

The back side of exhibits may reveal true colors, as participants in the crocheting and knitting class discovered. Judges' school students carefully examined several examples for seams, consistency in pattern and colors, or errant threads.

Judges' School

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examined several examples for seams, consistency in pattern and colors, or errant threads.

Fulmer, who has been judging for 20 years, not only crochets and knits but also teaches the crafts. "I just love to look at what other people do. Judging at a fair is one of the best places to get ideas for yourself," she said. "It's great."

Cooking, Photography

Hazel Stahley, Gaithersburg, Md., and Annie Clark, Whitneysville, instructed the baked goods portion of the school. Participants evaluated the tastes, textures, flavor, and appearance of several different kinds of confections and breads. Learning proper baking techniques has been a lifelong process for Stahley, who began as a 4-H'er and with instruction from her mother.

Stahley, who has judged for 25 years, pointed out cakes which were not mixed properly or were not baked long enough and had a wet spot. Stahley also suggested sniffing the cakes, since some exhibitors smoke while they bake cakes, lending a distinctive odor to the cake.

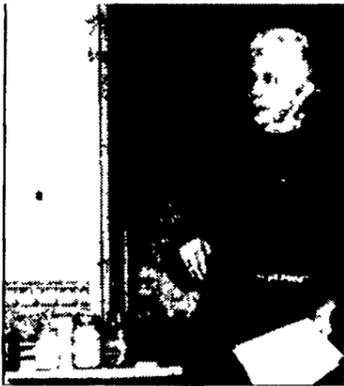
To tell the difference between a boxed angel food cake and a homemade cake, check the way the cake cracks on the top, she said. A boxed cake will have a star-like pattern while a homemade cake will crack in an almost-perfect ring.

"You have to tune your mind clear of preferences and judge on the quality of the exhibit itself," she said. As students tasted the cookies, she advised, "forget what you like and go by quality."

"It's nice to get together like this and learn. I can pick up a lot of things from these people. It doesn't matter how small or large a fair is, if you keep an open mind you'll learn something."

Clark used the same generic brand muffin mix and added different ingredients to challenge the baked good judges with several varieties of confections.

"If you've judged, you'll soon



Preserved foods instructor Rainy Linn taught how to distinguish the best canned foods at the fair.

develop your own philosophy and own methods of weeding out the good, the bad, and the in-between," said preserved foods instructor Rainy Linn. University research used by the USDA provided the criteria for judging those classes.

Jars should have 1 — 1/2 of head space, no foreign matter, and have a clear, bright, and natural liquid. According to Linn, jelly should quiver, jam should be spreadable, pickles should be crisp, and dried fruit should be chewable in the canned food competition.

In the photography class Howard Hoch, Oley, helped participants learn to evaluate subject matter, impact, and degree of difficulty. He is the department chairperson of the photography department for the Oley fair.

"Take into consideration what the photographer had to do to get that shot," said Hoch. "If you want that different impact, you're going to try to get that different angle."

Hoch also discussed photograph categories and how action, animals, portrait, children, still life or digital pictures should fit into each category.

The event was conducted in conjunction with the 89th annual convention sponsored by the Pennsylvania State Association of County Fairs and the Pennsylvania State Showmen's Association.

Site Helps Troubleshoot Vegetable Problems

said Thomas A. Zitter, Cornell professor of plant pathology and the Website's creator. "It's been needed a long time," he said, noting that he is particularly proud of the site's vegetable disease photo gallery. "We have even better photos now that didn't appear in the original information sheets."

If you want to know about common blight in beans, a fact

USING THE RSI AND OTHER OSCILLATORS TO ANALYZE THE MARKET

John Berry
Ag Marketing Educator
Lehigh County

Stochastic oscillators are called oscillators because they form a band across the bottom of a chart with a line that moves, or oscillates, above and below a midpoint.

Because an established trend line tends to continue indefinitely, it often is a reliable indicator of future prices. During market price uptrends, a producer wants to own grain that is increasing in value. In downtrends, investors are slow to invest money and quick to protect it. Oscillators are a market indicator that can predict when a producer should sell grain increasing in value and hold grain that is not.

In an uptrend's early stages, prices move steadily upward. As the trend continues, prices begin to move more rapidly as larger numbers of traders — expecting prices to continue to increase — jump into the market. Then, however, prices lose momentum as too few buyers are willing to pay higher prices. The prices move more slowly while holders of rights to receive a commodity (longs) stay in the market to reap further price increases, while other traders leave the market.

