats should be worn, and the participant should not be chewing gum. Long hair should be kept away from the face.

Delivery

Participants should speak clearly, distinctly, and loudly enough to be heard without shouting. Opening and closing statements should be used. An example of an opening statement is, *"I am contestant number five and I place this class of White Leghorn past production hens 1-2-3-4."* Similarly, a good closing statement is, *"For these reasons, I place this class of past-production hens 1-2-3-4. Are there any questions?"* The reasons should be given without long pauses between statements, and the participant should look confident in his or her opinions.

Proper Use of Terms

Participants are evaluated on their use of the correct terms (which are discussed later in this publication). It is also important that the terms be used correctly—just mentioning them is not sufficient to demonstrate an understanding of the terminology. The judges may ask the participant to define some terms that were not used or that were used but without a definition.

Accuracy of Statements

While this section is worth 20 percent of the oral-reasons score most judges try not to dock points if you got the placing wrong since this would be a "double-deduction" on the placing of a particular class of hens. Instead, many will give extra points if the participant has clearly demonstrated that he or she saw all the hens in the class.

Completeness of Coverage

It is important to indicate why one hen was placed over another rather than just describing the hens individually. It is important to stress the crucial differences and indicate the importance of these differences in the placement of the class. Just stating you "placed a class 1-2-3-4 because of bleaching" is not sufficient. You need to indicate what the specific differences in pigmentation between the hens were. It is important to mention as many comparisons as possible.

In order to present a complete set of oral reasons, the following is required:

- Knowledge of what constitutes a good egg layer
- Knowledge of the body parts of a hen and terminology for describing past production
- Knowledge of reasons organization
- Ability to write accurate notes
- Confidence

For information on what constitutes a good egg layers, see the factsheet “Kentucky 4-H Poultry: Evaluating Egg-Laying Hens” (4AJ-07P0).

During the time allotted for examining the hens, it is important that accurate notes are taken. Even though participants might not be able to use these notes while giving oral reasons (seniors may not use notes), they will be helpful in organizing the oral reasons presentation. Each participant has only two minutes to give their oral reasons. It is possible to give a lot of information within those two minutes, but organization is a must.

First-time participants can use the note-taking form included at the end of this publication. In the Kentucky state contest, all participants can use the form to make notes, but seniors cannot bring any notes in with them when giving oral reasons. It is important to remember these note-taking sheets are meant as a learning tool and cannot be used during national poultry judging contests.

Correct Terminology

You should know the appropriate names for the various parts of the chicken (Figures 1 and 2) as well as the terms that are essential to describing egg-production characteristics.

Keel: The breast bone of the hen

Pubic bones: The two slender, flat bones that terminate at the side of the vent of the hen

Abdomen: The rear region of the body of the hen which includes the area between the ends of the pubic bones and the tip of the keel

Pigmentation: The presence of yellow pigment in the various parts of the body of yellow-skinned breeds

Bleaching: The disappearance of the yellow pigment

Handling quality: Condition of the hen as indicated by the softness and pliability of the abdominal region

- Softness and pliability of the abdominal area are determined by gently rolling a pinch of skin just below the pubic bone.
- Softness indicates a lack of fat in the abdomen while hardness means considerably more fat is present.

Figure 1. Parts of a hen.

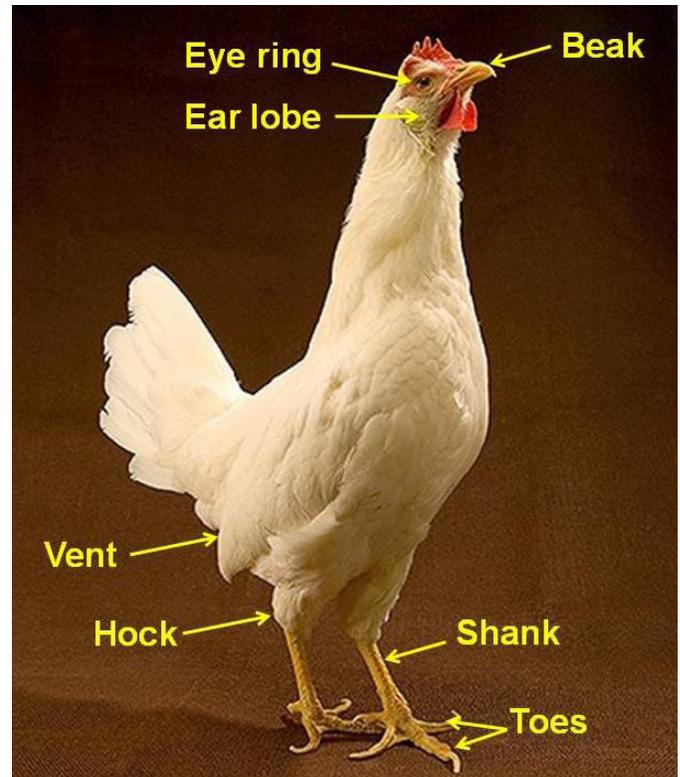
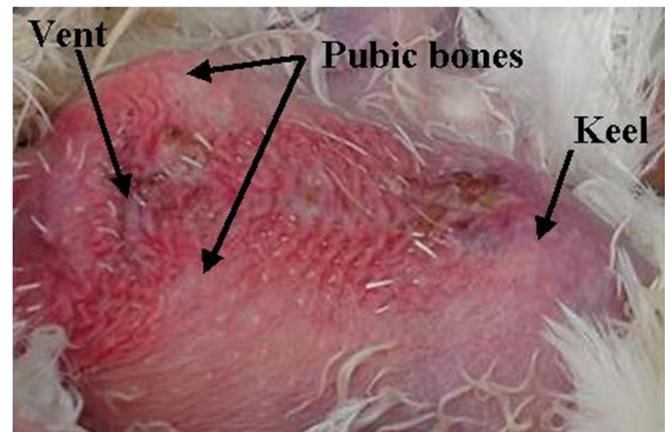


Figure 2. Rear parts of a hen.



