



Maryland
Guidelines
for Exhibiting
and Judging
Agricultural
Products

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General Guidelines for Exhibiting and Judging Agricultural Products

Objectives

- To encourage uniformity in exhibiting and judging agricultural products in Maryland. For use at county, regional, and State fairs and shows, for all classes: 4-H, open, youth, and others.
- To enhance the educational value of agricultural products exhibits.
- To reemphasize the purpose of agricultural products exhibits.

Purpose

The purpose of agricultural products exhibits is to demonstrate and reward *good market quality*.

Exhibitions should educate and serve as incentives for higher quality production and better market preparation. They should be competitive and inspirational. They should also prepare youth to enter the world of agricultural production and marketing.

Whether they are grown to be sold or consumed at home, products at their best market quality will be at their prime, meeting judges' or buyers' standards. Consistently high quality is a primary characteristic of these products.

Judging Standards

Exhibits should follow specific rules and regulations as to quantity, condition, and other criteria.

Judges should use their own expertise and discretion, with the following standards in mind, to evaluate and place each entry.

GENERAL STANDARDS

- Clean
- Free from damage or blemishes
- Uniform in size, shape, color, and maturity
- Of best market size and quality
- True to variety type

Showmanship

Agricultural product exhibition is the art of displaying quality products attractively. Showmanship is that "something extra" in preparation that makes the difference between a good and an excellent display. Display is an essential aspect of marketing agricultural products.

Tips for Prize-Winning Entries

FOLLOW ALL RULES AND REGULATIONS TO THE LETTER.

- Provide the exact number of items specified for each class. Too many or too few items will result in disqualification.
- Carefully follow all special preparation requirements listed in the catalog.

■ Containers used as part of an entry must be clean, with all visible labels removed. Do not cover containers.

■ To transport entries, wrap individual items neatly with plenty of padding. Keep them cool and in water if necessary.

■ Make sure entries are properly prepared and ready to be registered upon your arrival at the exhibit.

■ Remember best market quality and size, uniformity, condition (clean and free of damage), and trueness to variety.

A Note to Judges

Judges are encouraged to write comments on all entries. Although this process is time-consuming, it is one of the most important educational aspects of agricultural product exhibits and will result, over time, in better entries and better products. The importance of constructive comments cannot be overemphasized.

The following sections provide more information on individual commodities.

Section 1. Vegetables

General Considerations

■ All exhibits must be grown by the exhibitor.

■ List the variety for each vegetable, if possible. (Catalog may require.)

■ Vegetables should generally be shown in their best edible stage. An exception might be to avoid showing fully ripened cantaloupe, unless judging will be done the day of entry.

■ The average size from a commercial standpoint, rather than the largest specimens, should be exhibited. Strive for uniformity.

■ Clean vegetables with a soft, dry cloth or a soft brush. Wash gently only if extremely dirty—do not scrub. Washing may encourage rot. Leafy vegetables may require dipping in water to remove dust and foreign matter. Do not apply waxes or oils.

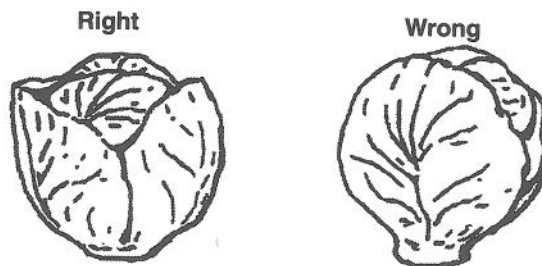
■ Transport and display leafy greens, broccoli, and herbs in water to retain freshness.

■ Trim stems neatly and evenly.

■ Harvest vegetables in early morning and store in a cool place to remove field heat, which can reduce quality.

