

# PRESENTATION OF ORAL REASONS

By **Chris T. Boleman, Texas A&M University**

Oral reasons are very important to 4-H and FFA livestock judging team members. This is their opportunity to defend their placing and to help paint a clear picture of a particular class.

As a teaching aid, oral reasons aid in the development of public speaking skills, which in turn, will help build confidence in 4-H and FFA members. Oral reasons are extremely useful for teaching communication and organization skills, accuracy, and overall presentation needed to understand selection of beef cattle.

In order to present a complete set of reasons, 4-H and FFA members must have:

- ✓ Knowledge of ideal livestock
- ✓ Knowledge of body parts and terminology of livestock
- ✓ Knowledge of reasons organization
- ✓ Ability to write accurate notes
- ✓ Confidence

## **Knowledge of Body Parts and Terminology of Livestock**

- ✓ Livestock judges must know the parts of livestock
- ✓ Livestock judges must know descriptive and comparative terminology of livestock

A judging class consists of four animals. Oral reasons are given to describe and compare the individuals. Each class of four has three pairs. Most of the comparisons and descriptions will take place within these pairs. These pairs are called: top, middle, and bottom.

As livestock are compared within these pairs, adding “-er” to a word creates the

advantage. Also adding the word “more” in front of a term usually covers the comparisons.

There are several ways to describe the same advantage within pairs. The challenge for each participant is to discuss the same comparison within the same set of reasons while wording these comparisons in several ways to avoid repetition.

As stated earlier, try to paint a clear, concise picture. Imagine the person listening has not ever seen the class.

Do not worry if you think the form of each set is similar. In contest situations, the presenter will give their oral reasons to a different person each time. In other words, use the same format each time and stay with it. This will allow the presenter to become more comfortable with each set.

## **Knowledge of Reasons Organization**

Each set of oral reasons should follow the same format. It is important for each set to be organized and consistent each time using the same logical order.

Reasons should be divided in the following sections.

1. Introduction
2. Class winner’s description compared to class
3. Top pair section
4. Middle pair section
5. Bottom pair section
6. Last place animal’s description compared to class
7. Summary sentence

### **Introduction**

The introduction to a set of reasons is always the same except for the name of the class and the placing. Example: Class name-Market steers, class placing- 1-2-3-4. Statement: *"I placed the market steers 1-2-3-4."*

### **Class Winner's Description**

This should be a brief sentence outlining the advantages the class winner has to the entire class followed by a brief criticism.

*"I started the class with 1 as he best combines cutability and quality grading characteristics to the higher degree. If I could change my class winner, I would like to see him smoother shouldered."*

### **Top, Middle, and Bottom Sections**

Each section within a set of reasons is organized in the same manner. Each section is composed of sentences that describe the two animals within each pair.

- A. The first sentence is the introductory sentence. This should introduce the pair. Continuing with the market steer class, the introductory sentence should be, *"In the top pair, I placed 1 over 2 because...."*
- B. After introducing the pair, it is time to add the important factor within the pair. Adding to the introductory sentence, it should read, *"In the top pair, I placed 1 over 2 because 1 is the heaviest muscled steer in the class. He handles with the most expressive loin, he is wider hipped, wider through his stifle, and showed the most bulge through the quarter."*

This sentence should be clear and prioritized correctly. Notice, the description started at the front of the body and worked all the way to the base of the quarter. It is a good idea

to start from the front and go to the rear. This is much easier to follow for the reason scorer and it is easier for the presenter to go step by step.

- C. The furthermore and in addition sentences are designed for the presenter to discuss other areas to compare in each pair. For example, *"Furthermore, 1 possesses a higher degree of finish over his rib cage and should rail a carcass more apt to grade Choice."* The presenter may substitute "in addition" for furthermore if he/she would like. Other additives include "also" and "moreover."

Feel free to add as many other comparisons that are applicable. Remember to be descriptive, but understand there are still two more sections to discuss.