Persistency: Refers to the number of eggs laid over a specific period of time, and evaluated by pigment loss (bleaching) and molt.

Intensity: Refers to the hen's current rate of production, evaluated by handling qualities, abdominal capacity, and health and vigor (indicated by the shape and brightness of the eye, proportional shape of the head, and the condition of the comb and wattles).

Vigor: Refers to the health and activity of the hen.

Reasons Organization

An egg-production class in a 4-H poultry judging contest consists of four hens. Oral reasons are given to describe and compare the individual hens. Each class of four has three pairs—top, middle, and bottom. Most of the comparisons and descriptions will take place within these pairs.

Each set of oral reasons should follow the same format and be divided into the following sections:

- Introduction
- Class winner’s description compared to the rest of the class or top-pair section
- Middle pair section
- Last place hen’s description compared to the rest of the class or bottom-pair section
- Summary sentence

The introduction to a set of reasons is always the same except for the name of the class, overall placing, and a description of the pairs. *Example: “I am contestant number 12, and I place this class of Single Comb White Leghorn hens 2-3-1-4. I had an easy top pair, a close middle pair, and an easy bottom pair.”*

The description of the class winner should be a brief statement outlining the advantages or good qualities in comparison to the rest of the class. *Example: “I placed Hen Number 2 at the top of the class, because she was the most thoroughly bleached hen in this class, indicating she has laid the most eggs of the four hens and thus the most persistent layer of the class.”* *Optional: “If I could improve my class winner, I would like to see a slightly larger abdominal capacity.”*

Each section within a set of reasons is organized in the same manner, composed of sentences that compare the two hens within each class. After introducing the pair, additional important factors within the pair should be mentioned. This allows for the discussion of other areas to compare in each pair.

The phrases “in addition” and “furthermore” are commonly used. “Grant” sentences also can be used to acknowledge a positive aspect of the lower-placed hen over the hen placed above it. The closer the placing, the more important and detailed these statements should be. Other words for ‘grant’ statements include “admit,” “concede” or “realize.”

Example: “In my top pair, I placed Hen Number 2 over Hen Number 3 because Hen 3 showed considerably more pigment remaining in the front of the shanks than did Hen 2. In addition, the handling qualities of Hen 2 were better than Hen 3, as indicated by the softer, more pliable abdomen. For my close middle pair, I placed Hen 3 over Hen 1, again on the basis of pigmentation. While both hens showed similar bleaching, I felt that Hen 1 had slightly more pigment remaining in the front and back of her shanks. Both hens also had similar handling qualities. I do grant, however, that Hen 1 had a slightly larger abdominal capacity than Hen 3, being slightly deeper and wider between the pubic bones and with a little more spread between the pubic and keel bones. In my bottom pair I placed Hen 1 over Hen 4. Hen 4 had a large amount of pigment remaining in her shanks and considerable fat in her abdomen. Furthermore, Hen 4 had the smallest abdominal capacity of the class. These factors indicated that Hen 4 was clearly the poorest layer in the class.”

The reasons are then finished off by repeating the

Table 1. Descriptive terms for good and poor qualities of laying hens.

Characteristic	Good quality	Poor quality
Pigmentation	Less pigment in her shanks, beak, and vent; well-bleached; shows a greater degree of fading	Showing more pigment; more yellow color in the shanks, beak, and vent; shows a lower degree of fading
Handling quality	Softer, more pliable abdomen	Too much fat in the abdomen
Abdominal capacity	Greater abdominal capacity; more width between the pubic bones or more spread between pubic bones and keel	Shallow; lacks capacity; tight and hard abdomen
Feather and plumage condition	Feathers or more brittle, ragged, worn;	Feathers are bright, glossy, clean
Molt (if present)	Late, rapid molting hen	Early, slow molting hen
Head	Large red, plump, waxy comb and wattles	Masculine; crow-headed
General characteristics	A longer, wider back	Narrow and short body; too shallow
Behavior	Vigorous, active, alert	Drowsy, not active, lack vigor

overall placing of the class in a summary sentence. It is important that the placing at the end of the reasons be the same placings given at the start. *Example: “For these reasons, I place this class of Single Comb White Leghorn hens 2-3-1-4.” (Optional: If molt was not used in placing the class, that can be mentioned as well. Example: “Molt was not a factor in placing this class,” or, “None of the hens showed any signs of molt.” You can finish up by asking if there are any questions.)*

Taking Notes

The key to giving accurate and polished oral reasons is note-taking. It is the opportunity to write the descriptions and criticisms in an orderly manner. The goal in studying notes is not to memorize the notes while preparing each set of reasons. Instead, the notes serve to help in recalling the hens from the class.

