

# **HANDS ACROSS THE ROCKIES MEAT PROCESSORS CONVENTION**

## **CURED MEAT COMPETITION RULES**

1. Competition is open to all members whose current year dues (membership fees) are PAID IN FULL.
2. Operator may enter ONE item in each class. Students may enter one item only.
3. All products must be prepared or processed in the plant of the exhibitor.
4. In the interest of sportsmanship, please bring only unbranded or unlabelled products. Prior to entry, all identifying marks, brands or stamps must be removed.
5. All products must be registered AND received no later than 8:00 am the day of judging. Each product will be tagged by the competition chairperson in a manner such that its identity will remain unknown to those involved with the judging.
6. It is the operator's responsibility to specify in which class their entry belongs. Judges may disqualify any product not entered in the appropriate class.
7. Entry fee is \$15.00 per item.
8. All products containing pork shall be subjected to one of the methods for eliminating Trichina specified in section 318.10 of the Federal Meat Inspection regulations.
9. All products which have been cooked and cooled shall have been processed according to the schedules in Appendix A and Appendix B of the USDA/FSIS Compliance Guidelines for Meeting Lethality Performance Standards.
10. All products requiring refrigeration must be kept at 41 degrees or colder during storage, transport and prior to judging. If any product requiring refrigeration exceeds an internal temperature of 45 degrees when the judging begins, that product may be disqualified due to food safety concerns.
11. The judging of the different entries in the contest shall be divided between the judges in accordance with their areas of special interest and qualifications. Decisions of the judges shall be final. After judging has taken place, there will not be any re-evaluation except in the event of a tie: and if re-evaluation is necessary, a new sample shall be judged and the product scoring highest on flavor will be declared the winner.
12. It is the responsibility of the judges to disqualify any entry which does not meet any of the rules or requirements of the contest, and to notify the competition chairperson of all disqualifications. No refunds will be issued for disqualified products.
13. Evaluation Standards: Since judges may be changed from year to year and there may be considerable difference of opinion as to the characteristics of the ideal or average product, entries shall be judged according to the standards given in these rules and the Product Evaluation Guidelines provided by AAMP.

14. **Winners** -The entry in each class scoring the highest number of points shall be declared the Grand Champion; the entry with the next highest number of points shall be the Reserve Grand Champion and the entry scoring the next highest number of points shall be the Champion. One sole winner will be selected from the Student Class of entries. Student entries are not eligible for the awards in each product class.
15. **Responsibility** - Although the convention management will exercise every reasonable precaution to protect and safeguard all entries, it does not assume any responsibility for entries. All products are entered solely at the risk of the owner.
16. **Liability** - Liability for entered products rest solely with the exhibitor. The convention management assumes no responsibility for sickness, illness, disease, infection, malady or other affliction caused by the ingestion, handling or cooking of products entered in the Cured Meat Competition.
17. A list of product ingredients in descending order may (but is not required to) accompany each product.
18. **Overall Grand Champion** - is selected from the Grand Champions of each judging class (item 22 a-i), and is determined at the discretion of all participating judges. This decision is based solely on product judging as outlined in these rules. The product entry tags shall remain unopened with names concealed while selecting the Overall Grand Champion. The presentation of this award will occur during the evening awards banquet. This product should be the absolute best of show as it may (at the discretion of the entrant) represent our convention at the National Convention of the American Association of Meat Processors.
19. **Student Class** - This class is open to all students currently enrolled at Colorado State University, Sheridan College and The University of Wyoming. Students are not required to pay dues to the association or entry fees for their entry. They may enter only one item per student. Student entries will be judged in their respective product classes using these rules. Tags shall be noted with the word **STUDENT** clearly visible to the judges. Once judging has taken place, judges shall review all student entries to determine the sole winner. Student entries are exempt from the Overall Grand Champion award.
20. **ALL ENTRANTS SIGNIFY HIS/HERS ACCEPTANCE OF ALL OF THE ABOVE RULES BY REGISTERING FOR THIS COMPETITION.**
21. **Classes for competition:**
  - (a) **Ham – Bone in**
  - (b) **Bacon**
  - (c) **Summer Sausage – Cooked**
  - (d) **Luncheon Meat - Large diameter**
  - (e) **Jerky – Whole Muscle**
  - (f) **Smoked Turkey**
  - (g) **Smoked and Cooked Sausage - Small diameter**
  - (h) **Meat Snack Sticks**
  - (i) **Specialty Products**
  - (j) **Wild Game Specialty Meats**
  - (k) **Fresh Sausage – Bulk**
  - (l) **Fresh Sausage – Cased**

