

2023 Texas 4-H Roundup Soil Judging Contest Guidelines

Contestant/Teams

Each team will consist of at least 3 members and not more than 4 members. In the event, a sponsor has more than four potential contestants; the sponsor must designate the four individuals who will compete for “prizes”. Any additional team members are then referred to as alternates and will be allowed to judge in the background if the contest superintendent deems adequate pit space is available. In general, no more than 15-20 persons should be in or around a pit at one time. Large contests, where 15+ teams are present, should be split into 5-8 pit numbers, thus at time 1 (A-D enter the pits) at time 2 (B-E) enter, at time 3 (C-F enter). This staggering will cause some individuals to be out of the pits in wait mode. It is desirable to funnel these individuals back into the pits as soon as possible.

Under no circumstances should two members from the same sponsor be in the pits at the same time. Subsequently, these members (alternate + contestant) should remain separated during all other times.

- *Contestants may carry:* clipboard, pencils, water bottle, knife, and towel.
- *Contestants **ARE NOT ALLOWED** to carry:* instructional or reference materials of any kind.

The use of tobacco and other products prohibited for use by minors *are not* used by any person on the judging site.

Teams or contestants acting in un-sportsmanship like behavior may be disqualified by any contest official. The contest superintendent will have final authority over all questionable actions.

Judging

The score card judging is a time consuming process. It is advisable to locate 4-6 individuals for score card grading. Each score card should be marked, tallied, and signed twice. Each section is to be worth 10 points, except Section A-C which are worth 20 points, for a maximum of 150 points per pit. The contest superintendent and pit judges may require more than one mark per section. In this case, each mark may be assigned an individual value such as:

3 correct answers,

- if mark 1 then 3 points
- if marked 2 then 6 points
- all marked then 10 points

- if marked 2 correct and 1 incorrect then 3 points
- if marked 1 correct and 2 incorrect then 0 points
- No negative credit will be given.

The team scores will be based on top three individuals on each pit. For example:

Individual	pit 1	pit 2	pit 3	pit 4	total
Tom	100	150	70	40	360
Bill	20	20	150	100	290
Jenny	150	150	100	10	410
Luke	110	10	130	120	370
Team Total	360	320	380	260	

For a team total of 1320 points

This scoring method generally allows each contestant to participate in the final team score. For individual totals, all four pits are used. In this case, the ranking would be Jenny, Luke, Tom then Bill.

Setting up the pits

- *Four soil pits* should be dug that represent some diversity in soil genesis and morphology. These pits should not be deeper than 4 feet, or wall shoring is required. The pits should also be 3-5 feet wide, although sandy pits should be 6+ feet wide. As a rule, the wider the pit the better.
- *A control zone* will be established and outlined with string and nails. This zone should be picked clean to show structural details. The zone chosen should be representative of the soil 3-4 feet on each side of the zone. In addition, the official judges will use the control zone for all judging. No contestant's will be allowed to pick, dig, or otherwise manipulate this zone.
- *A ruler and water bottle* should be provided at each site. In addition, two slope markers should be positioned 100 feet apart. The positioning of these markers should represent the landscape in which the pit lies. It is advisable that the top of each marker be of similar height.

The contest

Each contestant will be given a number. This number must appear on the scorecards along with the pit number (or letter). Each contestant has 20 minutes from the time the pit judge says start. It is advisable for the contestants at each pit to be split into two groups. One group is allowed into the pit for the first 5 minutes, while the second group must wait (provides time to measure slope and evaluate landscape). The final 10 minutes are then open to all contestants.

The contestants must give a completed score card to pit official upon the call "TIMES UP". Contestants failing to give card to pit official before leaving pit area or after "TIMES UP" is called will have scores for that particular pit voided.