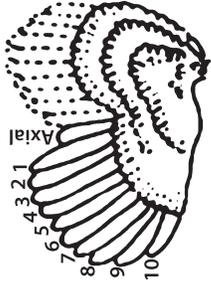
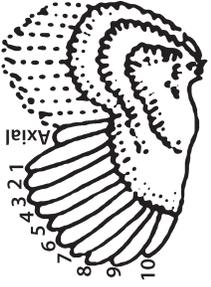
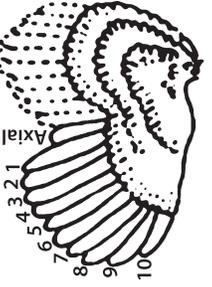
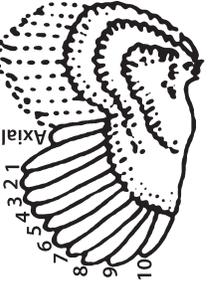
Seniors participating in the national event are not allowed to bring any notes. They can bring in blank sheets of paper, which can then be used to create a simple note-taking table such as that shown in Table 2. The make-believe notes in the table are used to demonstrate how this can be done. It is important to remember that seniors cannot use notes while giving oral reasons.

For those just learning to judge past-production hens, the form on Page 6 can help with note taking. This form can be used at the Kentucky state contest and will be made available to those wishing to use it. Examples showing the completed notes follow, along with examples of oral reasons that can be developed with the information shown. It is important to remember no perfect set of reasons exists and it is unlikely any two participants would give the exact same oral reasons.

Table 2. An example of note-taking for a set of oral reasons.

Hen No.	Pigment loss (P)	Handling qualities (HQ)	Abdominal capacity (AC)	Molt (M)	Additional notes
1	Bleached through to front of the shanks with moderate yellow color in the front and back of shanks—color slightly more intense than in hen 3	Harder and less pliable abdomen than hen 3.	3 ½ x 4	none	
2	Bleached through to front of the shanks with pale yellow color in the front and back of shanks	Soft, pliable abdomen	3 x 3	none	
3	Bleached through to front of the shanks with moderate yellow color in the front and back of shanks	Soft, pliable abdomen but not as good as hen 2	3 x 3	none	Felt that hen 3 definitely had more pigment in the shanks than hen 2
4	Bleached through to the face with intense pigment in the shanks	Hard abdomen	2 ½ x 3	none	
Placing: 2 - 3 - 1 - 4					

Poultry Reasons Card

		Pigment Remaining		Handling Qualities		Abdominal Capacity	Molting (indicate missing or old 1 st feathers)	Notes												
		Body Part	Color*	Skin	Rank															
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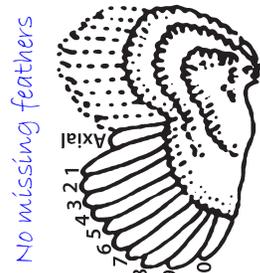
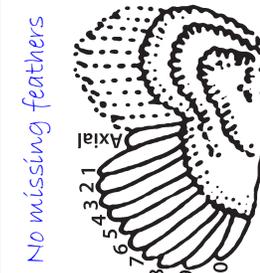
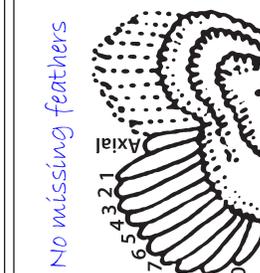
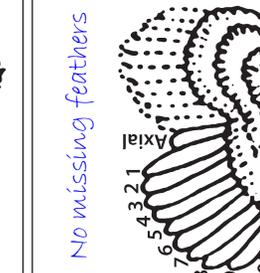
*Color: DY = Dark Yellow; Y = Yellow; PY = Pale Yellow; W = White

Ranking=

Methodology used in evaluating the hens in the Example 1 note sheet on the following page is described below (remembering that, with other participants in an actual event, it may not be possible to handle the hens in order of the cages):

1. All the hens were examined while still in the cages. All showed good health and vigor with bright red and glossy comb and wattles; bright, alert, and round eyes; and a balanced head with good proportions to its length, width, and depth.
2. Removed hen from Cage 1 and examined with the following notes:
 - No pigment noted in the vent, eye ring, ear lobe, beak, or bottom of feet
 - Intense yellow pigment in the shanks, tops of toes, and hock
 - Excellent handling qualities (soft, pliable abdomen)
 - Abdominal capacity of 3 x 4
 - No molt noted
3. Returned hen to Cage 1
4. Since it is the only hen examined so far, Hen 1 is the top hen and used as comparison for the next hen examined.
5. Removed hen from Cage 2 and examined with the following notes:
 - Also bleached through to bottom of feet
 - Yellow pigmentation in shanks, tops of toes and hock not as intense as Hen 1
 - Handling qualities similar to Hen 1
 - Abdominal capacity similar to Hen 1
 - No molt noted
6. Returned hen to Cage 2
7. Placings so far: 2-1
8. Removed hen from Cage 3 and examined with the following notes:
 - Also bleached through to bottom of feet
 - Pigmentation remaining in feet is more intense than in Hen 2 but not as intense as in Hen 1
 - Handling qualities similar to hens 1 and 2
 - Abdominal capacity slightly smaller than both hens 1 and 2
 - No molt noted
9. Returned hen to Cage 3
10. Placings so far: 2-3-1
11. Removed hen from Cage 4 and examined with the following notes:
 - Also bleached through to bottom of feet
 - Pigmentation remaining in the feet is slightly more than Hen 2, but less than hens 3 and 1
 - Good handling qualities, but not as good as the other three hens
 - Abdominal capacity larger than Hen 3 but similar to hens 1 and 2
 - No molt noted
12. Returned hen to Cage 4
13. Final placings: 2-4-3-1
14. Noted that top pair of 2 and 4 were close with only slight pigmentation intensity differences in hock area
15. Noted that middle pair of 4 and 3 were easy with large differences in pigmentation intensity in the feet
16. Noted that bottom pair of 3 and 1 was close with only slight pigmentation intensity differences in the feet

