

STANDARDIZATION OF RULES FOR JUDGING SHOW FRUIT.

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It is quite understood that in all competitive exhibitions, such as agricultural and horticultural shows, the fortune of competitors is largely in the hands of the judge. To some extent this is quite as it should be, as judges are invariably selected on their knowledge and experience in the particular classes they are called upon to adjudicate, and as experts they should be fully competent to arrive at just decisions.

It is also recognized, however, that an expert may, and very often has, very strong and set opinions with reference to his particular line, and when officiating as a judge these opinions, no matter how sound they may be, may, if left unchecked, detrimentally affect his decision. That is to say, any important feature of the display, if not limited by standard rules for judging, may dominate all others, and a decision be given by a judge that is quite contrary to the wishes of the society for which he is acting.

Instances of this have been only too numerous in the past in connection with fruit shows. In fact, the apparent inconsistency or lack of uniformity among fruit judges has been responsible for many enthusiastic exhibitors cooling off and eventually dropping the show business altogether; while many others have resorted to the expedient of making more than one entry to a class when competing under a judge of whom they have had no previous experience.

These remarks are not intended to reflect on the competency of past judges, but upon the system, or lack of system, on which they were working. A judge must carry out his work according to his own ideas, and so long as ideas differ and remain unrestricted by standard rules, so must judgments continue to be inconsistent and otherwise unsatisfactory.

This matter was taken up by the annual conference of the New Zealand Fruitgrowers' Federation, held at Dunedin in May last, and a committee of growers representing the various districts was appointed to go into the matter with a view to submitting a scheme to the Federation's executive for consideration. The report of the committee—on which the writer was invited to act—included