

Guidelines for Successful MCFA Record Books

REQUIREMENTS: *BE SURE ALL MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS ARE MET!!!*

- Binder, folder, book cover, or other creative binding for pages
- Personal information sheet or use the official “Cover Page”
 - include the information all on one page
 - you do not necessarily have to use the “Cover Page” provided
- Operating Expenses for the duration of the project (any format accepted, but include totals)
- Project Summary
 - does not have to be an essay all on one page; be creative!
 - could be multiple pages each with a short paragraph and accompanying photographs
 - should be directly indicated as the “Project Summary”

GRAMMAR / MECHANICS:

- Have a teacher or someone else with grammar expertise proofread your project summary.
- *Quality is better than quantity* with regard to the project summary. After all, a judge will not have a lot of time to read multiple pages of information.

NEATNESS:

- Excessive décor, glue, or bulky additions that impede page turning is discouraged.
- Typed information is a definite must for a quality record book.
- Use a good binder, cover, or other creative type of holder for the record book pages.
- Clean, crisp, well-printed or constructed pages are an obvious plus.
- Easy-to-read, simple fonts should be used.
- Decorations and other additions that add eye appeal are encouraged, but they should be neat and have a purpose in the book other than excessive “fluff,” which can be distracting.

ORGANIZATION:

- Book should be well-organized and complete, not thrown together helter-skelter.
- Dividers or means for distinguishing clear sections help judges tremendously.
- Be consistent in pages and order (chronological sequence, categorical sections, etc.)

CREATIVITY:

Creativity represents that indefinable quality that makes a judge say WOW! Include features that distinguish your book from others. This does not necessarily mean you should use extreme content such as excessive use of color, stickers, or other similar scrapbooking paraphernalia that may be overwhelming or obnoxious.

Think about this: when a judge sits down to evaluate your record book, he or she will get a general first impression of the book from the cover and cover pages and determine how the book is organized so that he or she can then look to see if the basic *Requirements* are met. The easier it is for a judge to “check” these things, the more competitive your book will be.

CONTENT:

- Again, *quality is better than quantity!*
- Detailed information and documentation is certainly a plus (after all, it is a **record book**).
- All content should be focused and have a purpose within the book and not simply thrown in to add bulk. (As an example, some exhibitors with a substantial number of receipts may elect to include periodic summary reports of their expenses instead of individual receipts).

PHOTO DOCUMENTATION:

- Photos add substance and a visual aspect to your project record.
- Quality counts: if photos are poor quality, don't use them.
- *Quality is more important than quantity!*
- Photo pages should not just serve as a showcase for cute poses or staged shots.
- Photos should help define and “tell the story” of your project experience.
- Captions are important for photos, or at least a sentence or two to describe a page of photos.

Remember, this is a livestock project record book. It is not just a scrapbook, photo album, receipt book, documentation file for taxes, daily activity journal, etc. A common theme: “Quality is better than quantity”!