Example 1 - Poultry Reasons Card

		Pigment Remaining		Handling Qualities		Abdominal Capacity	Molting <small>(indicate missing or old 1st feathers)</small>	Notes												
		Body Part	Color*	Skin	Rank															
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Ranking= 2 - 4 - 3 - 1 Close top; easy middle and close bottom pairs/all had good health and vigor

Example of possible oral reasons for the hens used to fill in the note sheet on Page 7:

Good morning, I am contestant Number 4. I place this class of past-production hens 2-4-3-1. I had a close top pair, an easy middle pair, and a close bottom pair.

I placed Hen Number 2 at the top of the class because she was the most thoroughly bleached hen in the class, being bleached through to the front of the shanks with some pigment remaining in the shanks, tops of toes, and hock. This bleaching indicates she has laid the most eggs of the four hens and thus is the more persistent layer in the class. She also had excellent handling qualities as indicated by the thin, pliable abdomen. Furthermore, she had a large abdominal capacity of a three-finger width between the pubic bones and a four-finger depth between the pubic bones and the tip of the keel.

For my top pair, I placed Hen 2 over Hen 4 on the basis of pigment loss, with Hen 4 showing slightly more pigment remaining in the shanks than the first-place hen. Furthermore, Hen 2 had superior handling qualities, with Hen 4 having slightly more fat in the abdomen.

For my middle pair, I placed Hen 4 over Hen 3 on the basis of pigment loss. Hen 3 had considerably more yellow pigment remaining in the shanks and toes indicating that she was not as persistent a layer as Hen 4. In addition, Hen 3 had a slightly smaller abdominal capacity with only a three-finger width by 3½-finger depth. I do grant, however, that Hen 3 had slightly better handling qualities than Hen 4 with a softer, more pliable abdominal area.

Moving on to my close bottom pair, I placed Hen 3 over Hen 1. The yellow pigment remaining in the front of the shanks and tops of the toes was slightly more intense in Hen 1, indicating she has laid the least number of eggs and placing her at the bottom of the class as the least-persistent layer. Both hens had excellent handling qualities, but I do grant that Hen 1 had a slightly larger abdominal capacity than Hen 3.

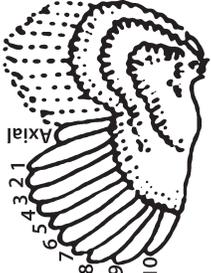
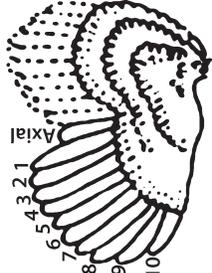
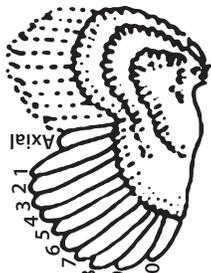
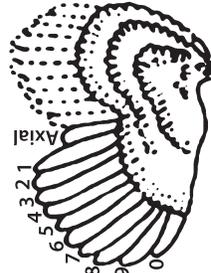
None of the hens in this class had any indications of molt, so molt was not a factor in placing the hens in this class. Similarly, all hens showed good health and vigor.

For these reasons, I place this class of past-production hens 2-4-3-1.

Methodology used in evaluating the hens in the Example 2 note sheet on Page 10 is described below (remembering that, with other participants in the event, it may not be possible to handle the hens in order of the cages):

