

# Montana Meat Processors Association

## Cured Meat Rules - Yr. - 2024

1. **Eligibility:** Competition is open to all meat processors who are either current or new members of the Montana Meat Processors Association who cure and/or smoke hams, bacon, turkey, manufacture sausage, jerky, meat snack sticks or produce specialty products.

2. **Classes of Entries:**

- A. Commercial Style Ham
- B. Commercial Style Bacon
- C. Summer/Salami Sausage
- D. Specialty Summer/Salami Sausage
- E. Jerky (Whole Muscle)
- F. Jerky (Chopped and Formed)
- G. Smoked Turkey
- H. Flavored Pork Belly Bacon
- I. Specialty Bacon
- J. Specialty Ham
- K. Specialty (Restructured)
- L. Specialty (Whole Muscle)
- M. Fresh Sausage - Bulk
- N. Fresh Sausage - Cased
- O. Polish Sausage
- P. Meat Snack Stick
- Q. Specialty Meat Snack Stick
- R. Small Diameter Cooked *and/or* Smoked Sausage
- S. Specialty Small Diameter Cooked *and/or* Smoked Sausage
- T. Montana Beef Council Innovative All Beef Product
- U. Pork Producers Council Innovative All Pork Product

3. **\*\*\*Ingredient Statements and Processing Schedules will be required on all entries. \*\*\***

**EACH ENTRY SHALL BE ACCOMPANIED BY THE FOLLOWING:**

- a. **AN INGREDIENTS STATEMENT WITH INGREDIENTS LISTED IN DESCENDING ORDER OF PREDOMINANCE.**
  - b. **IF THE PRODUCT CONTAINS PORK, A COPY OF THE PROCESSING SCHEDULE FOR THE PRODUCT OR A CERTIFICATE INDICATING THAT THE PRODUCT WAS PREPARED WITH PORK THAT WAS CERTIFIED TRICHINA FREE.**
  - c. **COOK SCHEDULE FROM TRACKING FORMS OR SMOKEHOUSE CHARTS – THIS IS TO ASSIST THE JUDGES AND QUARANTEE A SAFE PRODUCT**
4. **General Requirements:** Each member firm may enter up to 2 production items in each class, providing *each* entry is accompanied by the required entry fee. The exception

is in the *Innovative All Beef Product* and the *Innovative All Pork Product*, since the Montana Beef Council and Pork Producers pays the entry fees respectively, each member plant may enter only **one** item. All entries must be manufactured in the plant of the entrant, must be entered whole, and their dues in the association must be current. It is the exhibitor's responsibility to specify on the entry blank the class in which their entry belongs.

In the event a class does not have a least five entries, that class may be dropped. Consideration for reinstatement of class will require a petition by five or more eligible firms.

5. **Entry Requirements:** Entry must be accompanied by the following: (1) The actual product label (or photo copy), (2) If you are a Custom or Retail Exempt establishment and do not utilize Federal or State Inspection, you could provide one label, with mark of inspection (i.e. from the box) of raw materials used for each protein with product name and ingredients statement, but not required. A photo will be considered adequate also. This is required to enter any products – this label proves the meat block was properly handled before processing. \*New reinforcement rule, without it your product may not be allowed to be entered.
6. **Removal of Identifying Marks:** Exhibitors are required to remove all identification marks branded or stamped on entries; any such marks found on any entry will be removed by the committee.
7. **FSIS Compliance Guidelines:** All appropriate products shall be processed according to Appendix A and Appendix B of the Compliance Guidelines for Meeting Lethality Performance Standards.
8. **Thermal Processing:** The product must have been thermally processed according to compliance guidelines of USDA/FSIS Appendix A (e.g., meet lethality performance standards for certain meat and poultry products.) This product must have been cooled according to the compliance guidelines of USDA/FSIS Appendix B (e.g., meet cooling standards of heat-treated meat and poultry products)
9. **Winners:** Entries scoring the highest number of points in each class shall be declared Grand Champions; entries scoring the next highest number of points shall be the Reserve Grand Champions; entries scoring the third highest points shall be the Champions; and entries scoring the fourth highest points in each class shall be the Reserve Champions. Member plants entering more than one item per class may receive only **one** award. The highest placing product will receive the award it merits, and all other products will be nullified from placement.
  - A.) **“Ron Richard” Overall Grand Champion:** The Overall Grand Champion Award shall be determined by the following points system: All Grand Champion awards -- 4 points each; Reserve Grand Champion -- 3 points; Champion -- 2 points; and Reserve Champion -- 1 point. The entrant with most Overall points shall be declared the Winner. In the event of a tie, the judges shall **make the decision to break the tie.**

