

Examining the Bird

The judge will randomly ask you to show some of the following parts. You will need to practice with your bird before the show.

Head - Hold the bird's head up on your finger and look at its eyes, beak, and comb. Then turn the chicken around and do the same thing on the opposite side. Don't just pretend to be examining the bird, as some judges will ask you questions about certain points on your chicken.

Wings - Fan the chicken's wings out by grasping the shoulder joint and gently pulling out the wing. Slowly fan or spread the feathers out so that the judge can see them all. Turn the bird around and repeat the procedure on the other side.

Undercolor - Lift the feathers on the bird's saddle or neck and blow under them. This is checking that the bird's undercolor, or the color of the feather shafts, is correct, as well as checking for mites or lice.

Width of Body - Place your thumb and first finger around the widest part of the bird's body, or right behind the wing or shoulder joints.

Breast - Flip the bird over and hold their back against your chest. Measure the length of his/her keel bone, sometimes called the breast bone, with your first finger and thumb. This checks that the keel bone is straight and does not have any bumps on it.

Vent - Lower the bird slightly so that the head is facing you. Part the feathers and show the judge the vent, checking for mites and lice as you do so.

Depth of Abdomen - Measure the number of fingers that you can fit between the end of the breast bone and the pubic bones, two small bones on either side of the vent that stick out.

Width between Pubic Bones - The main purpose of this step is to see how productive your hen is when it comes to laying. This may make it seem like an unnecessary step if you show a rooster, but you need to do it anyway. See how many fingers you can fit between the pubic bone.

Feet and Legs - Turn the chicken so the head is facing toward the judge. Then hold out the feet and legs of the bird and look them over, checking for dirt, scaly leg, bumble foot, and other diseases that might be present. Slowly turn the chicken in a full circle, looking at the legs and feet all the time. As this is the last step, you need to wait patiently if you finish first, holding your bird and smiling.