1. All the hens were examined while in the cages. All the hens showed good health and vigor with bright red and glossy comb and wattles; bright, alert, and round eyes; and a balanced head with good proportions to its length, width, and depth.
2. Removed hen from Cage 3 and examined with the following notes:
 - No pigment noted in the vent, eye ring, ear lobe, beak, or bottom of feet
 - Some yellow pigment in the shanks, tops of toes, and hock
 - Good handling qualities (soft, pliable abdomen but slight indication of fat present)
 - Abdominal capacity of 3 x 3
 - No molt
3. Returned hen to Cage 3
4. Since it is the only hen examined so far, Hen 3 is the top hen and used as comparison for the next hen examined.
5. Removed hen from Cage 2 and examined with the following notes:
 - Some pigment noted in vent
 - No pigment noted in eye ring, ear lobe, or beak
 - Some pigment in bottom of feet and hocks
 - Yellow pigmentation in shanks and tops of toes
 - Slightly better handling qualities than Hen 3
 - Abdominal capacity similar to Hen 3
 - No molt noted
6. Returned hen to Cage 2
7. Placings so far: 3-2
8. Removed hen from Cage 4 and examined with the following notes:
 - Also bleached through to bottom of feet
 - Slightly more pigment in feet than Hen 3 but less than Hen 2
 - Handling qualities better than hens 3 and 2
 - Abdominal capacity slightly larger than both hens 3 and 2
 - No molt noted
9. Returned hen to Cage 4
10. Placings so far: 3-4-2
11. Removed hen from Cage 1 and examined with the following notes:
 - Also bleached through to beak
 - Bottom of feet slightly yellow
 - Pigmentation remaining in the feet is more than hens 3 and 4 but the same as Hen 2
 - Worst handling qualities of the class
 - Abdominal capacity larger than hens 2 and 3 but similar to Hen 4
 - No molt noted
12. Returned hen to Cage 1 and re-examined Hen 2, confirming the pigment remaining in Hen 2 is slightly more than Hen 1
13. Final placings: 3-4-1-2
14. Noted that top pair of 3 and 4 were close, with only slight pigment intensity differences in hock and sides of shanks
15. Noted that middle pair of 4 and 2 were easy, with differences in pigment intensity in bottom of feet, front of shanks, and hock
16. Noted that bottom pair of 1 and 2 were close, with only slightly different pigment intensity differences in the bottom of feet and vent areas

Example 2 - Poultry Reasons Card

		Pigment Remaining		Handling Qualities		Abdominal Capacity	Molting <small>(indicate missing or old 1st feathers)</small>	Notes
		Body Part	Color*	Skin	Rank			
Cage 1	Vent	DY	Y	PY	W	Width Depth 2 2 ③ 3 X 4 ④ 5 5	No missing feathers 	Last handled Pigmentation similar to hen 2 so reexamined hen 2 to confirm comparison Worst HQ in the class
	Eye ring	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Ear lobe	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Beak	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Bottom of feet	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Front of shank	④	Y	PY	W			
	Back of shank	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Side of shank	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Top of toes	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Hock	DY	Y	PY	W			
Cage 2	Vent	DY	Y	PY	W	Width Depth 2 2 ③ ③ X 4 4 5 5	No missing feathers 	2nd handled More pigment in legs than hen 3 but also has pigment in vent Slightly less fat in abdomen than hen 3 On re-examination had slightly more pigment in the bottom of feet
	Eye ring	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Ear lobe	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Beak	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Bottom of feet	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Front of shank	④	Y	PY	W			
	Back of shank	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Side of shank	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Top of toes	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Hock	DY	Y	PY	W			
Cage 3	Vent	DY	Y	PY	W	Width Depth 2 2 ③ ③ X 4 4 5 5	No missing feathers 	1st handled
	Eye ring	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Ear lobe	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Beak	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Bottom of feet	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Front of shank	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Back of shank	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Side of shank	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Top of toes	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Hock	DY	Y	PY	W			
Cage 4	Vent	DY	Y	PY	W	Width Depth 2 2 ③ 3 X 4 ④ 5 5	No missing feathers 	3rd handled Slightly less pigment than hen 3 Best HQ so far Largest AC so far
	Eye ring	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Ear lobe	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Beak	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Bottom of feet	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Front of shank	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Back of shank	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Side of shank	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Top of toes	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Hock	DY	Y	PY	W			

*Color: DY = Dark Yellow; Y = Yellow; PY = Pale Yellow; W = White

Ranking = 3 - 4 - 1 - 1 - 2 Close top pair; easy middle pair; and difficult bottom pair/all had good health and vigor

Example of possible oral reasons for the hens used to fill in the note sheet on Page 10:

Good afternoon, I am Contestant Number 79. I place this class of Single Comb White Leghorn past-production hens 3-4-1-2. I was able to place the class on pigmentation. I had a close top pair, an easy middle pair, and difficult bottom pair.

I placed Hen Number 3 at the top of the class, and over Hen 4, on the basis of bleaching. Both hens were bleached through to the bottom of the feet but Hen 4 had slightly more pigment remaining in the shanks and hocks, indicating she was not as persistent a layer as Hen 3. I do grant, however, that Hen 4 had superior handling qualities as indicated by thinner and more pliable abdominal skin. Hen 4 also had a deeper abdominal capacity, with four fingers between the pubic bones and the tip of the keel as compared to the three-finger depth in Hen 3. Both hens had a three-finger spread between the pubic bones.

For my middle pair, I placed Hen 4 over Hen 1, again on the basis of pigmentation lost. As previously mentioned, Hen 4 was bleached through to the bottom of the feet, with yellow pigment remaining in the shanks, tops of toes, and hocks. Hen 1 was bleached in the vent, beak, and ear lobe, with some pigment remaining in the bottom of the feet in addition to the pigment remaining in the shanks, tops of toes, and hock. Furthermore, Hen 1 had the worst handling qualities of the class, with a hard abdomen indicating the presence of more fat in the abdominal area than the other three hens. This indicates she is the least-intense layer in the class.