22. Standards for competition entries:

- a. **HAM (BONE-IN)** - Can be of any weight, must be entered whole with the bone in, may not be cut or sliced and shall be cured. This class will consist of pumped hams which require refrigeration. Judges are to cut ham 2 inches from the aitch bone toward the shank perpendicular to the long axis of the ham.
  - i. **General Appearance**: 200 points. Hams shall be graded on eye appeal, conformation, trim, and cutability or yield. Scoring for general appearance will be done in two phases allowing up to 100 points before cutting and 100 points after cutting.
  - ii. **Aroma**: 150 points. Off, foreign, sour or sharp odors should downgrade the ham and the good mellow aroma that pleases the judge should upgrade it.
  - iii. **Texture of cut surface**: 100 points. Excessive moisture is objectionable. The cut ham surface should not be too coarse grained nor should there be an excess of fat marbled within. Excessive seam fat between the muscles will downgrade its score. "Pickle pockets" caused from excessive pumping will downgrade the score.
  - iv. **Inside Color**: 150 points. The color should be uniform and appealing, not too light or too red and bruises should score quite heavily against color. Uncured or undercured spots on the cut surfaces will downgrade its score.
  - v. **Flavor**: 400 points. A full center slice of ham shall be heated and two samples taken from the cushion side, one from the lower muscle and one from the top muscle. The ham should not be too salty nor too bland and should have the mellow flavor expected in a good commercial ham. The presence of off flavors such as rancidity, bacterial spoilage, etc. shall severely downgrade the product.
- b. **BACON** - Can be of any weight, must be cured and smoked and skinned. This product must be a traditional-type bacon and must not contain specialty non-meat ingredients (i.e. black pepper) on the exterior of the product. Bacons must not be cut prior to judging. Judges will cut one third of the way from the shoulder end.
  - i. **General Appearance (before cut)**: 150 points. Manner in which belly was trimmed, eye appeal, conformation, quality of workmanship and a deep outside color should be the main points considered. Judges will severely penalize a belly showing excessive trimming, poor workmanship in trimming or robbing of the lean areas and lack of uniformity of outside color.
  - ii. **Fat to Lean (after cut)**: 150 points. Lean bacon is very desirable and should be scored accordingly unless it is so lean that it would indicate a poor quality hog.
  - iii. **Aroma**: 100 points. A good smooth ample aroma is desirable, off or sour odors should downgrade the bacon.
  - iv. **Texture**: 100 points. Bacon should be firm and fine grained and will be downgraded for excessive moisture.

- v. **Inside Color:** 100 points. Lean should be light red, fat should be white and color should be uniform. Bruises and uncured spots should downgrade the bacon.
  - vi. **Flavor:** 400 points. Flavor should be full and rich, indicating a full cure and smoke, not too bland and not too salty. The presence of off flavors such as rancidity, bacterial spoilage, etc. shall severely downgrade the product.
- c. **SUMMER SAUSAGE** - Entries must be whole (not cut or sliced), in a clear casing, cooked to a temperature of not less than 137 degrees F and be acidified by either direct acidification (i.e. addition of GDL, encapsulated lactic, citric or other food grade acidulant) or fermentation by incubation with an acceptable starter culture. Entries may be beef and/or pork. This product must be a traditional type summer sausage and must not contain specialty non-meat ingredients (i.e. cheese). No spice-coated casings are allowed in this class. Sausage will be cut at the discretion of the judges.
- i. **External Appearance:** 250 points. Product is judged on visual appearance and workmanship. Uniformity of color (75 pts.) and uniformity of shape (75 pts.). Defects such as air pockets, wrinkles and fat caps will downgrade the product (100 pts.)
  - ii. **Internal Appearance:** 275 points. Judges will look for uniformity of color (75 pts.) and uniformity of texture(50 pts.) and lean to fat ratio (50 pts.). Obvious defects shall severely downgrade the product (100 pts.)
  - iii. **Eatability:** 475 points. The texture or mouth feel (100 pts.) of the product is judged. Aroma (75 points) and taste (300 points) are evaluated. A strong after taste or flavors such as rancidity, bacterial spoilage, etc. shall severely downgrade the product.
- d. **LUNCHEON MEAT – LARGE DIAMETER** - This product can be any cooked sausage (except summer sausage) in a large diameter casing. Exterior spices (i.e. black pepper, etc) and incorporated non-meat ingredients (i.e. cheese, olives, etc) are allowed in this class but are not required. Entries must be a whole sausage, made from beef and/or pork, and stuffed in a clear casing at least two inches in diameter.  
**Thermal processing:** This product must have been thermally processed according to compliance guidelines of USDA/FSIS Appendix A. This product must have been cooled according to the compliance guidelines of USDA/FSIS Appendix B.
- i. **External Appearance:** 250 points. Uniformity of color (75 points). Uniformity of shape (75 points); Lack of defects (100 points)
  - ii. **Internal Appearance:** 275 points. Uniformity of texture (50 points); Uniformity of color (75 points); Fat to Lean ratio (50 points) ; Lack of obvious defects (100 points)
  - iii. **Eatability:** 475 points. Aroma (75 points); Taste (300 points); Texture/mouth feel (100 points). Flavors such as rancidity, bacterial spoilage, etc., shall severely downgrade the product.
- e. **WHOLE MUSCLE JERKY** - Must be made from one whole piece of beef, pork or poultry; and may be seasoned at the discretion of the entrant. Topical spices (i.e. black pepper) are allowed but not required. The amount of product entered shall weigh at least one-half pound. It must be processed so that it does not require refrigeration and may be

eaten without further processing. This class excludes ground and formed varieties of jerky.