- B.) “**John Miller” Best of Show Award:** This Award shall be picked from any one of the 19 Grand Champion products. This will be determined solely at the discretion and decision of the head Judge(s)
10. **Registration:** Each cured meat product shall be registered by the filling out of a separate registration form. The registration shall be handled exclusively by the Association staff or assisting personnel and shall not be performed by any contest judges.
  11. **Fees:** A registration fee of \$ 17.50 shall be paid for every cured meat product registered. Entries in the Montana Cured Meat Championships will be accepted for registration on Friday P.M. as scheduled. ***THERE WILL NOT BE ANY SATURDAY MORNING CHECK IN!!***
  12. **Tagging:** Each cured meat product shall be tagged and coded in such a way that its identity will remain unknown to anyone having anything to do with judging, scoring and handling of the products, exception of members of the Association, staff or those designated to handle registrations.
  13. **Cutting:** Bone-in hams shall be cut two inches from the aitch bone perpendicular to the long axis of the ham. Bacons shall be cut one-third of the way from the shoulder end. Specialty hams shall be cut only once with the angle of the cut at the discretion of show management.
  14. **Judging:** The judging of the different entries in the show shall be divided between the judges in accordance with their areas of special interest and qualifications so that the judging work load will be shared equitably. Except for special cases, judging of each entry shall be done by one judge who is responsible for the entries in that class. It is the responsibility of the judges to disqualify any entry which does not meet any of the rules or requirements of the show. If any entry appears to be exhibited in the wrong class, the judges shall disqualify it. No refunds will be issued for disqualified product. The judges shall refrain from discussing disqualified products during the Awards Banquet. Decision of the judges shall be final. After the judging is finished, there should not be a reevaluation made unless to break a tie; and if reevaluation is necessary, a new sample shall be judged.
  15. **Display:** Product entries shall be displayed on Saturday after the Awards Banquet.
  16. **Records:** The Association shall retain in its files for three months the scoring of the products entered in the show.
  17. **Refrigeration:** Sometimes operators who bring entries for the show request the use of refrigerated space at the convention facility to keep products cold. Although the Association will not assume responsibility for providing refrigeration; when possible, it will make arrangements with the facility to provide storage or try to make arrangements with a local processor to accommodate the products.
  18. **Releasing the Cured Meat Products:** The cured meat products in the show may be picked up at the time and place specified in the convention program. All products will have a score card attached so the owner will be informed of the score attained by his entries. Cured meat

products remaining in the area after the announced deadline will become the property of show management and will be donated to a local charitable organization.

19. **Responsibility:** Although the Montana Meat Processors Association will exercise every reasonable precaution to protect and safeguard all cured meat product entries, it does not assume responsibility for the entries; all cured meat products are entered solely at the risk of the exhibitor. Liability for entered products rests solely with the exhibitor. The Montana Meat Processors Association assumes no responsibility for sickness, illness, disease, infection, malady, or other affliction caused by ingestion, handling, or cooking of products entered.
20. **Registration of Entries When Owner Does Not Attend Convention:** No mail entries will be accepted. Member operators who cannot attend the convention may enter cured meat products in the contest by sending them with someone else. *The absent member operator will be required to remit all the appropriate convention registration fees (advanced or on-site) in addition to the product registration fee of \$17.50 per entry.*
21. **List of Winning Scores:** Shortly after the convention, the names of plant members with winning products will be published in the MMPA newsletter and website.
22. **Show Management:** Show management shall have full power to interpret, extend or amend these rules at any time as conditions may arise which may warrant changes for the good of the entrants.
23. **Standards of Evaluation:** Since judges may be changed from year to year and there may be considerable difference of opinion as to the characteristics of the ideal product, entries shall be judged according to the following standards:

# **PRODUCT CLASSES**

**A. COMMERCIAL BONE-IN HAM:** To be eligible for this class, bone-in hams must contain the following bones: aitch bone (ischium), leg bone (femur), and a portion of the shank bones (tibia and fibula). Incorporation of curing ingredients must be by either injection or massaging (tumbling) or soaking. Hams entered in this class cannot be sliced, must be whole. Judging will be based on the following:

1. **General Appearance:** 200 points. Hams shall be graded on eye appeal, conformation, trim and cut ability or yield. Scoring for general appearance will be done in two phases allowing up to 100 points for appeal, conformation and trim before cutting; and 100 points for cut ability and yield after cutting. Hams will be cut by the judges, approximately two inches from the aitch bone perpendicular to the long axis of the ham.
2. **Aroma:** 150 points. Off, foreign, sour or sharp odors should downgrade the ham and a good mellow aroma that pleases the judge should upgrade it. Aroma shall be decided upon cutting of and before the cooking of the product.
3. **Texture of the Cut Surface:** 100 points. Excessive moisture is objectionable; the ham should not be coarse grained. There should not be an excess of fat marbled in the ham.
4. **Inside Color:** 150 points. The color should be uniform and appealing. It should not be too light or too red and bruises should score quite heavily against color. If a ham should be noticeably cooler than the rest of the hams, giving it an advantage in color and firmness, this should be considered and graded accordingly.
5. **Flavor:** 400 points. A full half-slice of ham from the cushion side of the ham shall be cooked and two taste samples taken, one from the lower muscle and one from the top muscle, unless the ham is sour or off-flavor in the first sample, making it too inferior to be considered in the top four places. The ham should not be too salty nor too bland and should have the good mellow flavor expected in commercial ham. The presence of off-flavor such as rancidity, bacterial spoilage, etc. shall severely downgrade the product.

**B. COMMERCIAL BACON:** To be eligible for this class, bacon shall be of standard approved trim with skin on or off. Bacon must be whole and shall not be cut or sliced. This product must be a traditional type bacon and must not contain inclusions on the exterior of the product entered (*i.e.*, no topical spices and no visual coatings allowed). Examples of inclusions are black pepper, crushed red pepper, ground cinnamon, or any other exterior ingredients. Although incorporated flavorings (*e.g.*, maple, brown sugar, etc.) are acceptable but not required, these flavorings are not to be predominant enough to define the product as a flavored bacon. Incorporation of curing ingredients must be by either injection, massaging (tumbling), dry rubbing, or soaking. Judging will be based on the following:

1. **General Appearance:** 150 points. Amount of trimming, workmanship, eye appeal, conformation and outside should be the main points considered. Bacon may be skinned or

unskinned, but skinned bellies should exhibit careful workmanship in skinning. Judges will severely penalize a belly showing excessive trimming or poor workmanship in trimming.

2. **Fat to Lean (After Cut):** 150 points. Lean bacon is desirable and should be scored accordingly unless it is so lean that it would indicate a poor quality.
3. **Aroma:** 100 points. Off or sour odors should downgrade the bacon and a good, smooth aroma should upgrade.
4. **Texture:** 100 points. Pumped bacon may be downgraded in texture if it appears to have excess moisture. Temperature of the bacon should be considered in scoring the texture since cooler bacon is firmer.
5. **Inside Color:** 100 Points. Lean should be light red, fat should be white; color should be uniform. Bruises should downgrade the bacon.
6. **Flavor:** 400 Points. Flavor should be a pleasing rich flavor, not too salty and not too bland. The presence of off-flavors such as bacterial spoilage, etc. shall severely downgrade the bacon.

C. **SUMMER/SALAMI SAUSAGE:** To be eligible for this class, sausage may not be encased in colored casings. Sausage must be whole and shall not be cut or sliced. This product must be a traditional type summer/salami sausage and must not contain inclusions (*i.e.* Jalapenos, cheese, etc.) Traditional Salami is expected to have peppercorns. All sausage in this class must contain clips on both ends and casing must be left on the product. If casing tails are attached they are considered part of the sausage and may be graded accordingly, there will be **no** deduction of points if not present. Total entered product weight shall not be less than one (1) pound. Judging will be based on the following:

1. **External Appearance:** 250 Points. Visual appearance and workmanship; Uniformity of color, 75 points; Uniformity of shape (diameter, etc.), 75 points; Lack of defects (*i.e.* air pockets, wrinkles, fat caps), 100 points.
2. **Internal Appearance:** 350 Points. Uniformity of color, 75 points; Uniformity of texture, 50 points; fat to lean ratio, 50 points; Lack of obvious defects, 100 points; Aroma, 75 points.
3. **Edibility:** 400 Points. Taste (the presence of strong after tastes shall severely downgrade the product), 300 points; Texture/Mouth feel, 100 points. Flavors such as rancidity, bacterial spoilage, etc. shall severely downgrade the product.