Selection of Individual Vegetables

- Beans, snap** Choose pods that are well-matched in size, shape, color, and maturity. Fairly young, smooth, straight, brittle pods, free of blemishes, stand the best chance of placing high. Trim stems evenly.
- Beans, lima** Pods should be well matched in all characteristics and filled with beans at the best stage for eating. Pods that are losing their green color are overmature.
- Beans, shelled** Beans should be plump, smooth, and uniform in size. Exhibit in a glass jar covered with clear plastic to prevent discoloration and dehydration.
- Beets** Beets should be uniform in size, shape, and color. They must be smooth and free from side roots and blemishes. Trim the tops uniformly to about 1 inch. Medium-sized beets—1 1/2 to 2 1/4 inches—are preferred. Larger specimens may be woody. Do not remove the tap root.
- Broccoli** The exhibit should consist of single heads or bunched shoots at least 3 inches in diameter. Choose fresh, clean, damage-free specimens. The flower cluster should be compact and evenly colored with uniform, tight, medium-sized buds. Exhibit stems in water to prevent wilting.
- Brussels sprouts** Select medium-sized sprouts that are heavy, firm, and green. After removing the buds or sprouts from the stem, trim them uniformly. Remove loose outer leaves.
- Cabbage** Heads that are firm, heavy for their size, fresh, crisp, tender, and typical of the variety are preferred. Trim off only the large, loose outer leaves, leaving at least two layers of green wrapper leaves. Then trim the stem to not more than 1/2 inch.

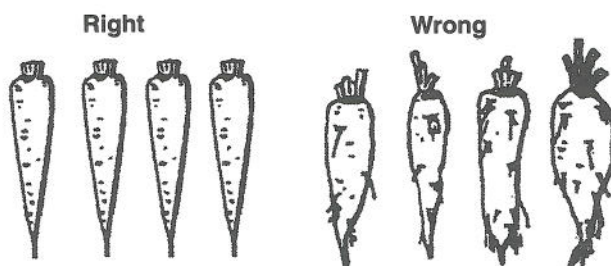


**Cantaloupes or
Muskmelons**

Select healthy, vine-ripened specimens that are well matched and free from soft spots. The melons should be typical of the variety.

Carrots

Uniformity of size and shape is very important. Specimens should be clean, firm, and smooth with no side roots or greening at the crown. Trim the tops 1 inch from the crown.



Cauliflower

The head (or curd) should be white, smooth, clean, and firm with no ricing or discolored buds. Remove all but four to six protective leaves and trim these squarely 1 inch above the head. Cut the stem off to about 1/2 inch.

Corn, sweet

Ears well matched, free from insect or other injury, and well filled from butt to tip are best to exhibit. Select ears with tender kernels in the milk-stage. The husk should be succulent and green with no part opened, stripped back, or removed unless specifically stated in the catalog. Cut off excess shank to about 1 inch.

Cucumbers

Slicing:

Uniformity and quality are important. Specimens should be clean, straight, dark green, firm, crisp, and tender. Avoid overmature cucumbers that are puffy and beginning to yellow. "Spines" should be carefully removed if present.

Pickling:

Exhibit only specimens that are well matched, clean, small, uniform, and of even diameter (cylindrical).

Eggplant

Entries must be uniform, firm, and free from discoloration and blemishes. Medium size is preferred. Wipe the fruit with a moist cloth, but do not wash it.

Kale

Select dark green, crisp, clean, closely set, and well-curled leaves. Cut off the roots at the crown. Exhibit the stems in water.

Kohlrabi

Solid, crisp, and tender kohlrabi of uniform size and color is preferred. Leave four to six upper leaves, trimmed to 3 to 4 inches. After removing the roots just below the swollen stem, clean but do not wash the specimens.

Lettuce

Head:

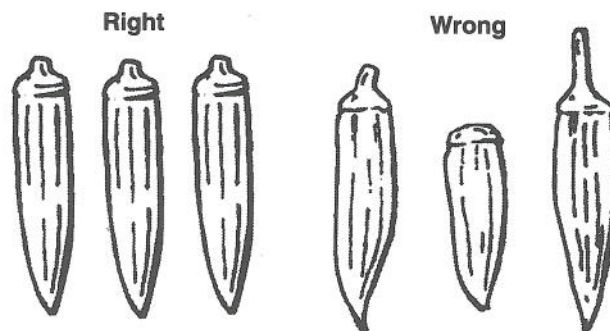
Use heads that are medium-sized, firm, fresh, crisp, and well matched. Remove coarse or damaged outer leaves and cut the core off short.

Leaf:

Plants should be well matched, crisp, tender, and fairly compact. Remove damaged or discolored leaves. Cut the roots close and wash if dirty. Exhibit stems in water.

