

April 16, 2024,



Greetings District Judging Contacts

It has been a while since our last newsletter so I would like to bring you up to date on a few important items. I realize this is a long email but I ask that you please take the time to read the entire email so you don't miss any important information.

1) Extension of Judges' Certification deadline:

While reviewing the Judges' Lists while preparing them to upload to the new Judging Program database, it became apparent that there are a significant number of judges that would have lost their certification in certain Categories as of January 1, 2024.

Upon discussion with the Judging Program Advisory Committee, **we have decided to make one last extension to ensure that we don't lose a significant number of Judges.**

Judges whose certification was set to expire as of **January 1, 2024** will be given until **August 1, 2024** to attend Judging Schools in those categories where they had not attended a judging school since 2016 & 2017 to maintain their certification.

To allow people to attend the judging school in the spring, we will also be extending the other deadlines from January to August.

Judges whose certification was set to expire as of January 1, 2025 will be given until **August 1, 2025** to attend Judging Schools in those categories where they had not attended a judging school since 2018.

Judges whose certification was set to expire as of January 1, 2026 will be given until **August 1, 2026** to attend Judging Schools in those categories where they had not attended a judging school since 2019.

IN ADDITION: Anyone that attended a Judging School in 2020, 2021, or 2022 will need to attend a judging school in those categories by **August 1, 2026** to maintain their certification.

IMPORTANT: Starting with schools attended in 2023, we will be returning to the requirement to attend a judging school **at least once every 3 years for each category** to maintain certification for that category.

O A A S J U D G I N G R E C E R T I F I C A T I O N D E A D L I N E S

Year last attended Judging School	Recertification deadline	1) Certified Judges - To remain certified 2) Apprentice Judges- to maintain their name on the Apprentice Judges List
2015 or earlier	Not applicable	Revised April 2024 must start process to become a judge from the start by attending judging school and apprenticing
2016	August 1, 2024	must attend judging school in each category no later than this date to maintain certification
2017	August 1, 2024	must attend judging school in each category no later than this date to maintain certification
2018	August 1, 2025	must attend judging school in each category no later than this date to maintain certification
2019	August 1, 2026	must attend judging school in each category no later than this date to maintain certification
Continued overlap/extension due to the Pandemic		
2020	August 1, 2026	must attend judging school in each category no later than this date to maintain certification
2021	August 1, 2026	must attend judging school in each category no later than this date to maintain certification
2022	August 1, 2026	must attend judging school in each category no later than this date to maintain certification
Return to the 3-year requirement to maintain certification		
2023	2026	must attend judging school in each category no later than this date to maintain certification
2024	2027	must attend judging school in each category no later than this date to maintain certification
2025	2028	must attend judging school in each category no later than this date to maintain certification

2) IMPORTANT: Updated process for providing information on participants that have completed Judging Schools

The Judges' List spreadsheets that are on our website have been uploaded to our new Judges' Program. It was hoped that the process would be in place to receive the new information for the spring judging schools but it has taken longer than expected to get the program in place, so OAAS staff will be adding the information for your spring/summer schools into the new program.

IMPORTANT: Add the year of the judging school and any changes to judges' contact information or submission of a code of conduct form **and highlight those changes in yellow** on the most recent Judges List and submit to vince@oasfairs.com.

NOTE: If you are not sure you have the most recent copy of your district's spreadsheets, please contact me and I will send you a copy.

IMPORTANT: Please submit this information as soon as possible after the completion of your judging school.

3) NEW Website

Our new website will be going live very shortly. We have reorganized the website to make it easier and more intuitive to find information, forms, and programs that Districts, Agricultural Societies and their members are looking for.

IMPORTANT: Please watch for emails and notices on our current website, on our Facebook accounts and via email with additional information as well as dates of training webinars and the go-live date.

One of the concerns with our previous website was that Judges' personal contact information was available to the general public. Anyone accessing the new website will be able to see a list of Certified and Apprentice Judges, the categories they are certified/apprentice, their home fair and District but the general public will not be able to see the judges' personal contact information.

IMPORTANT: Each District and Agricultural Society will be provided with a unique password to access the Certified and Apprentice Judges Lists which will also include the Judges' contact information. The process is quick and straight-forward and should be less time-consuming to access than on our current website.

4) AssistExpo Judging Program Module

The current Judges' Lists have been uploaded into the new program and the latest judges' information will be available on the new site.

We are currently verifying the Judges' information that was input into the system and working to remove duplicate entries. There are a number of Judges that were listed on more than one District Judges' List, and some were entered with different spelling of their names e.g. Sue versus Susan on a District Homecraft versus their Ag & Hort Lists. We are having to manually compare the duplicate entries to ensure that all the information has been captured correctly for each person.

The OAAS staff will be updating the program with the information that you submit from your spring Judging Schools (see point 2 above).

Moving forward, the new program will allow a Judge to indicate what district they are willing to travel to for judging assignments. They will also be able to add dates, categories and ag society information for all their Judging Assignments. The Judge will also be able to update any changes to their contact information (address, phone, email) so hopefully that will lighten the workload for the districts.

5) Judging School – Requirements

a) Use of OAAS Certified Instructor

An OAAS Certified Instructor is required to instruct/lead all OAAS Judging Schools. If a Certified Instructor is not available for the Judging School Category you are holding, you may engage a *Subject Matter Expert* to teach the Category but an OAAS Certified Instructor is required to lead the Judging School and provide guidance.