- i. **Appearance:** 250 points. External appearance includes eye appeal consisting of size and shape (100 points). Color (150 points) will be judged on the variation of external and internal color after processing.
  - ii. **Texture/Mouth Feel:** 200 points. Hardness, chewability and moisture content are very important to the judging of this product. A product with excessive moisture will be downgraded. Product shall be shelf-stable.
  - iii. **Eatability:** 100 points.. Chewability and lack of residue will upgrade this product
  - iv. **Aroma:** 75 points. There should be a desirable cured aroma. Off odors are objectionable.
  - v. **Flavor:** 300 points. A desirable, intense flavor is appropriate. Flavor may be salty, peppered, sweet, or spicy.
  - vi. **Pleasant aftertaste:** 75 points. A pleasant aftertaste is necessary.
- f. **SMOKED TURKEY** - Entries must be whole (not boneless), brine cured and smoked. Turkeys must be fully cooked to a minimum final internal temperature of 155 degrees F. Judges are to cut one slice of white meat from one half of the breast near the keel bone and one slice of dark meat from the midpoint of the length of the thigh bone. Samples will be tasted cold.
- i. **General Appearance:** 200 points. Turkeys shall be graded on eye appeal, conformation (plumpness of breast, straightness of keel bone), smoke color, and yield. Skin shall be intact, not too dry, and shall have a uniform smoked color. Bruises and pin feathers will downgrade the product.
  - ii. **Aroma:** 150 points. A good mellow aroma that pleases the judges is desirable. Sharp, off, foreign or sour odors shall downgrade the product.
  - iii. **Texture of Cut Surface:** 100 points. White and dark meat are judged equally. While excessive moisture is objectionable, the turkey shall not be too dry. Excessive dryness and a basted turkey will downgrade the product. Turkey meat should not be too coarse-grained.
  - iv. **Inside Color:** 150 points. (white meat 100 points, dark meat 50 points) The white meat shall be uniform light pink and the dark meat shall be uniform light red. Bruises or uncured areas will score quite heavily against color.
  - v. **Palatability Characteristics:** 400 points. White and dark meat are judged equally. Turkey should have a good mellow flavor, should be tender and have no unpleasant aftertaste. Turkey shall be downgraded for being too salty, too bland or off flavors such as rancidity, bacterial spoilage, etc.
- g. **SMALL DIAMETER SMOKED AND COOKED SAUSAGE** - The products in this class must be a traditional type small-diameter smoked sausage made from beef and/or pork, and must not contain specialty non-meat ingredients (i.e. cheese, rice, etc).

Product may be skinless or stuffed in an edible casing. Casing size cannot exceed 40 mm and no colored casings are allowed. The amount of product entered must weigh at least 1.5 lbs.

**Thermal processing:** This product must have been thermally processed according to compliance guidelines of USDA/FSIS Appendix A. This product must have been cooled according to the compliance guidelines of USDA/FSIS Appendix B.

