

Nebraska Land Judging Rules and Regulations

Original – May 1982

Revised – Nov. 2010, August 2017, July 2019, Jan. 2020, Jan. 2021; Dec. 2022; Jan. 2024; Jan. 2026

Revisions only include current practices and name changes for gender and those groups or individuals in charge of an area or practice at this time. No revisions have been made to change original intent of rules.

I. General Rules

1. No talking or comparing cards.
2. No bubble vials, tape measures or other measuring devices are allowed.
3. Contestants can have the following pieces of equipment:
 - Pencil – Required for Scantron Cards; No Pens
 - Reference Card (colored)
 - Official ScanTron Score Card
 - Capability Chart
 - Clipboard – As of 2026, all schools should have clear clipboards that contain no writing, markings, or measuring marks. If students bring other kinds of clipboards, they will be asked to judge without one.
 - Hand towel for cleaning soil off hands.

Knives are NOT allowed at contests

*Cell Phones are NOT allowed at contests***

******Contestants are not allowed to have a phone during the contest. The contest staff should have a zero tolerance for such devices. If contest staff see a phone they should pull the card at the judging site. Students will not be allowed to continue judging while the phone is still with them. Students need to find a teacher to leave their phone with until the end of the contest if they wish to continue. If contest staff see a phone while students travel between sites, they should pull the card for the upcoming site. This rule also includes Apple watches or any device that may be used to communicate. If advisors have students that have a watch that may be confused with an Apple watch or similar device, please suggest that they leave it on the bus or van with their phone. Many students may use a standard watch to help monitor time. ******

4. The land evaluation handbook and the most current capability chart for the area will be used to resolve contest differences and should be used in setting up and conducting the contests. The latest information will be available on the official Land Evaluation website, it is the obligation of the instructors, site judges and others to make sure they are using the most current information. Changes will not be made to the ‘official’ site within 30 days of the first contest for a given year.
5. Contestants are only allowed to take notes on site instructions (ie, soil depth, erosion and slope). Other written information on reference cards and capability charts are not allowed.

6. At the land judging site, contestants will receive a reference card, ScanTron card and capability chart. After receiving contest materials and instructions from site judge, the contestants and adults will be divided into 5 (or more) rotational groups. Groups will be given 20 minutes to evaluate each site. Before judging a site, contestants will be given field note information from the field instructor, which can be written on the “Field Notes” section of the reference card. As contestants finish or when time is expired, they should flip over their Reference Card to the field notes and place over their Scantron Card. This will help prevent cheating and they’ll also be ready to take notes at the next pit. Contestants are not allowed to talk during the contest.

II. Divisions

1. 4-H

Not applicable - no 4-H teams at this time.

2. FFA Division

- a. To compete in FFA Division, it is necessary to be a 9-12th grade student enrolled in an Agricultural Education class at the competing high school.

3. Adult Division

- a. Agricultural Educators, Extension Service, Farm managers, NRD personnel and past National contest participants will compete in adult division.

III. County Land Judging Contests

Not applicable at this time.

IV. Area Contests

1. Nebraska has been divided into seven areas in order to maintain areas that have similar slope grouping and management practices. The area boundaries therefore follow closely the NRD boundaries. However, Capability Charts and Interpretation Sheets will designate all official judging of contests for that area. See map which designates the counties in each area and the appropriate Capability Chart and Interpretation Sheet to be used.

- a. The State Land Judging Committee, the local Natural Resources District (NRD) and other local organizations sponsor area contests.
 - b. Any agricultural educator or county agent may bring as many students as they desire to compete at the area contest. Students will compete as individuals.
 - c. The four highest-scoring students will be put on a team as the state qualifying team for the school.
 - d. Only one team from a school may represent the area in the State Contest.

- e. Area contests are elimination contests. The number of teams representing each area at the State Contest will be determined by a designated scale determined by the number of schools competing in the area contest.
 - Less than 3 schools in area contest – 1 team qualifies
 - 3-4 schools in area contest – 2 teams qualify
 - 5-9 schools in area contest – 3 teams qualify
 - 10-14 schools in area contest – 4 teams qualify
 - 15-19 schools in area contest – 5 teams qualify
 - 20-24 schools in area contest – 6 teams qualify
 - 25-29 schools in area contest – 7 teams qualify
 - 30+ schools in area contest – 8 teams qualify
- f. Teams must compete in their own area contests. They will not be allowed to cross area boundary lines.
- g. Ribbons for winners will be furnished by the State Land Judging Committee based on a percentage of the number of previous years participation.

V. State Contest

1. The State Contest will be sponsored by the State Land Judging Committee and hosted by the Natural Resources District (NRD).
2. Contestants in the Adult Division are not required to have participated in an area contest.
3. Substitution of ONE team member will be permitted in the State Contest upon notice by that instructor before the State Land Judging Contest. All substitutions require the approval of the State Land Judging Coordinator.
4. All four team members scores will be counted at the State Contest.
5. The State Land Judging Committee will furnish ribbons and plaques for the State Contest.

VI. National and International Contests

1. Contestants who have represented Nebraska in a previous National Contest are ineligible for further competition in Area and State Contests.
2. Nebraska participation in the National Contest will be limited to a maximum of up to five certified teams representing the FFA Division. These teams will be the top five teams in the FFA Division in the annual State Contest. If the winning team is unable to go to the National Contest, then the next highest team in the division will be eligible to represent the state.
3. Financial assistance will be furnished to the top five FFA teams to go to the National Contest only if it is available.