Okra

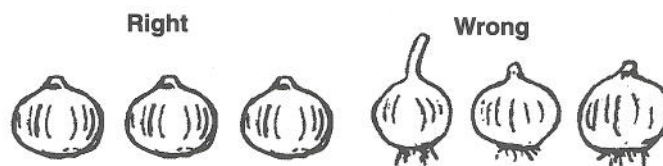
Harvest the pods when they are about half grown. Select pods that are nearly straight and uniform in size, texture, shape, and color. Leave about 1/2 inch of the stem, trimmed evenly.



Onions

Mature bulbs:

Select well matched, bright, clean, solid, medium to large bulbs with the dry outer scales intact. A few scales may be removed if they are broken or dirty. There should be no sprouting, and the necks should be well cured. Cut off the roots just below the base and the tops 1 inch above the bulb.



Green:	Select medium-sized, tender specimens that are straight, smooth, and uniform in size. Cut the roots off close to the base. Trim the tops to an even length. Remove the wrapper skins just before entry and tie the specimens neatly.
Parsley	Entries must be fresh, bright green, and free of dirt and yellowed or discolored leaves. Bunch and trim the stems evenly. Exhibit the stems in water.
Parsnips	Select medium-sized, evenly matched, and smooth roots with uniform tapering and no side roots. Soak any soil off the roots in water, rubbing only if needed. Trim the tops to 1 inch.
Peas	Select pods that are uniform in size, bright green in color, free from blemishes, and well filled with tender peas. Show with pod stems neatly and uniformly trimmed.
Peppers	Select specimens that are well matched, typical of the variety, thick-fleshed, firm, and uniform in color. In a lobed variety, each pepper should have the same number of lobes. They should be free of discoloration and blemishes, and the stems should be trimmed to a short, uniform length.
Potatoes	Uniformity in size and shape is very important. Choose tubers typical of the variety, smooth, and free from all types of injuries. Clean the tubers thoroughly by brushing lightly or wiping with a moist cloth, but do not wash. Medium size is preferred.
Pumpkins	Large, heavy entries are desirable. They should be uniformly colored, symmetrical in shape, well matured, and free from blemishes. Leave a 2-inch stem. Pumpkins with excessively flattened or discolored "ground sides" are not as desirable.
Radishes	Select crisp, firm, smooth, medium-sized specimens that are uniform in size, shape, and color. Bunch them neatly, leaving on the tops and roots.
Rhubarb	Pull—do not cut—stalks that are straight, uniform, fresh, and crisp. Trim the tops, leaving 1 to 2 inches of leaf base. Bunch and tie neatly. Red color is preferred.

Salsify

Medium to slightly smaller specimens are best. The roots should be as straight and smooth as possible and not forked. Brush off any soil and remove all the side roots.

Spinach

Choose plants that are well matched, free from injuries, and have fresh leaves attached to the crown. Cut the roots off at the crown. Exhibit stems in water.

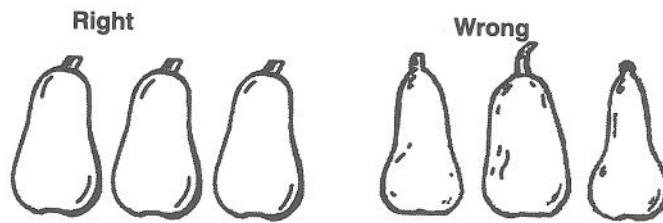
Squash

Summer:

Choose clean, uniform, young, and tender (at the best edible stage) specimens typical of the variety, with short stems attached. Trim stems to an even length.

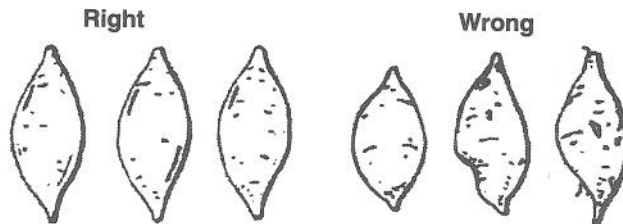
Winter:

Show only mature, hard-rind specimens free from blemishes; uniform in size, shape, and color; and typical of the variety. Size should be medium to large. Do not wash. Trim stems to an even length.



Sweet potatoes

Select specimens that are uniform in size, shape, and color; typical of the variety; smooth; clean; and free from blemishes. For most varieties the spindle shape is desirable. Clean by brushing lightly, retaining the natural bloom of the skin. Do not wash.



