

ACBA Improper Show Etiquette: A judge's Perspective

by Don Petersen, ARBA Judge 713



Since I received my cavy judge's license in 1997, I would guess that I've judged over 100 cavy shows. During that time I've witnessed several cases from exhibitors that I would classify as improper show etiquette. Now during the years that I've been a cavy judge I've lived in Indiana, Michigan, Connecticut, New York and Georgia so I would consider myself a "local" judge in all of those areas at those particular times. So when I mention my experiences at a local show I'm just compiling my thoughts from over all the years and not one area in particular.

When improper show etiquette is displayed it creates an uncomfortable situation for the other exhibitors, the show officials and the judge(s). Going to these shows is for many of us a nice release from our day to day lives and adding extra drama is not something most of us bargained for when we sent in our entries.

The three cases of improper show behavior I would like to touch on are as follows:

- Continuing to show animals with known Disqualifications
- Making statements at the table regarding dissatisfaction with the judging
- Attempts to identify or mark ones animals during judging

I've only seen the first example happen one time, but I'm sure it happens more than we know. It occurred when I was at a local show and I disqualified a very nice animal for a foreign spot in the eye. Less than one month later I heard that the animal was still being shown and won BIS at the show. All judges can miss DQ's but when you are continuing to show an animal in the hope that they miss the DQ so you can win you are missing the whole point of proper showmanship. Also what kind of message you sending to our Youth?

The second example actually occurred at a large show where on a neighboring judges table an exhibitor was so upset with their placement (obviously they did not win the breed) that they proceeded to make loud disparaging comments about the judge. The judge was very embarrassed by the comments but chose to ignore them. It made for a very uncomfortable situation for everyone within ear shot. Granted not everyone can win and we all feel disappointment at shows we go to but we as judges are providing a service to the ARBA and ACBA. Remember we are coming to these shows to have fun.

If in fact you feel you have been done wrong by a judge at a show then you are entitled to file a protest with the ARBA. A protest is only allowable if one of the following occurs: (1) A disqualified animal is placed (see example number 1). (2) An animal is wrongly disqualified. (3) Alleged fraudulent practices on the part of any judge. The protest must be done within 2 hours after awards are placed and requires the exhibitor to put up a \$25.00 protest fee. ARBA Show rules 48 — 50 go in to further detail. Most times however the exhibitor will take the easy road and make noise at the show, which makes for an uncomfortable setting.

The last example occurs quite often at shows. Many cavy shows are small enough that unless the judge closes their eyes or turns their back every 10 minutes when the animals are brought to the table they are going to have a general idea whose animals are whose. It's near impossible to avoid sometimes but when you go out of your way to make sure the judge knows it's your animal you have crossed the line. Remember that the judge has been hired by the club because their opinion is respected and they are counting on them to be fair.

One example of many occurs, when after the breed is over you scoop up your BOB winning animal from the table and stare right at

the judge and ask "How did this one do?" you are in violation of ARBA show rule 45, which is as follows:

Exhibitors or guardians of exhibitors attempting to, or actually interfering with, annoying, molesting, or influencing the judge or judges, or acting in a manner unbecoming an exhibitor(s) shall have all their stock disqualified by the judge and shall be ejected by the show superintendent and barred from the show room. Suspension or expulsion of ARBA membership may result from said acts, if so deemed by ARBA Board of Directors.

Weather it was perfectly innocent or not, meaning you really didn't know how the animal did, you have attempted to influence the judge when it comes to BIS consideration. The judge has every right to enact show rule 45. Now the expulsion would only occur if you were in fact a member of ARBA but remember even Non-ARBA members agree to abide by the ARBA Show Rules when they make their entry so they are subject to having animals disqualified and being ejected from the show.

Now granted show rule 45 is very broad in its scope but it also very serious in its nature. I don't know of any judges who are out looking to enforce show rule 45 because it is so serious but it is an option that all judges have at their disposal. There are numerous other examples when exhibitors attempt (sometimes innocently) to influence the judge but remember that you are putting everyone in a very awkward position. Even if the judge totally ignored your question they still heard and saw your actions and likely so did everyone else at the show. So now when your animal comes up for BIS (assuming show rule 45 did not get enacted on yourself) you have put the judge in a very awkward position because there is always the chance some exhibitor out there felt that your statement did influence the judge if you do go on to win BIS or RIS.

If you really don't know how your animal did after the breed is judged then quietly off to the side ask the show officials and they will be glad to tell you.

Also it's getting to be common place nowadays when most shows are a double so animals are being show on two tables at the same time. Most shows also are no longer using comment cards so there is a chance that you might not be able to be present when the comments are being given. Most judges understand this so if you missed the comments because you were busy at another table then it is acceptable to approach the judge after the show is over and ask about an animal or two. During it during the show is not proper, but I don't think most judges would mind after the show.

This has been a recap of some of my experiences over the years of judging. It's really done as an attempt to make everyone aware that our actions like these at shows, innocent or not, have reactions that create uncomfortable and awkward environments. We all come to the shows to have fun and socialize, so let's not spoil it with improper show etiquette. Thanks for you time.

IF MY OWNER PURPOSELY SHOWED ME KNOWING I HAD A DQ, WHY, I'D BE MORTIFIED! HOW RUDE...

