



## Spectator Etiquette

We are thrilled you have decided to attend a dog or cat event at the Purina Event Center. To make sure you have the best experience possible, we've put together the following tips, so you'll be right on your way to becoming an expert spectator:

### What should I bring?

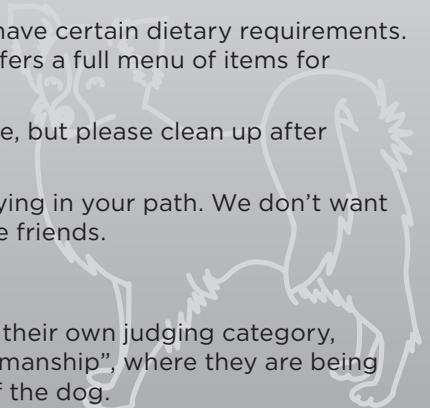
- It's a good idea to bring your own chair. A lot of exhibitors (those handling the dogs or cats during competition) and spectators bring folding lawn chairs.
- Wear comfortable walking shoes to easily get around the different halls to see all of the activities taking place.

### What are some general rules?

- Always ask before you pet any of the dogs and cats as some might have been recently groomed and are now waiting their turn to enter the ring. Do not allow children to hug a strange dog or stick their fingers into a strange dog or cat's crate. Just like people, dogs and cats may be uncomfortable with strangers invading their personal space.
- The inside of the competition rings (including empty rings) are off limits to spectators. Stepping over or hanging on ring gating can pose a safety hazard. Also, empty rings may have just been cleaned or set up for the next event.
- Try to sit at least 5' away from the competition ring out of respect for the exhibitors, and so you don't become a distraction. During agility, obedience and rally trials, 8'-10' away from the ring is the preferred seating distance.
- Children are welcome at shows and trials, but please emphasize the importance of using inside voices, staying a fair distance away from the rings and keeping their hands close by their sides when passing by the dogs and cats. Although strollers are welcome at Purina Farms, events on the property sanctioned by the American Kennel Club (AKC) may prohibit strollers, so please plan accordingly. This rule is enforced by the individual Club hosting the event. Please call ahead - 314-982-3232 - to see if the show or trial you are attending allows strollers.
- Please turn your phones to silent when near the competition rings. The ringing may interfere with the dogs and cats competing.
- No outside food and beverage is allowed unless you have certain dietary requirements. A Café is located right next to the event space and offers a full menu of items for purchase.
- You may bring food and drink out into the event space, but please clean up after yourselves.
- Watch your step for any dogs that may be sitting or lying in your path. We don't want you to step on feet, noses, or tails of any of our canine friends.

### What can I expect to see?

- Certain shows allow kids to handle a dog. They are in their own judging category, which usually falls under the heading of "Junior Showmanship", where they are being judged on their handling skills and not the qualities of the dog.



- During conformation shows, dogs and cats are judged against an individual breed standard established for their particular breeds. A judge evaluates dogs and cats according to how well they conform to the ideal breed standard in terms of structure and temperament. For dogs, they also evaluate the way they move or their “gait.” For cats, they also pay attention to their curiosity and mental acuity when toys are brought out. The highest title at an All-Breed Show is Best in Show. The highest title at a National Specialty is Best of Breed.
  - o In terms of the American Kennel Club sanctioned conformation events, most dogs are competing for points toward their AKC championships. It takes fifteen points, including two majors (win of three, four or five points) awarded by at least three different judges, to become an American Kennel Club “Champion of Record.”
  - o Spayed or neutered dogs are not eligible to compete in conformation classes at a dog show, because the purpose of a dog show is to evaluate breeding stock.
- Agility, obedience and rally are just three types of performance trials you can see regularly at the Purina Event Center. During agility, the dog is judged on time and accuracy with the highest title being MACH (Masters Agility Champion). In Obedience, the dog is judged on accuracy and precision with his handler as they move through pre-determined exercises led by the judge. The highest title is OTCH (Obedience Trial Champion). In Rally, the dog and handler must execute a course designed by a judge that contains signs telling the team what they have to do and what direction they go in. The highest title for Rally is an RAE (Rally Advance Excellent). With all these performance events, there are three levels of competition, with each level becoming increasingly more difficult to perform. In order to qualify (pass the test), the team must score a certain percentage of the highest available score for each event.
- Notice how many of the exhibitors root for each other. At the end of the day, it all comes down to passion. Exhibitors are passionate about seeing the best of the best dogs and cats showcased for all to see.

### **What are the secrets to success for the winning dogs and cats?**

- It comes down to a great foundation made up of good breeding, excellent nutrition, ideal conditioning and expert training and handling. Did you know that more than 90 of the Top 100 AKC All-Breed Champions are fed Purina® Pro Plan®? The top two most requested Pro Plan® formulas here at the Purina Event Center are Sensitive Skin & Stomach and Performance 30/20.

### **How do I start competing with my dog or cat?**

- The best place to start is by joining a local Club. You can join a local kennel club or a breed-specific specialty club. You could also join a performance club that focuses on agility and/or obedience. Visit [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org) and do a Club search, but please know there are other registries out there that also have Clubs, but are not affiliated with the AKC. Also, check [cfa.org](http://cfa.org) for a listing of cat clubs.

### **What if I want to add a pet to my family after seeing all the amazing dogs and cats in competition?**

- Purina promotes all of the life-enriching benefits that come from pet ownership. We encourage you to work with reputable breeders to bring a new pet into your home or find responsible shelters or rescue groups in your area. We don't allow the selling of pets on the Purina Farms property. You can contact us at [purinafarms@purina.nestle.com](mailto:purinafarms@purina.nestle.com) for breeder and animal welfare organization referrals.