For my difficult bottom pair, I placed Hen 1 over Hen 2. While both hens had similar intensity in pigment in the shanks, tops of toes, and hocks, Hen 2 had slightly more pigment remaining in the bottom of the feet. In addition, Hen 2 had a slightly yellow color in the vent area, indicating she had gone out of production and put pigment back into the vent area. Despite the re-pigmentation, however, there was no indication of molt.

Although Hen 2 had superior handling qualities and a larger abdominal capacity than Hen 1, indicating she is a more intense layer, I fault her for having more overall pigmentation than Hen 2, indicating she was not as persistent a layer as the other three hens in the class.

All four hens showed good health and vigor, with bright red and glossy comb and wattles; bright, alert, and round eyes; and a balanced head with good proportions to its length, width, and depth. Furthermore, there was no indication of molt.

For these reasons, I place this class of Single Comb White Leghorn past-production hens 3-4-1-2.

Methodology used in evaluating the hens in the Example 3 note sheet on Page 13 is described below (remembering that, with other participants in the event, it may not be possible to handle the hens in order of the cages):

1. All the hens were examined while in the cages. It probably will be difficult to place the class solely on pigmentation. Noted that Hen 2's combs and wattles were not as bright as those of the other three hens.
2. Removed hen from Cage 1 and examined with the following notes:
 - No pigment noted in the vent, eye ring, ear lobe, beak, bottom of feet, or front of shanks
 - Some yellow pigment in the rest of the shanks, tops of toes, and hock
 - Excellent handling qualities (soft, pliable abdomen)
 - Abdominal capacity of 3 x 3
 - Missing one primary feather in left wing and had one broken primary feather in the right
3. Returned hen to Cage 1
4. Since it is the only hen examined so far, Hen 1 is the top hen and used as comparison for the next hen examined.
5. Removed hen from Cage 3 and examined with the following notes:
 - Bleached through to front of shanks, the same as Hen 1
 - Slightly less-intense yellow in the rest of the shanks, tops of toes, and hocks than Hen 1
 - Similar handling qualities to Hen 1
 - Abdominal capacity slightly larger than Hen 1
 - No molt noted
6. Returned hen to Cage 3
7. Placings so far: 3-1
8. Removed hen from Cage 4 and examined with the following notes:
 - Pigmentation loss identical to Hen 3, which is similarly better than Hen 1
 - Handling qualities not as good as Hen 3
 - Abdominal capacity slightly larger than both hens 3 and 1
 - No molt noted
9. Returned hen to Cage 4
10. Placings so far: 3-4-1 (based on handling qualities for placing 3 and 4)
11. Removed hen from Cage 2 and examined with the following notes:
 - Also bleached through to beak
 - Bottom of feet slightly yellow
 - Pigmentation in the feet (shanks, tops of toes, hocks) is the most intense yellow of the class
 - Worst handling qualities of the class with hard abdomen
 - Abdominal capacity larger than hens 1 and 4 but similar to Hen 3
 - Two new feathers in each wing
12. Returned hen to Cage 2
13. Final placings: 3-4-1-2
14. Noted that top pair of 3 and 4 were difficult with identical pigmentation. Placed on basis of better handling qualities for Hen 3, though Hen 4 had larger abdominal capacity.
15. Noted that middle pair of 4 and 1 were close, with differences in pigment intensity in back and front of shanks and tops of toes
16. Noted that bottom pair of 1 and 2 were easy, with Hen 2 the definite bottom hen