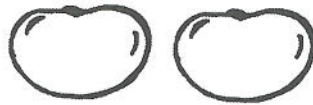
Swiss chard

Leaf blades should be crisp and uniform in color with bright, tender, fleshy leaf stalks. Exhibit stalks in water.

Tomatoes

Exhibit medium or larger fruits that are well matched in all respects and are firm, free from cracks and blemishes, and of a bright, uniform color typical of the variety. Always remove the stems. These standards apply to both ripe and green tomatoes.

Right



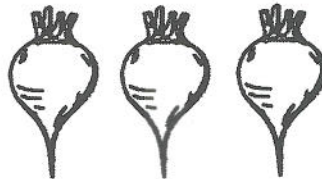
Wrong



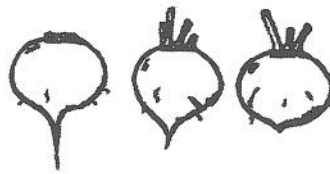
Turnips

Exhibit medium-sized, well matched, smooth, clean turnips with the tops cut back to 1 inch and the tap roots left on. Clean roots gently with a soft cloth, but do not wash.

Right



Wrong



Watermelons

Select a heavy, medium-to-large melon, well formed, smooth, free from blemishes, mature but not overripe, and true to the variety type and color. Leave a short, trimmed stem. The ground spot should have a yellow tinge.

Vegetable Displays

A vegetable display is a collection of different kinds of vegetables grouped together in an attractive manner. Any produce commonly classed as a vegetable may be used, including those listed above. Vegetables should be identified by variety. **Quality, attractiveness, and arrangement** are important factors. Make the exhibit colorful and establish a central point of interest. Display the number of vegetables specified in the catalog.

Section 2. Fruit

General Considerations

- All exhibits must be grown by the exhibitor.
- List variety for each fruit.
- Fruits should be shown at their best edible stage if judging will be done the day of entry. If not, enter less ripe specimens that will remain in good condition on exhibit. Cover berries with plastic wrap to prevent dehydration.

■ The average size from a commercial standpoint, rather than the largest specimens, should be exhibited. Strive for uniformity.

■ Clean tree fruit with a soft, dry cloth or a soft brush to bring out the natural sheen.

■ Stems should remain on apples, pears, plums, and cherries.

■ Harvest fruit in early morning and store it in a cool place to remove the field heat, which can reduce quality.

Selection of Individual Fruits

Apples

Stems must be present, but not the fruit spur or leaves. Color should be uniform, bright, and representative of the variety. Size should be ideal for the variety, and shape should be characteristic. Clean gently with a soft cloth to bring out the natural sheen.

Pears

Stems should be attached. Color, size, and shape must be uniform. Specimens should be free from blemish or injury.

Peaches

Strive for uniformity. The basic fruit color is yellow. Red cheeks will vary with variety. Show without stems. Harvest and transport carefully to avoid bruising. Avoid overripe specimens.

Plums and Cherries

Leave stems attached. Select uniformly plump, ripe specimens. Clean gently with a soft cloth if needed. Do not remove the bloom on plums.

Grapes

Bunches must be full and uniform in size. The fruit should be uniform and plump with the natural bloom present. The stem should be neatly cut to the same length on each cluster. Any decayed portion of the cluster should be neatly removed. Each grape should be firmly attached.

Raspberries and Blackberries

All specimens in a box should be uniform in size, shape, color, and ripeness. The fruit should be clean. Handle carefully to avoid mechanical injury.

Blueberries

All berries in the box should be uniformly plump and ripe with the natural bloom present. Use caution when picking to avoid tearing the fruit.

Strawberries

Each berry in the box must be uniform in size, shape, and color. The stem and cap must be attached. Trim stems uniformly. Green-streaked or malformed berries should be avoided. Clean soil from specimens gently with a soft painter's brush. Do not wash.

Fruit Displays

A fruit display is a collection of different kinds of fruit grouped together in an attractive manner. Any produce commonly classed as a fruit may be used, including those listed above. Fruit should be identified by variety. **Quality, attractiveness, and arrangement** are important factors. Make the exhibit colorful and establish a central point of interest. Display the number of fruits specified in the catalog.

Section 3. Cut Flowers and Flower Arrangements

Cut Flowers

General Considerations

- All exhibits must be grown by the exhibitor.
- List type and variety for each flower. Exhibit each variety separately.
- Exhibit the exact number of blooms (individual flowers) or stalks (stems that may have more than one flower) listed in the catalog.
- Exhibit only mature, fresh flowers, not over- or undermature flowers.