D. **SPECIALTY SUMMER/SALAMI SAUSAGE:** To be eligible for this class, sausage may not be encased in colored casings. Sausage must be whole and shall not be cut or sliced. This product must contain inclusions (*i.e.* Jalapenos, cheese, etc.) All sausage in this class must contain clips

on both ends and casing must be left on the product. If casing tails are attached they are considered part of the sausage and may be graded accordingly, there will be **no** deduction of points if not present. Total entered product weight shall not be less than one (1) pound. Judging will be based on the following:

1. **External Appearance:** 250 Points. Visual appearance and workmanship; Uniformity of color, 75 points; Uniformity of shape (diameter, etc.), 75 points; Lack of defects (i.e. air pockets, wrinkles, fat caps), 100 points.
2. **Internal Appearance:** 350 Points. Uniformity of color, 75 points; Uniformity of texture, 50 points; fat to lean ratio, 50 points; Lack of obvious defects, 100 points; Aroma, 75 points.
3. **Edibility:** 400 Points. Taste (the presence of strong after tastes shall severely downgrade the product), 300 points; Texture/Mouth feel, 100 points. Flavors such as rancidity, bacterial spoilage, etc. shall severely downgrade the product.

**E. JERKY (WHOLE MUSCLE):** To be eligible for this class, jerky must be made from a solid piece of beef, pork, or poultry. It cannot be ground and formed. Total entered product weight shall not be less than one half (1/2) pound. Product may be seasoned according to the discretion of the entrant. Topical spices (*i.e.*, black pepper, etc.) are allowed, but are not required. Judging will be based on the following:

1. **Appearance:** 200 points. External appearance includes eye appeal consisting of size and shape (100 points). Color will be judged on the variation of external and internal color after processing (100 points).
2. **Aroma:** 100 points. There should be a desirable cured and smoked aroma; off or stale odors will severely downgrade this product.
3. **Texture/Mouth feel:** 200 points. Hardness, chewability and moisture content are very important to the judging of this product. Product must be shelf-stable.
4. **Edibility:** 100 points. Chewability and lack of residue will upgrade this product.
5. **Flavor:** 400 points. A desirable, intense flavor is appropriate. Flavor may be slightly salty, peppered, sweet or spicy (325 points). A pleasant aftertaste is necessary (75 points).

**F. JERKY (GROUND AND FORMED):** To be eligible for this class, jerky must be ground and formed from beef, pork, or poultry. Total entered product weight shall not be less than one half (1/2) pound. Product may be seasoned according to the discretion of the entrant. Topical spices (*i.e.*, black pepper, etc.) or incorporated flavorings are allowed, but are not required. Judging will be based on the following:

1. **Appearance:** 200 points. External appearance includes eye appeal consisting of size, shape and uniformity (100 points). Color will be judged on the variation of external and internal color after processing (100 points).
2. **Aroma:** 100 points. There should be a desirable cured and smoked aroma; off and stale odors will severely downgrade this product.
3. **Texture/Mouth Feel/Bind:** 200 points. Hardness and moisture content are very important to the judging of this product. Product shall be shelf stable.
4. **Edibility:** 100 points. Chew ability and lack of residue will upgrade this product.
5. **Flavor:** 400 points. A desirable, intense flavor is appropriate. Flavor may be slightly salty, peppered, sweet, or spicy (325 points). A pleasant aftertaste is necessary (75 points).

**G. SMOKED TURKEY:** To be eligible for this class, turkey must be brine cured and smoked, must be fully cooked. Boneless turkey products are not eligible for this class. If the number of entries is large, the class may be divided into heavy and light divisions. Judging will be based on the following:

1. **General Appearance:** 200 points. Turkeys shall be graded on eye appeal, conformation, and plumpness of breast, straightness of keel bone, smoked color and yield. Skin shall be intact, not to dry and shall have a uniform smoked color. Bruises and pin feathers will downgrade this product.
2. **Aroma:** 100 points. Off, foreign, sour or sharp odors shall downgrade the turkey and the good mellow aroma that please the judge shall upgrade it.
3. **Texture of Cut Surface:** 150 points. (White Meat-100 points; Dark Meat - 50 points). Excessive dryness in the turkey will cause to downgrade the product. The turkey should not be too coarse grained.
4. **Inside Color:** 150 points. (White Meat - 100 points; Dark Meat - 50 points). The color of the white meat should be uniform light pink color and bruises shall score quite heavily against color. The dark meat should be a uniform light red color and bruises shall score quite heavily against color. Any uncured areas will downgrade the product.
5. **Palatability Characteristics:** 400 points. (White Meat - 200 points; Dark Meat - 200 points). One wedge-shaped slice of dark meat shall be taken from the midpoint of the length of the thigh bone, one wedge-shaped slice of white meat shall be taken from one half of the breast near the keel bone in line with the point of the keel bone and an additional cross section sample shall be taken from the breast. Slices shall be tasted cold. The turkey should not be too salty or too bland, should have the good mellow flavor expected in a good smoked turkey, with no unpleasant after taste and should be tender.