Example 3 - Poultry Reasons Card

		Pigment Remaining		Handling Qualities		Abdominal Capacity		Molting		Notes		
Cage	1	Body Part		Skin		Rank		Capacity		(indicate missing or old 1" feathers)		
		DY	PY	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	
Vent	DY	Y	PY	W	W	Compared to other hens:	Poor	Width	2	Depth	2	
Eye ring	DY	Y	PY	W	W		Fair		X			
Ear lobe	DY	Y	PY	W	W		Good		4			
Beak	DY	Y	PY	W	W		Excellent		5			
Bottom of feet	DY	Y	PY	W	W	Pinch of skin below pubic bones:	Thick (fat)					
Front of shank	DY	Y	PY	W	W		or					
Back of shank	DY	Y	PY	W	W		Thin (lean)					
Side of shank	DY	Y	PY	W	W							
Top of toes	DY	Y	PY	W	W							
Hock	DY	Y	PY	W	W							
Vent	DY	Y	PY	W	W	Compared to other hens:	Poor	Width	2	Depth	2	
Eye ring	DY	Y	PY	W	W		Fair		X			
Ear lobe	DY	Y	PY	W	W		Good		4			
Beak	DY	Y	PY	W	W		Excellent		5			
Bottom of feet	DY	Y	PY	W	W	Pinch of skin below pubic bones:	Thick (fat)					
Front of shank	DY	Y	PY	W	W		or					
Back of shank	DY	Y	PY	W	W		Thin (lean)					
Side of shank	DY	Y	PY	W	W							
Top of toes	DY	Y	PY	W	W							
Hock	DY	Y	PY	W	W							
Vent	DY	Y	PY	W	W	Compared to other hens:	Poor	Width	2	Depth	2	
Eye ring	DY	Y	PY	W	W		Fair		X			
Ear lobe	DY	Y	PY	W	W		Good		4			
Beak	DY	Y	PY	W	W		Excellent		5			
Bottom of feet	DY	Y	PY	W	W	Pinch of skin below pubic bones:	Thick (fat)					
Front of shank	DY	Y	PY	W	W		or					
Back of shank	DY	Y	PY	W	W		Thin (lean)					
Side of shank	DY	Y	PY	W	W							
Top of toes	DY	Y	PY	W	W							
Hock	DY	Y	PY	W	W							
Vent	DY	Y	PY	W	W	Compared to other hens:	Poor	Width	2	Depth	2	
Eye ring	DY	Y	PY	W	W		Fair		X			
Ear lobe	DY	Y	PY	W	W		Good		4			
Beak	DY	Y	PY	W	W		Excellent		5			
Bottom of feet	DY	Y	PY	W	W	Pinch of skin below pubic bones:	Thick (fat)					
Front of shank	DY	Y	PY	W	W		or					
Back of shank	DY	Y	PY	W	W		Thin (lean)					
Side of shank	DY	Y	PY	W	W							
Top of toes	DY	Y	PY	W	W							
Hock	DY	Y	PY	W	W							
Vent	DY	Y	PY	W	W	Compared to other hens:	Poor	Width	2	Depth	2	
Eye ring	DY	Y	PY	W	W		Fair		X			
Ear lobe	DY	Y	PY	W	W		Good		4			
Beak	DY	Y	PY	W	W		Excellent		5			
Bottom of feet	DY	Y	PY	W	W	Pinch of skin below pubic bones:	Thick (fat)					
Front of shank	DY	Y	PY	W	W		or					
Back of shank	DY	Y	PY	W	W		Thin (lean)					
Side of shank	DY	Y	PY	W	W							
Top of toes	DY	Y	PY	W	W							
Hock	DY	Y	PY	W	W							

*Color: DY = Dark Yellow; Y = Yellow; PY = Pale Yellow; W = White

Ranking= 3 - 4 - 1 - 2 difficult top and close middle pairs and definite bottom

Example of possible oral reasons for the hens used to fill in the note sheet on Page 13:

Good afternoon, I am Contestant Number 92. I place this class of White Leghorn hens 3-4-1-2. I had a difficult top pair, a close middle pair, and a definite bottom hen.

As I mentioned, I had a difficult top pair, which were the most persistent layers in the class. Both hens had identical pigmentation, being bleached through to the shanks. Both hens had only slight pigment remaining in the back and side of shanks, tops of toes, and the hock. Because of the identical pigmentation, I went to the next important factor for evaluating laying hens—handling qualities. Although the handling qualities were good for both hens, I favored Hen 3 over Hen 4, because I thought she had slightly less fat in the abdomen with a more pliable abdominal skin, indicating she was the more intense layer of the pair. I do grant, however, that Hen 4 had a slightly larger abdominal capacity with a larger depth between the pubic bones and the tip of the keel. Both had a three-finger spread between the pubic bones.

For my middle pair I placed Hen 4 over Hen 1. I was able to place this pair on pigmentation with Hen 1 showing more yellow pigment in shanks than Hen 4. I noted that Hen 1 had one feather missing in the left wing and a broken feather in the right wing, but did not appear to have gone out of production, with no pigment returning to the vent, eye ring, earlobe, or beak.

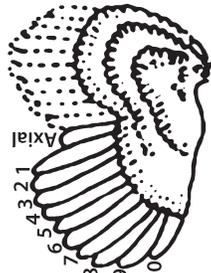
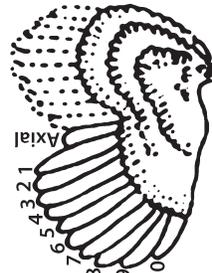
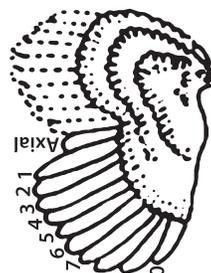
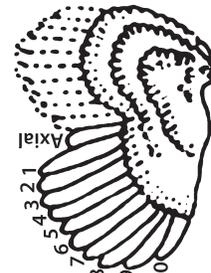
Moving on to my easy bottom pair, I placed Hen 2 below Hen 1, and at the bottom class, because she had the most pigmentation remaining in her feet, indicating she was the least-persistent layer of the class. She also had more fat in her abdomen than the other hens in the class and the smallest abdominal capacity, indicating she also was the least-intense layer in the class. She had two new feathers in each wing indicating she was in a two-feather molt. In addition, the comb and wattles of Hen 2 were not as bright red as those of the others in the class indicating reduced health and vigor.

For these reasons, I place this class of White Leghorn hens 3-4-1-2. Are there any questions?