Round-headed flowers (marigolds, zinnias, dahlias, etc.)—Flowers should be open enough so that the outer petals begin to turn down and are still in good, fresh condition.

Spike-type flowers (gladiolus, snapdragons, salvia, etc.)—Maximum number of florets on the spike should be open without the bottom ones overmature or fallen. Spike should be straight and strong with no secondary side shoots. (Remove side shoots as they develop, so one good spike will develop on the plant.)

- Select flowers that are turgid (full of water) so they will hold up well on display.

■ Harvest and prepare flowers properly:

- ◆ Prepare containers by thoroughly scrubbing them and soaking them in bleach solution. Rinse thoroughly.
- ◆ Remove leaves that will be under water.
- ◆ Cut stems with a sharp knife.
- ◆ Add 1 tablespoon of vinegar and 2 tablespoons of sugar to 1 quart of warm water (110 °F).
- ◆ Place cut stems immediately into the container of warm water (110 °F), except those that produce a milky or sticky sap (dahlias, poppies, etc.).

-Place flowers that produce milky sap into cold water immediately. Seal their stems to seal them by placing the end of the freshly cut stem in boiling water for 30 seconds, then place in warm water.

-If flowers have fuzzy stems (for example, statice) soak the stems for 5 minutes in a 1:10 solution of bleach (Clorox): water to kill microorganisms on the surface of the stems.

- ◆ Place containers in a cool location (40 to 45 °F), if possible. A cool basement will work. The area should be dark, out of drafts, and with high humidity to prevent water loss.

◆ Leave flowers in water containers in a cool place for 12 hours before preparing to show. A plastic bag placed over the pail and flowers will help raise the humidity. To prevent damage, do not crowd flowers.

◆ Transfer flowers to plain, cool tap water.

■ Prepare specimens for show by removing faded flowers and yellow leaves and by gently removing any dirt or residue.

■ Transport carefully to prevent damage.

Selection of Individual Flower Specimens

Foxglove, delphinium, and gladiolus—Select long, strong, and straight spikes with as many open flowers as possible and with the bottom florets in prime condition. Florets should be evenly spaced, with no skips. For best exhibit, use named varieties.

Salvia—Select single, straight spikes with bottom florets intact and leaves attached.

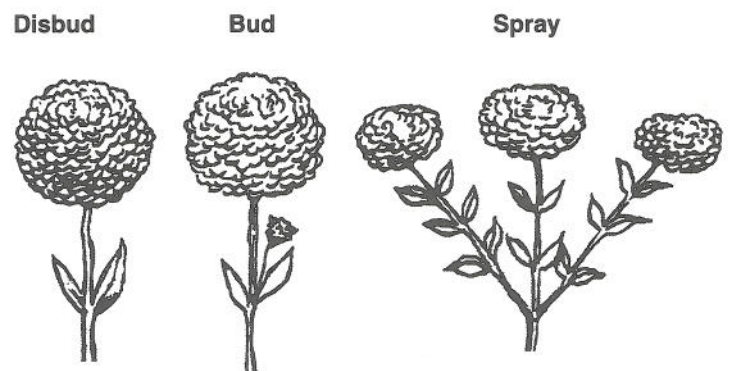
Snapdragons—Select long, tapered, well filled spikes with no skips. A few healthy leaves should be attached. Spikes should be perfectly straight.

Asters, bachelor's buttons, black-eyed susans, calendula, cosmos, dahlias, dianthus, gaillardia, marigolds, nasturtiums, phlox, and zinnias—All of these plants should be exhibited as single-stem disbuds: there should be only one flower at

the tip of the stem and all others along the stem should have been removed in the bud stage. The flowers must be in perfect condition, fully open, with any outer (older) petals still fresh. In the case of phlox, the bottom flowers must still be fresh and on the plant.

The flower must be squarely attached to the stem and not crooked or deformed in any way. Stems should be straight and as long as possible. Foliage must be present and removed only on the portion of the stem that is under water. The foliage must be clean, lustrous, and free of damage. Flawless condition, cultural perfection, and uniformity should be exhibited.