The presence of off flavors such as rancidity, bacterial spoilage, etc., shall severely downgrade the product.

**H. FLAVORED PORK BELLY BACON:** This product may be any whole belly bacon that otherwise would not conform to the Commercial Bacon class. Honey, Cajun, Apple Cinnamon would be examples of bacon for this category. Anything with inclusions will classify in this class. The product must be whole and shall not be cut or sliced and should be boneless. Incorporation of curing ingredients must be by either injection, messaged (tumbling), dry rubbing or soaking. Judging will be based on the following:

1. **General Appearance:** 150 points. Amount of trimming, workmanship, eye appeal, conformation and outside color should be the main points considered. Judges will severely penalize excessive trimming or poor workmanship or robbing of lean areas, and lack of uniformity of color.
2. **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 poor quality.
3. **Aroma:** 100 points. Off or sour odors should downgrade the bacon. A good, smooth aroma should upgrade.
4. **Texture:** 100 points. Pumped bacon may be downgraded in texture if it appears to have excessive moisture. Temperature of the bacon should be considered in scoring texture since cooler bacon is firmer.
5. **Inside Color:** 100 points. Lean should be light red, fat should be white, color should be uniform; bruises should downgrade the bacon.
6. **Flavor:** 400 points. Flavor should be a pleasing rich flavor, not too salty and not too bland. The presence of off flavors such as bacterial spoilage, etc., shall severely downgrade the bacon.

**I. SPECIALTY BACON:** This product may be any specialty bacon that otherwise would not conform to the Commercial Bacon/Flavored Whole Belly class. Beef, Cottage, Duck and Canadian would-be examples of bacon for this category. Anything with inclusions will classify in this class. The product must be whole and shall not be cut or sliced and should be boneless. Incorporation of curing ingredients must be by either injection, messaged (tumbling), dry rubbing or soaking. Judging will be based on the following:

1. **General Appearance (Before Cut):** 100 points. Amount of trimming, workmanship, eye appeal, conformation and outside color should be the main points considered. Judges will severely penalize excessive trimming or poor workmanship or robbing of lean areas, and lack of uniformity of color.

2. **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 poor quality.
3. **Aroma (After Cooking):** 100 points. Off or sour odors should downgrade the bacon. A good, smooth aroma should upgrade.
4. **Texture (Fat:Lean & Moisture):** 100 points. Pumped bacon may be downgraded in texture if it appears to have excessive moisture. Lean should be light red, fat should be white, color should be uniform; bruises should downgrade the bacon.
5. **Flavor:** 400 points. Flavor should be a pleasing rich flavor, not too salty and not too bland. The presence of off flavors such as bacterial spoilage, etc., shall severely downgrade the bacon.
6. **Texture - Mouth Feel:** 150 points. Temperature of the bacon should be considered in scoring texture since cooler bacon is firmer.

**J. SPECIALTY HAM:** To be eligible for this class, boneless hams must be manufactured from whole muscle pieces, chunked pieces, and/or ground or emulsified pieces of the wholesale cut of the ham. Whole muscle pieces are allowed. Hams may be shaped, formed or pressed. Boiled hams and cuts other than pork hams are not allowed. Incorporation of curing ingredients must be by either injection or massaging (tumbling). Judging will be based on the following:

1. **General Appearance:** 200 points. Hams shall be graded on eye appeal, conformation, and trim and cut ability or yield. Scoring for general appearance will be done in two phases allowing up to 100 points for appeal, conformation, and trim before cutting; 100 points for cut ability and yield after cutting.
2. **Aroma:** 150 points. Off, foreign, sour or sharp odors should downgrade the ham and a good mellow aroma that pleases the judge should upgrade it. Aroma shall be decided upon the cutting of and before the cooking of product.
3. **Texture of the Cut Surface:** 100 points. Excessive moisture is objectionable. The ham should not be too coarse grained. There should not be an excess of fat marbled in the ham.
4. **Inside Color:** 150 points. The color should be uniform and appealing. It should not be too light or too red and bruises should score quite heavily against color. If ham should be noticeably cooler than the rest of the hams giving it an advantage in color and firmness, this should be considered and graded accordingly.
5. **Flavor:** 400 points. A full half-slice of ham from the cushion side of the ham shall be cooked and two taste samples taken, one from the lower muscle and one from the top muscle, unless the ham is sour or has an off flavor in the first sample, making it inferior to be considered in the top four places. The ham should not be too salty or too bland and

should have a good mellow flavor expected of a good ham. The presence of off-flavor such as rancidity or bacterial spoilage, etc., shall severely downgrade the product.

- K. SPECIALTY CLASS (RESTRUCTURED):** Any cured meat or manufactured product not listed as a specific category, and that has been ground, restructured, comminuted or formed. A card identifying the product by name **must** accompany the entry to assist in judging. Judging will be based on the same rules listed above. Examples would be lunch meat that was ground then formed or head cheese.
- L. SPECIALTY CLASS (WHOLE MUSCLE):** Any cured meat or manufactured product not listed as a specific category that is made from full muscles. A card identifying the product by name **must** accompany the entry to assist in judging. Judging will be based on the same rules listed above. Examples would be Pastrami, Corned Beef, or Dried Beef.
- M. FRESH SAUSAGE - BULK:** Sausage ***must not*** be in casings and should be packaged as it would normally be retailed. The total weight of the product entered for competition must be at least one (1) pound. A card identifying the product by name **must** accompany the entry to assist in judging. Because fresh sausage will lose its natural color rapidly, the way it is packaged will be considered when judging the external appearance. Packaging should be moisture proof, as products will be held on ice during the competition. This product may also contain inclusions. Judging will be based on the following:
1. **General Appearance:** 100 points. Product shall be graded on eye appeal, conformation and packaging.
  2. **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.
  3. **Characteristics of cooking:** 200 points. Product shall be graded on aroma during cooking, fat/lean ratio, and moisture content.
  4. **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 MMPA's specialty class.
  5. **Texture/Mouthfeel:** 150 points. Rancidity, spoilage, chewability and bind will all be considered.
- N. FRESH SAUSAGE - CASED:** Sausage ***must*** be in edible casings and should be packaged as it would normally be retailed. The total weight of the product entered for competition must be at least one (1) pound. A card identifying the product by name **must** accompany the entry to assist

in judging. Because fresh sausage will lose its natural color rapidly, the way it is packaged will be considered when judging the external appearance. Packaging should be moisture proof, as products will be held on ice during the competition. This product may also contain inclusions. Judging will be based on the following:

1. **General Appearance:** 100 points. Product shall be graded on eye appeal, conformation and packaging, and uniformity of shape.
2. **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 casing and blood spots) and aroma.
3. **Characteristics of cooking:** 200 points. Product shall be graded on aroma during cooking, fat/lean ratio, and moisture content.
4. **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 MMPA's specialty class.
5. **Texture/Mouthfeel:** 150 points. Rancidity, spoilage, chew ability and bind will all be considered.

**O. POLISH SAUSAGE:** Sausages must be whole and shall not be cut or sliced. Total entered product weight shall not be less than one (1) pound. Sausage may be cased or may be skinless. Polish sausage shall be cooked to a temp. of not less than 152 degrees F. This product must be a traditional type small diameter smoked sausage and **must not** contain inclusions. Examples of inclusions are rice, cheese, jalapeños, etc. If your product does contain specialty ingredients it must be entered in the Specialty Small Diameter class. Judging will be based on the following:

1. **External Appearance:** 250 points. Visual Appearance and Workmanship: Uniformity of color, 75 points; Uniformity of shape (diameter, etc.), 75 points; Lack of defects (i.e. air pockets, wrinkles, fat caps), 100 points.
2. **Internal Appearance:** 350 points. Uniformity of color, 75 points; Uniformity of texture, 50 points; fat to lean ratio, 50 points; Lack of obvious defects, 100 points; Aroma, 75 points.
3. **Edibility:** 400 points. Taste (the presence of strong after tastes shall severely downgrade the product), 300 points; Texture/Mouthfeel, 100 points. Flavors such as rancidity, bacterial spoilage, etc. shall severely downgrade the product.