Methodology used in evaluating the hens in the Example 4 note sheet on the following page is described below (remembering that, with other participants, it may not be possible to handle the hens in order of the cages):

1. All the hens were examined while in the cages. All showed good signs of health and vigor.
2. Removed hen from Cage 1 and examined with the following notes:
 - No pigment noted in vent, eye ring, ear lobe, beak, or bottom of feet
 - Some pigment remaining in the rest of the feet, with pale yellow in back and side of shanks as well as hocks and slightly brighter yellow in front of shanks and tops of toes
 - Considerable amount of fat in abdomen giving only fair handling qualities
 - Abdominal capacity of 3 x 4
 - No missing feathers, but a couple of broken ones
3. Returned hen to Cage 1
4. Since it is the only hen examined so far, Hen 1 is the top hen and used as comparison for the next hen examined.
5. Removed hen from Cage 2 and examined with the following notes:
 - Pigmentation similar to Hen 1, but with slightly more intensity in front of shanks
 - Considerable amount of fat in abdomen, but slightly better handling qualities than Hen 1
 - Abdominal capacity of 3 x 4
 - No missing feathers
6. Returned hen to Cage 2
7. Placings so far: 1-2
8. Removed hen from Cage 3 and examined with the following notes:
 - No pigment in vent, face, or the bottom of the feet
 - Intensity of pigment in shanks and hocks more than for hens 1 and 2
 - Handling qualities not as good as hens 1 and 2
 - Abdominal capacity of 3 x 4
 - No missing feathers
9. Returned hen to Cage 3
10. Placings so far: 1-2-3
11. Removed hen from Cage 4 and examined with the following notes:
 - Hen is the heaviest hen in the class
 - Some pigment returned to vent
 - No pigment in face and bottom of the feet
 - More pigment in front and side of shanks as well as tops of toes than Hen 3
 - No missing feathers
 - Abdominal capacity of 3 x 4
12. Returned hen to Cage 4
13. Final placings: 1-2-3-4
14. Noted that top pair of 1 and 2 were close with similar pigmentation and handling qualities
15. Noted that middle pair of 2 and 3 were fairly easy, with large differences in pigmentation and handling qualities
16. Noted that bottom pair of 3 and 4 were easy, with Hen 4 being the obvious bottom placed hen on basis of pigmentation (with some returning to the vent)

Example 4 - Poultry Reasons Card

		Pigment Remaining		Handling Qualities		Abdominal Capacity	Molting <small>(indicate missing or old 1st feathers)</small>	Notes
		Body Part	Color*	Skin	Rank			
Cage 1	Vent	DY	Y	PY	W	Width 2 Depth 2 3 X 4 5 4	 No missing feathers	Last handled A couple of broken feathers on one wing but none missing
	Eye ring	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Ear lobe	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Beak	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Bottom of feet	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Front of shank	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Back of shank	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Side of shank	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Top of toes	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Hock	DY	Y	PY	W			
Cage 2	Vent	DY	Y	PY	W	Width 2 Depth 2 3 X 4 5 4	 No missing feathers	2nd handled Front of shanks slight DY than hen one H&C slightly better than hen one
	Eye ring	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Ear lobe	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Beak	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Bottom of feet	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Front of shank	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Back of shank	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Side of shank	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Top of toes	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Hock	DY	Y	PY	W			
Cage 3	Vent	DY	Y	PY	W	Width 2 Depth 2 3 X 4 5 4	 No missing feathers	3rd handled H&C not as good as for hens one and two
	Eye ring	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Ear lobe	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Beak	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Bottom of feet	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Front of shank	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Back of shank	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Side of shank	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Top of toes	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Hock	DY	Y	PY	W			
Cage 4	Vent	DY	Y	PY	W	Width 2 Depth 2 3 X 4 5 4	 No missing feathers	Last handled Heaviest hen Some pigment noted in the vent but no molt
	Eye ring	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Ear lobe	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Beak	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Bottom of feet	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Front of shank	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Back of shank	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Side of shank	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Top of toes	DY	Y	PY	W			
	Hock	DY	Y	PY	W			

*Color: DY = Dark Yellow; Y = Yellow; PY = Pale Yellow; W = White

Ranking= 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 Close top; fairly easy middle, easy bottom hen

Example of possible oral reasons for the hens used to fill in the note sheet on Page 16:

Good afternoon, I am Contestant Number 54. I place this class of laying hens 1-2-3-4. I had a close top pair, a fairly easy middle pair, and an easy bottom pair.

For my top pair, I placed Hen 1 over Hen 2. Although they had similar bleaching with some pigment remaining in the shanks, tops of toes, and hock, I thought the pigmentation in Hen 1 was slightly less than Hen 2's, indicating Hen 1 was the more persistent layer. I do grant, however, that Hen 2 had slightly better handling qualities as indicated by slightly thinner and more pliable skin in the abdominal area. Both hens had similar abdominal capacities of three fingers between the pubic bones and four fingers between the pubic bones and the tip of the keel. Although Hen 1 had a couple of broken feathers on one wing, neither hen was missing any of their primary feathers.

For my middle pair, I placed Hen 3 below Hen 2 on the basis of bleaching, with Hen 3 having considerably more pigment remaining in the shanks, tops of toes, and hock. In addition, the handling qualities of Hen 3 were not as good as those of hens 1 and 2.

Number 4 was clearly the bottom hen in the class. In addition to having darker-yellow pigment remaining in the shanks and tops of toes, she had put pigment back into the vent area, indicating she had stopped laying. No indication of a molt was seen, since no primary feathers were missing or new on either wing. She had the poorest handling qualities and was also the heaviest hen in the class. Taken together, these factors indicate she was both the least persistent and least intense layer of the class.

For these reasons, I place this class of White Leghorn hens 1-2-3-4.