Ageratum, chrysanthemum, petunia, and sweet peas—These plants are exhibited as sprays. They are not disbudded as those above. Otherwise, they should be exhibited following the same guidelines. Flowers in the spray should be as uniform as possible.



Roses—The American Rose Society specifies that blooms of teas, climbing teas, hybrid teas, climbing hybrid teas, hybrid perpetuals, and climbing hybrid perpetuals must be exhibited as disbudded specimens. Side buds are not desirable.

Single hybrid teas and polyanthas, hybrid polyanthas, floribundas, and climbers (other than those mentioned above) may be exhibited as naturally grown without dis-budding. Check the catalog for specific information.

The bloom should be one-half to three-quarters open. The center should be well formed and more than one row of the outer petals should be unfolded. Avoid specimens that are dull in color or that have split centers or malformed petals. The stems must be strong enough to support the flower, but not out of proportion to it.

Flower Arrangements

General Considerations

- Good design within the confines of the class is most important. Consider balance, scale, and proportion.
- Use good color combinations. Avoid clashing colors.
- The materials used should not be too skimpy, too crowded, or out of scale with the container.
- Flowers and foliage should be of top quality and well-prepared to retain their good quality (see **Cut Flowers—General Considerations**).
- Mechanics (floral foam, tape, etc.) should not be visible and should be covered with foliage or flowers.
- Originality makes the difference between a good and an excellent entry.

Specific Requirements

- **Table arrangements** should not be taller than 14 inches unless otherwise specified in the catalog.
- **Miniature arrangements** must not be taller than 3 inches overall. Scale is extremely important. The flowers and the container they are placed in should both be tiny, so that the arrangement looks like a miniature of a normal size arrangement. Design, color, and condition of flowers should be considered.
- **Corsages** should be exhibited with consideration to design, color, and good combination of materials, originality, and condition of materials. Technique—the way the flowers are tied together, the way they are taped along the stem if tape is used, and the way the ribbon is tied and attached—is also important. The corsage's weight should be balanced and not excessive, so it will stay in place when it is pinned on.

Section 4. Houseplants and Greenhouse Crops

General Considerations

- Enter plants in the proper class—flowering or nonflowering.
 - Plants should be of high quality and free from insects, disease, damage, or blemishes.
 - Pots must be in good condition and clean. Never wrap pots with foil or any other material. The container should not detract from the plant material.
 - Plants should be grown in a good potting soil mixture.
- Never apply leaf shines or other materials to foliage plants. Simply wash the leaves off and wipe gently with a soft cloth to bring out the natural sheen.
 - The size of the plant should be in proportion to its pot. The plant should be about twice the size of the pot. The shape of the plant should be balanced on all sides.
 - Flowering plants should have an abundance of flowers of good quality and color. Foliage should also be healthy, free of blemishes, and have good color.
 - Unusual varieties of good quality make good exhibits.

Section 5. Grain Crops

General Considerations

- All exhibits must be grown by the exhibitor and may not be more than 1 year old.
- List the variety/hybrid name of each exhibit.

Selection of Specimens

Small Grains

- General appearance—uniformity of size and color.
- Odor—should be sweet and fresh; free from musty or objectionable odor.
- Color—clear and bright; do not submit treated samples.
- Free of weed seeds or pieces.
- Free of other small grain and crop seeds.
- Free from disease: scab, smut balls, or molds.
- Free from insect or mouse damage.
- Free from mechanical damage, such as cracked kernels. Avoid samples with excessive cracks in the seed coats.
- Free of inert matter, such as straw and weeds, trash and foreign matter, and insect parts.
- Strive for a sample of maximum weight per bushel with plump kernels.

Soybeans

- Color—clear and bright (lustrous); free from discoloration.
- Purity—free of other crop seeds.
- Free of weed seeds.
- Free of inert matter, such as dirt, stems, chaff, and stones.
- Size—typical for variety, plump.
- Free from cracked or damaged seeds, worms, and webs.
- Free from musty or objectionable odor.
- General appearance—uniformity in size and color.

Shelled Corn

- General appearance—clear, bright color; uniformity of grade or size.
- Kernel characteristics—proper size and shape; plump kernel tips; bright-colored germ.
- Free from disease—no moldy, brown, discolored, or decayed kernels.
- Free from rodent or insect damage—no mouse-, weevil-, or worm-damaged kernels. Free from mechanical damage, such as cracked kernels. Free of inert matter, such as cobs, trash, or other extraneous matter.