**P. MEAT SNACK STICKS:** To be eligible for this class, the product **cannot** consist of any inclusions like cheese, jalapenos, etc. If your product does contain inclusions it must be entered in the Flavored Meat Snack Sticks class. Sausage may be cased or skinless. Products are to be labeled either *Ready to Eat* (RTE) or *Keep Refrigerated*. Both types shall be judged together as

one category. The total weight of the product entered for competition must be at least one half (1/2) pound. Judging will be based on the following:

1. **General Appearance:** 150 points. External appearance includes uniformity of color, conformation, casing or surface appearance, and lack of obvious defeats.
2. **Internal Appearance:** 100 points. Internal appearance will be judged high on particle uniformity and excessive fat shall down score the product.
3. **Aroma:** 100 points. There shall be a desirable cured aroma; objectionable odors will be downgraded.
4. **Texture:** 150 points. Mouthfeel and appropriate moisture content will be extremely important in the judging of this product.
5. **Edibility:** 200 points. A desirable appearance, pleasing aroma, desirable mouthfeel and flavor along with a pleasant aftertaste that will stimulate continued or further consumption of this product shall up score this product.
6. **Flavor:** 300 points. A suitably full-bodied flavor is appropriate. Flavor may vary at the discretion of the entrant - (150 points). A pleasant aftertaste is necessary - (150 points).

**Q. SPECIALTY MEAT SNACK STICKS:** To be eligible for this class, the product **must** consist of inclusions like cheese, jalapenos, etc. If your product does not contain it must be entered in the Meat Snack Sticks class. Sausage may be cased or skinless. Products are to be labeled either *Ready to Eat* (RTE) or *Keep Refrigerated*. Both types shall be judged together as one category. The total weight of the product entered for competition must be at least one half (1/2) pound. Judging will be based on the following:

1. **General Appearance:** 150 points. External appearance includes uniformity of color, confirmation, casing or surface appearance and lack of obvious defeats.
2. **Internal Appearance:** 100 points. Internal appearance will be judged high on particle uniformity and excessive fat shall down score the product.
3. **Aroma:** 100 points. There shall be a desirable cured aroma; objectionable odors will be downgraded.
4. **Texture:** 150 points. Mouthfeel and appropriate moisture content will be extremely important in the judging of this product.
5. **Edibility:** 200 points. A desirable appearance, pleasing aroma, desirable mouthfeel and flavor along with a pleasant aftertaste that will stimulate continued or further consumption of this product shall up score this product.

6. **Flavor:** 300 points. A suitably full-bodied flavor is appropriate. Flavor may vary at the discretion of the entrant - (150 points). A pleasant aftertaste is necessary - (150 points).

**R. SMALL DIAMETER COOKED AND/OR SMOKED SAUSAGE** To be eligible for this class – smoked and cooked sausage must consist of beef and/or pork, or chicken. Emulsion type products are eligible for this class. This product **must not** contain inclusions (cheese, jalapenos, etc.), if your product does it must be entered in the Specialty Small Diameter Class. Product must be stuffed into an edible casing not to exceed 40mm in diameter or be skinless. No colored casings allowed. The total weight of the product entered for competition must be at least one (1) pound. Judging will be based on the following:

1. **External Appearance:** 250 points. Visual appearance and Workmanship, Uniformity of color, 75 points; Uniformity of shape (diameter, etc.), 75 points; lack of defects (i.e. air pockets, wrinkles, fat caps), 100 points.
2. **Internal Appearance:** 350 points. Uniformity of color, 75 points; uniformity of texture, 50 points; fat to lean ratio, 50 points; Lack of obvious defects, 100 points; Aroma, 75 points.
3. **Edibility:** 400 points. Taste, 300 points; Texture/Mouthfeel, 100 points; Off flavors such as rancidity, bacterial spoilage, etc., shall severely downgrade the product.

