

# Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies





Welcome to

# Homecraft Competitions: The Family Heart of your Fair

Presented by Cheryl Bunda  
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## Prize Books:

- Everyone wants to know “where do I get a prize book, what can I enter, and how do I enter? “
- Your prize book should be readily available both in hard copy and online for anyone interested to access.
- It doesn't hurt to advertise where your books can be found, bulletin boards, Facebook, word of mouth even. Many fairs are currently using the AssistExpo program to put their prize lists online or on Facebook.

# Review Your Prize Book Regularly



- To keep your prize list fresh and up to date, review it with your committee members yearly.
- A good time is after you wrap up your fair, so everything is still fresh in everyone's mind.
- Even before that, you can have a suggestion box for fair goers to ask if they have any questions, need any clarifications or would like to see a change. This allows the exhibitor to feel like they are part of the fair.
- Take the time to check each class, ask questions such as are entries up, or down or is anyone still entering in this class?
  - How many years has this class been in the book?
  - Maybe it is time to revamp this class, or maybe remove it all together, and add a new class?
  - Is this class age appropriate? i.e. avoid any craft or items that involve using an oven, microwave or glue gun in classes for children under 4 years of age.

## Review Your Prize Book Regularly ... cont'd

- Review all the rules for each class – are they clear?
  - Now is the time to clarify the information.
  - Have any of your Committees had questions from judges or exhibitors about unclear or incomplete rules or instructions for any classes listed in your prize book?
  - Be sure your prize list concurs with the Judging Standards handbook.
- Review Prize Books from other Fairs to find fresh ideas for different classes, prizes or advertisers for your fair; is there information in their competition rules or on their entry forms that could assist to make your Prize Book more complete or clearer?
- Be sure to double check the requirements for OAAS Convention Competition items (posters, quilts, butter tarts, and cookies)
  - If your Prize Book does not contain a link to the OAAS Provincial Competition Rules on the OAAS website, add it.



# What about adding a new class?

- Don't be afraid to add a new class.
- Check with local craft and or hobby stores or go online to Pinterest to see what is new in crafting circles.
- Or better yet, take in a local “sit and sew” session to get ideas firsthand from the people who are crafting at them.
- A trip to your local farmer's market can give you some ideas for changes in the culinary section. What are the current food trends: gluten free breads, muffins or cookies? Sugar free jams, low sodium pickles, how about a vegan baked bean class? (they have this at the Renfrew Fair) The choices are so many.
- You can even ask exhibitors if they would be willing to include a recipe with their entries and put them together for a quick booklet to hand out during the fair. Be sure to get permission to publish the recipe - it is as simple as having them sign a release.



# Themes / Advance prize lists

- Does your fair host a theme, or perhaps this is an anniversary year for your fair? This is an opportunity to tie the homecraft section into the rest of the fair.
- A themed quilt, a themed cake, the group displays, and don't forget about the floral section, they can all be covered within a theme.
- Advance prize lists are a valuable tool to get your information out early.
  - This is very important in homecrafts and floral.
  - Homecraft exhibitors need time to put together the perfect quilt, afghan, or clothing items.
  - And gardeners have their seed catalogues at the ready, some even before Christmas.
- You may want to put an eye catching colour cover on your advance prize list, as it will help in locating it after the Christmas rush.



# Involve Your Sponsors

- Your sponsors can also be helpful when reviewing your prize list, after all they are the ones putting up the prize money.
- Perhaps they want to change what they sponsor to change things up a bit but want to keep their name in the book.
- Always be sure to thank your sponsors after your fair is finished.
- I include the number of entries and who the winners were when I send out my thank-you notes.
- It is important to keep your sponsors happy, stay involved with them, and check in with them for any class changes they may want to make.





# Group or Community Displays

- Does your fair host group or community displays?
- Inquire at the office how many are expected, go ahead and mark off the designated/allotted space for each display (plus a 2 1/2-inch easement on the sides)
- This way on setup day there is no question as to where to set up, and because you have pre-marked everything, everyone gets the same amount of space, and no overcrowding.
- Let the groups know if it is a first-come basis or a designated spot.



# Encourage Your Exhibitors

- More fairs are having an early entry evening (usually 7 pm to 9 pm) the evening before judging day.
  - This is helpful for exhibitors who work day-shifts, but still want to enter into the fair.
  - Make them feel welcome, not an inconvenience.
- Hold an information session to explain what judges are looking for in various types of exhibits, what types of classes are available, etc.
- Encourage new exhibitors by holding a seminar to learn a craft and then hold a new class just for beginners in that craft. This can be done in co-operation with the local craft shop, (and why not ask the owner to sponsor the class at fair time?)



# So now let's do some round table discussions:

- 1) How many fairs are online? Have you found this to be beneficial towards entries?
- 2) How many fairs put out a preliminary prize list? Do you think this is helpful?
- 3) How many homecraft committees does your fair have?  
(Homecrafts, Juniors, Culinary, Floral)
- 4) Does each committee have a chairperson?
- 5) How many members sit on each committee?
- 6) Who contacts your judges?
- 7) How many judges does each committee need?
- 8) How often do you review your prize list?
- 9) Where do you go for ideas for changes?



Thank you for attending this seminar and I hope you have gained and shared some ideas to help make your fair prize book better than ever.



Questions, Comments



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