- D. Grant sentences are designed to allow the opportunity for the presenter to acknowledge the positive mark the lower placing animal has over the animal that might proceed it. The closer the placing, the more important and detailed each grant statement should be. A well worded grant sentence is essential because the reason listener might have switched the pair from the presenter's pair. An example of an acceptable grant sentence is as follows, *"I grant 2 is a larger framed, longer designed steer."* Other words for grant include "admit," "concede," and "realize."
- E. Criticism sentences follow grants to emphasize the placing of that particular animal. Although the livestock industry has made tremendous strides to improve their quality, the perfect animal has yet to be created. Thus, every animal should have a criticism. Remember the fault of the class winner? Look back and find out exactly how it was

stated. Here is an example of another criticism sentence, “*I criticize 2 for being flat ribbed and shallow hearted, so he is second.*”

Now, you should be able to complete the introduction and the top pair section. Here it is altogether.

*“I placed the market steers 1-2-3-4. I started the class with 1 as he best combines cutability and quality grading characteristics to the highest degree. If I could change my class winner, I would like to see him smoother shouldered.*

*Nevertheless, in the top pair it is 1 over 2 because 1 is the heaviest muscled steer in the class. He handles with the most expressive loin, he his wider hiped, and wider through his stifle, and showed the most bulge through the quarter. Furthermore, 1 possesses a higher degree of finish over his rib cage and should rail a carcass more apt to grade choice.*

*I grant 2 is a larger framed, longer designed steer.*

*But, I criticize 2 for being flat ribbed and shallow hearted, so he is second.”*

The middle pair and bottom pair sentences will follow the example for the topic sentence for each pair. The changes are below:

*“In the middle pair, I placed 2 over 3 because” and “in the bottom pair, I placed 3 over 4 because....”*

After discussing all three sections, it is time to conclude with the bottom individual.

### **The Bottom Individual Paragraph**

After discussing the advantages of the last place animal over the animal in third it is time to criticize it and close out the reasons. The example is as follows:

*“I admit 4 was a more structurally correct steer, who takes a longer, freer stride, however, he still places last because he is the pounds lightest, least muscular steer. Quite simply, he should hang from the rail the lowest cutability carcass in the class.”*

Always end with “in the class” or “so he/she is last” when closing out a set of oral reasons.

### **Taking Notes**

The key to presenting accurate, polished oral reasons is note taking. This note taking guide has proven to be an excellent and thorough outline. It offers the participant the opportunity to write descriptions, comparisons, grants and criticisms in an orderly manner.

The goal in studying notes is not to memorize the notes while preparing each set of reasons, but to help in recalling the animals from the class. Always try to picture the livestock from each class!

### **Summary**

Delivering oral reasons takes patience, determination, and lots of practice. Try to expand terminology in each set, but always remember the key to oral reasons is TELLING THE TRUTH!

## JUDGING CLASS NOTES FORM

Class Name \_\_\_\_\_

Placing \_\_\_\_\_

**Brief Descriptions (ie color, gender, unique markings)**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

<b>1- Advantage to class winner</b>	<b>1- Criticism of class winner</b>
<b>1 / 2- Advantages for 1 over 2</b>	<b>Grant for 2 / 1</b>  <b>Criticism of 2</b>
<b>2 / 3- Advantages for 2 over 3</b>	<b>Grant for 3 / 2</b>  <b>Criticism of 3</b>
<b>3 / 4- Advantages for 3 over 4</b>	<b>Grant for 4 / 3</b>  <b>Why 4 places last</b>

## Oral Reasons Outline

- I. Introduction  
I placed this class of \_\_\_\_\_ .
- II. Class winner's description
  - A. Advantage to class
  - B. Criticisms of class winner
- III. Top Pair paragraph
  - Introduction sentence
  - Important factor sentence
  - Furthermore or In addition sentence
  - Grant sentence
  - Criticism sentence
- IV. Middle Pair paragraph
  - Introductory sentence
  - Important factor sentence
  - Furthermore or in addition sentence
  - Grant sentence
  - Criticism sentence
- V. Bottom Pair paragraph
  - Introductory sentence
  - Important factor sentence
  - Furthermore or in addition sentence
  - Grant sentence
- VI. Bottom Individual Criticism Paragraph
- VII. Closing Statement

\_\_\_\_\_ in the class OR

\_\_\_\_\_ so he/she is last.