Ear Corn

- General appearance—uniform, similar length, straight, clear and bright-colored, glossy. Ear shape: ear should be nearly cylindrical, tapering slightly toward tip. Length and circumference should be proportional. Kernels should be deep, cob not too large. Ear should be full of kernels from butt to tip.
- Free from disease—no moldy, decaying, dull or stained kernels, or softness of cob at butt or tip.
- Free from insect and rodent damage—no mouse, weevil, or corn ear worm damage. Avoid ears with cracked or missing kernels.

Section 6. Forage Crops

General Considerations

- Check the catalog for size of sample bundles and other requirements.
- Leafiness—Hay should have a high ratio of leaves to stems and a high proportion of the leaves attached. Stemmy hay and hay with leaves shattered should be avoided.
- Color—Choose hay with a bright green color. Golden yellow to yellow hays are less desirable. Avoid dark brown or black hays, which have been damaged by rain or other factors.
- Foreign material—Select hay that is free of injurious foreign material. Minimize noninjurious foreign material, such as weeds, which represent waste (little food value, unpalatability) and give the hay a poor appearance.
- Odor and condition—The smell of new-mown hay is the standard for comparison. Hay with musty or other “off” odors is less palatable and less desirable. Avoid moldy or unusually dusty hay, as well as insect- or disease-damaged hay.

Selection of Specimens

Alfalfa—Cut in late bud or early bloom stage. Avoid hay cut at the full-bloom stage, because it has lower feed value. Show as **Mixed Hay** if exhibit contains grasses.

Clovers—Cut at one-fourth to one-half bloom. Avoid hay cut at the full-bloom stage, because it has lower feed value. Show as **Mixed Hay** if exhibit contains grasses.

Grasses—Cut in the boot- to early heading-stage. Avoid hay cut between late-heading and full-bloom stages, because it has lower feed value.

Section 7. Maryland Tobacco

General Considerations

■ Check the catalog for number of hands and leaves per hand; for stick tobacco, check for number of plants per stick.

■ Leaves in hands should be pressed but not ironed, unless otherwise specified in the catalog.

Selection of Specimens

Hand Samples

Color—Cherry red (F) colors are considered best (refers to the color of cherry wood). Tan (L) colors are second choice.

Body—Thin body is desired, but difficult to prepare as a show sample.

Uniformity—All leaves should be uniform in size and color.

Condition—Avoid insect-damaged, bruised, or torn leaves. Midribs should be totally dry in “new crop” samples—no fat stems. No mold should be present on midribs of “old crop” samples.

Stick Samples

Color—Cherry red (F) colors are considered best (refers to the color of cherry wood). Tan (L) colors are second choice. Samples should be almost totally cured, with no green or totally yellow leaves.

Body—Thin body is desired.

Uniformity—Plants should be uniform in size, with all stalks speared at the same location. Make the stick look neat.

Condition—Avoid insect-damaged, bruised, or torn specimens.

Section 8. Eggs (Cartoned)

General Considerations

■ Check the catalog for specific requirements and classes.

■ Exterior soundness—Eggs should be well-shaped and smooth, without visible ridges or calcium deposits. Avoid thin, cracked, or leaking eggs.

■ Cleanliness—Eggs should be very clean, without stains. Avoid eggs with raised, adhering dirt such as manure, yolk, or litter, or large or scattered stains. Dirty eggs can result in disqualification.

■ Uniformity—Eggs in a carton should be as uniform in size, shape (normal, not ridged or misshapen), and color as possible. Do not mix brown and white eggs or eggs of different sizes.

■ Size—The size class for each entry must be identified. Total weight per dozen should be within the following ranges: Jumbo, 30 oz. and above; Extra Large, 27 to 30 oz.; Large, 24 to 27 oz.; Medium, 21 to 24 oz.; Small, 18 to 21 oz.

■ Interior Quality—All eggs in the entry should be fresh. Quality is judged according to USDA Standards of Quality for Individual Eggs. When candled, eggs should have a small air cell (1/8 inch or less); a clear, firm egg white; a yolk surrounded by a dense layer of white that makes its outline appear only slightly defined, and no blood or meat spots.

■ Good quality eggs protect consumer health. Factors that affect the safety of the product, such as freshness, soundness, and cleanliness, are the most important.

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