- i. **External Appearance:** 250 points. Uniformity of color (75 points); Uniformity of shape (75 points); Lack of defects (100 points)
  - ii. **Internal Appearance:** 275 points. Uniformity of texture (50 points); Uniformity of color (75 points); Fat to Lean ratio (50 points) ; Lack of obvious defects (100 points)
  - iii. **Eatability:** 475 points. Aroma (75 points); Taste (300 points); Texture/mouth feel (100 points). Flavors such as rancidity, bacterial spoilage, etc., shall severely downgrade the product.
- h. **MEAT SNACK STICKS-** Must be made from portions of beef, pork, buffalo, lamb, veal, poultry, seafood, or any combination of these. This product may be a traditional-type snack stick OR a flavored snack stick containing non meat ingredients or flavorings such as teriyaki or jalapenos. Product may be skinless, in a clear casing or in a colored casing. It must meet the labeling requirements: pH of 5.0 or less and a moisture:protein ratio of 3.1 to 1 or less.
- i. **External Appearance:** 200 points. External appearance includes uniformity of color, casing or surface appearance and lack of obvious defects.
  - ii **Internal Appearance:** 100 points. Product will be judged high on particle uniformity and excessive fat shall downscore the product.
  - iii **Aroma / Edibility / Flavor:** 700 points. Aroma (100 points) There shall be a desirable cured aroma; objectionable odors will be downgraded. Texture (150 points) Mouth feel and appropriate moisture content will be extremely important in the judging of this product. Edibility (150 points) Product shall be shelf stable and require no refrigeration. Flavor (300 points) A suitably full-bodied flavor is appropriate. A pleasant aftertaste is necessary.
- i. **SPECIALTY PRODUCTS** - This class is designed for new and creative products that do not meet the criteria of items A through G above. It is open to any processed red meat or poultry product. Entries should be in a clear casing for external appearance judging, but can be colored if the nature of the product dictates such a casing. Cooking or safety suggestions must be supplied to the judges and will be performed using the equipment available.
- i. **External Appearance:** 225 points. Visual appearance and workmanship, including eye appeal and consisting of uniformity of color, size, shape and lack of defects.
  - ii. **Internal Appearance:** 225 points. Workmanship and lack of obvious defects.
  - iii. **Aroma/Taste/Texture:** 550 points. Aroma (100 points). There should be a desirable cured, or smoked, or cooked aroma. Objectionable odors will

downgrade the product. Taste/Texture (450 points). Desirable flavor, mouth feel, appropriate moisture level, and palatability.

- j. **WILD GAME SPECIALTY CLASS** - Product must contain a minimum of 2/3 meat from any animal (or fish) EXCEPT beef, pork, lamb, turkey and chicken. Cooking or safety suggestions must be supplied to the judges and will be performed using the equipment available. Entries should be in a clear casing for external appearance judging, but can be colored if the nature of the product dictates such a casing. Please note: This class is exempt from the Overall Grand Champion Award as it is not an acceptable product at the American Association of Meat Processors.
- i. **External Appearance:** 225 points. Visual appearance and workmanship, including eye appeal and consisting of uniformity of color, size, shape and lack of defects.
  - ii. **Internal Appearance:** 225 points. Workmanship and lack of obvious defects.
  - iii. **Aroma/Taste/Texture:** 550 points. Aroma (100 points). There should be a desirable cured, or smoked, or cooked aroma. Objectionable odors will downgrade the product. Taste/Texture (450 points). Desirable flavor, mouth feel, appropriate moisture level, and palatability.
- k. **FRESH BULK SAUSAGE** – Entries must be in a bulk package. No casings are allowed. Patties are acceptable. Sausage must be in the raw state, and made from a domestic species. Non-meat ingredients may be added. Entry size should be at least one pound. To facilitate judging, an ingredient list is recommended. Because fresh sausage can lose its natural color rapidly, the way it is packaged will be taken into account when judging the external appearance. Judging will be based on the following:
- i. **General Appearance:** 100 points. Product shall be graded on eye appeal, conformation and packaging, and uniformity of shape.
  - ii. **Internal Appearance:** 150 points. Product shall be judged on fat/lean ratio and general internal appearance. Judges will look at particle definition, uniformity of texture, lack of obvious defects (such as blood spots) and aroma.
  - iii. **Characteristics of Cooking:** 200 points. Product shall be graded on aroma during cooking, fat/lean ratio, and moisture content.
  - iv. **Palatability Characteristics/Flavor:** 400 points. Product will be judged on flavor as related to the name of the product. Each product will be rated on its own merit, very similar to the judging criteria for the Specialty Class.
  - v. **Texture/Mouth feel:** 150 points. Rancidity, spoilage, chewability and bind will be taken into account.
- l. **FRESH CASED SAUSAGE** – Entries must be in casings. Sausage must be in the raw state, and made from a domestic species. Non-meat ingredients may be added. Entry size should be at least one pound and any special cooking instructions are recommended. To facilitate judging an ingredient list is recommended. Because fresh sausage can lose its natural color rapidly, the way it is packaged will be taken into account when judging the external appearance. Judging will be based on the following:

- i. **General Appearance:** 100 points. Product shall be graded on eye appeal, conformation and packaging, and uniformity of shape.
- ii. **Internal Appearance:** 150 points. Product shall be judged on fat/lean ratio and general internal appearance. Judges will look at particle definition, uniformity of texture, lack of obvious defects (such as air pockets in the casings and blood spots) and aroma.
- iii. **Characteristics of Cooking:** 200 points. Product shall be graded on aroma during cooking, fat/lean ratio, and moisture content.
- iv. **Palatability Characteristics /Flavor:** 400 points. Product will be judged on flavor as related to the name of the product. Each product will be rated on its own merit, very similar to the judging criteria for the Specialty Class.
- v. **Texture/Mouth feel:** 150 points. Rancidity, spoilage, chewability and bind will be taken into account.