The Subject Matter Expert must use the OAAS Judging Standards and points system for the Category as part of their instruction.

b) Length of Judging Schools - Appendix G “Judging Program Categories”

Just a reminder to review Appendix G “Judging Program Categories”

https://www.ontarioagsocieties.com/images/2022/Appendix_G_-_Judging_Program_Categories_revised_April_7_2022.pdf

prior to planning your Judging Schools to ensure that you have allowed enough time for the individual categories.

It came to my attention while inputting Judging School information into the new program, that several districts are not allowing sufficient time for Instructors to properly cover the required content and judging exercises during the judging school schedules.

Categories require a minimum of 3 hours of class time to ensure that the Instructor has time to:

- i. Adequately review and explain the Judging Standard point system for the Category and discuss the topic information included in the Judging Standards
- ii. Allow sufficient time for hands-on judging practice on several classes of items that are included within the Category.

6) Judging School Categories – updates to Ag & Hort

Field Crops - We will be looking to make some changes to the Agriculture and Horticulture Judges List over the next year. The plan will be to merge the 4 current Field Crop sections (Seed Sample/Small Grain, Grain corn, Small seeded Legume/Hay and Large Seeded Legume) into one section called Field Crops. From reviewing the Judges' Lists it appears that almost 100% of judges are qualified in all 4 sections.

IMPORTANT- we are asking if you are holding any Field Crop Judging Schools this year, that you include all 4 sections in your school to aid in the transition to the new format.

Roots & Vegetables and Table Garlic - We are also planning to merge the Table Garlic into the Roots & Vegetables category. It also appears that almost 100% of judges are qualified in both categories.

IMPORTANT- we are asking if you are holding a Roots & Vegetables Judging School this year, that you include Table Garlic in your school to aid in the transition to the new format.

7) Judging School funding

We will be providing Judging School funding again this year.

PROGRAM: - Judging School Funding

- OAAS is providing \$200 towards the cost of hiring OAAS certified Instructors **and to assist to cover other expenses for each full day (or two – ½ days)** Judging School for up to 2 Judging Schools in each District.
- If a District holds more than 2 Judging Schools in the year, they can apply for additional funding – if not all Districts hold 2 schools, the additional funding can be distributed to the Districts holding more than 2.

REQUIREMENTS:

The following provisions **must be met** for the District to be eligible for the \$200 (x 2) funding.

- 1) District must register their Judging School at least 45 days prior to the date by submitting the '**OAAS District Event Registration Form**' to the events@oaasfairs.com.

NOTE: this has been an ongoing requirement to ensure that your District event is covered by the OAAS liability insurance. Here's a link to the form -

https://www.ontarioagsocieties.com/images/2023/OAAS_District_Event_Registration_F14.16_06.02.2023.pdf

- 2) District must have OAAS certified Instructor running the school. If there is not a certified OAAS instructor available for the topic, an OAAS Instructor must oversee the school, and a subject matter expert can be brought in to teach the topic.
- 3) Judging School categories/topics shall endeavour to follow the timeframes set out in Appendix G. We are still reviewing the timeframes.
- 4) District must submit a list of successful participants that attended the Judging School(s) to vince@oaasfairs.com. Please include a) District #; b) Date; c) Topic(s) covered; d) Instructor(s) name; e) participants' names; and f) their District #.
- 5) Districts must submit the updated '**Judges' List**' Excel spreadsheet to vince@oaasfairs.com
- 6) All District Directors must have submitted their Police Record Check to vince@oaasfairs.com

After the criteria have been met and the list of successful participants and updated Judges' List spreadsheets have been submitted to vince@oaasfairs.com, the OAAS will send the District the payment.

NOTE: if 2 or more Districts are holding joint judging schools **only** 1 District may apply for the funding for that specific school.

8) Instructors' Lists

In the next couple of weeks, I will be sending out copies of your District Instructors lists for you to review and update. It appears that we have not received current lists of Certified and Apprentice Instructors from most of the Districts in the past few years.

Prior to the receipt of the Instructor spreadsheets, I would ask that you please take some time to collect the names, the Categories (whether they are Certified or Apprentice) and the year they became an Instructor **OR** the last year that they instructed in your District. If you have completed copies of the "OAAS Apprentice

Instructor Form”, I will ask you to submit those with the updated spreadsheets.

IMPORTANT: It is critical that each District submit this information so that we can have a complete list on our website. It appears that there are a number of individuals that have completed the process to become a Certified or Apprentice Instructor that are not currently included on our Instructors List and we need to ensure that this is corrected.

I have received some questions about Instructors qualifications or how to become an Instructor

- a) Must have been a Certified OAAS Judge for at least 5 years in each Category they wish to apprentice
- b) Must apprentice with 2 different Instructors in each Category they wish to become a Certified Instructor **and** complete and submit the “OAAS Apprentice Instructor Form” found on the website at [https://www.ontarioagsocieties.com/images/2019/OAAS Apprentice Instructor Form 2019 fillablepdf .pdf](https://www.ontarioagsocieties.com/images/2019/OAAS_Apprentice_Instructor_Form_2019_fillablepdf.pdf)

The above information about Instructor qualifications is taken from our website -

[https://www.ontarioagsocieties.com/images/2019/Requirements for OAAS Certified and Apprentice Instructors Feb 2019.pdf](https://www.ontarioagsocieties.com/images/2019/Requirements_for_OAAS_Certified_and_Apprentice_Instructors_Feb_2019.pdf)

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,



Vince Brennan
Executive Director (OAAS)