**S. SPECIALTY SMALL DIAMETER COOKED AND/OR SMOKED SAUSAGE** To be eligible for this class – smoked and cooked sausage must consist of beef and/or pork, or chicken. Emulsion type products are eligible for this class. This product **must** contain inclusions (cheese, jalapenos, etc.), if your product does not it must be entered in the Small Diameter Class. Product must be stuffed into an edible casing not to exceed 40mm in diameter or be skinless. No colored casings allowed. The total weight of the product entered for competition must be at least one (1) pound. Judging will be based on the following:

1. **External Appearance:** 250 points. Visual appearance and Workmanship, Uniformity of color, 75 points; Uniformity of shape (diameter, etc.), 75 points; lack of defects (i.e. air pockets, wrinkles, fat caps), 100 points.
2. **Internal Appearance:** 350 points. Uniformity of color, 75 points; uniformity of texture, 50 points; fat to lean ratio, 50 points; Lack of obvious defects, 100 points; Aroma, 75 points.
3. **Edibility:** 400 points. Taste, 300 points; Texture/Mouthfeel, 100 points; Off flavors such as rancidity, bacterial spoilage, etc., shall severely downgrade the product.

**T. MONTANA BEEF COUNCIL INNOVATIVE ALL BEEF PRODUCT:** Product must be 100% all beef as far as meat contents. This class is sponsored by the Montana Beef Council for Research and Development of new beef products.

1. **Class of Entry:** This is truly an open class. The foremost requirement is that the product must consist of 100% Beef *only* as the meat ingredient. Only ***one*** entry per member plant can be made in this category.
2. **Judges:** Besides the judges involved in the rest of the Montana Cured Meat Championships, a representative from the Montana Beef Council will also participate in the judging.
3. **Registration:** The registration fee of \$17.50 will be paid for by the Montana Beef Council. Entries for this class will be accepted in conjunction with the regular Cured Meat Registration form.
4. **Cutting and/or Cooking:** Cutting and/or cooking shall be left to the discretion of the judges.
5. **Points & Scoring:**
  - a. **General appearance:** 100 points. Product shall be graded on eye appeal, conformation and packaging and uniformity of shape
  - b. **Internal appearance:** 100 points. Product shall be judged on the general internal appearance. Judges will look at particle definition, uniformity of texture, lack of obvious defects in workmanship and aroma.
  - c. **Characteristics of cooking:** 200 points. Product shall be graded on aroma during cooking, fat/lean ratio and moisture content.
  - d. **Palatability characteristics/flavor:** 300 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 *Specialty Class*.
  - e. **Texture/mouth feel:** 100 points. Chew ability and bind will be considered.
  - f. **Convenience/ease of preparation:** 200 points. This shall be judged by a representative of the Montana Beef Council.
6. **General Rules:** All other General Rules of the 2019 MMPA Cured Meat Rules shall apply other than those listed above.
7. **Montana Beef Council Award:** **\$100.00** to the **Grand Champion!!** Grand Champion winner must release to the Montana Beef Council the full and complete detailed recipe, ingredients and cooking schedule (if applicable) for the winning product.

**U. MONTANA PORK COUNCIL INNOVATIVE ALL PORK PRODUCT:** Product must be 100% all pork as far as meat contents. This class is sponsored by the Montana Pork Council for Research and Development of new beef products.

1. **Class of Entry:** This is truly an open class. The foremost requirement is that the product must consist of 100% Pork *only* as the meat ingredient. Only ***one*** entry per member plant can be made in this category.

2. **Judges:** Besides the judges involved in the rest of the Montana Cured Meat Championships, a representative from the Montana Pork Council will also participate in the judging.
3. **Registration:** The registration fee of \$17.50 will be paid for by the Montana Pork Council. Entries for this class will be accepted in conjunction with the regular Cured Meat Registration form.
4. **Cutting and/or Cooking:** Cutting and/or cooking shall be left to the discretion of the judges.
5. **Points & Scoring:**
  - a. **General appearance:** 100 points. Product shall be graded on eye appeal, conformation and packaging and uniformity of shape
  - b. **Internal appearance:** 100 points. Product shall be judged on the general internal appearance. Judges will look at particle definition, uniformity of texture, lack of obvious defects in workmanship and aroma.
  - c. **Characteristics of cooking:** 200 points. Product shall be graded on aroma during cooking, fat/lean ratio and moisture content.
  - d. **Palatability characteristics/flavor:** 300 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 *Specialty Class*.
  - e. **Texture/mouth feel:** 100 points. Chew ability and bind will be considered.
  - f. **Convenience/ease of preparation:** 200 points. This shall be judged by a representative of the Montana Pork Council.
6. **General Rules:** All other General Rules of the 2019 MMPA Cured Meat Rules shall apply other than those listed above.
7. **Montana Pork Council Award:** **\$100.00** to the **Grand Champion!!** Grand Champion winner must release to the Montana Pork Council the full and complete detailed recipe, ingredients and cooking schedule (if applicable) for the winning product.