Finally exhausted, the prices stop moving up and turn downward. The downtrend produces a similar pattern, but it may be steeper than in the uptrend. If traders know when prices are losing momentum, they probably can respond to that reversal signal to increase their profitability position. In most cases, producers can forecast the end of the trend by plotting the changing movement of the market.

In short, oscillators are designed to measure the underlying strength of a price movement in the market. They measure changes in price rather than just the price level. This is done by measuring the distance of a price change within a time period and assessing if it is significant enough to signal the trader to take market action.

Oscillators usually are used in conjunction with other trend analysis tools. They are most valuable in a non-trending market with prices fluctuating within a trading range. All oscillators have similar charts. There is a base at the bottom and a midline around which the prices oscillate. Good charts can provide valuable information to the trader, but by themselves do not

yield enough clues to ensure good trades. Successful traders must know how to get into and out of the market at the right time to catch the move they are looking for.

Several types of oscillators are available to help traders measure the timing for trades. The Relative Strength Index (RSI) and a stochastic oscillator are among those most frequently used.

RSI

The RSI looks at the average of the up closes and the average of the down closes for a given period. A 14-day segment is commonly used, but the user may select the number of days.

The RSI attempts to identify overbought and oversold markets running out of momentum. A standard scale of zero to 100 is used. The RSI uses an exponential moving average — smooths out inconsistent movement and gives the most weight to recent data while not eliminating the old data. A producer needs to think about the degree of sensitivity desired when he or she chooses boundary lines. These lines represent overbought and oversold conditions. When the RSI crosses these lines, it indicates the market is losing strength and probably will change direction.

Many traders use the 70 line for the upper and the 30 line for the lower boundary, but some believe this range is too sensitive. Producers commonly use upper and lower boundaries of 65 and 35, respectively. The RSI is a leading indicator. Its highs and lows normally precede market tops and bottoms. It confirms changes in momentum, especially fading momentum, signaling an imminent change in market direction. The RSI also alerts the investor to periods of recent price movement that include insignificant true market movement.

Consistent use of the RSI shows long term trend formations similar to bar chart formations. With a little thought and effort, producers can draw support and resistance lines. Again: producers should watch for the RSI to change price direction as a strong signal of market change.

Other Oscillators

Stochastic oscillators forecast market changes by measuring the relative position of the closing price within the daily price range.

For example, while buyers in a bull market are stronger than sellers and push prices up at the end of the trading day, this pat-



Farm Management

tern weakens toward the end of a trend. If the market prices continue to go up but the closing price is moving toward the low end of the price range, the trader should watch for changing markets.

A bear market will see a similar pattern in reverse. When reading the charts, the overbought conditions are indicated near the top of the chart's range while the oversold conditions are near the bottom of the range.

To calculate the Stochastic indicator, subtract the total of the lows for 14 days from the last day's close. Subtract the total of the lows for the same 14 days from the total of the highs for the same 14 days. Divide the first number by the second. This number is then plotted on the graph. Many chart services carry the Stochastic graph at the bottom of their daily activity chart. These patterns usually have been smoothed out by using a moving average of raw stochastic data. Producers using charting services need to check their publications for the exact calculation of this oscillator.

Conclusion

Oscillators rarely are used alone as a market analysis tool. Each trader should develop a personalized combination of marketing tools that may well include oscillators. The producer's needs and time limitations are valid considerations. Producers who consider using the RSI or any of the other oscillators should think about subscribing to a charting service. The time saved may be well worth the expense.

Profitability is the ultimate test of any chosen combination of marketing tools. The trader using oscillators must remember that if prices gain too much velocity, the prices probably will become overextended and change direction.

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ITHACA, N.Y. — Is your asparagus ailing? Can your melons be suffering a malady? Find out what's hurting your corn and cucurbits at Vegetable MD Online, <http://vegetablemdonline.ppath.cornell.edu>, a free service of the Cornell University plant pathology department.

"I've always had an interest in popularizing the good production work we do at Cornell,"

sheet describes its leaf symptoms and explains that it is caused by a bacterium. While warm, humid conditions favor the development of common blight, Vegetable MD Online said that even a trace of infected seed can infect an entire field.

Vegetable MD Online also was developed by Margaret McGrath, Cornell associate professor of plant pathology at the

Long Island Horticulture Research and Extension Center, Riverhead, N.Y., and by Dawn Dailey-O'Brien, an extension support specialist in plant pathology.

Navigating the web site is easy. A click on "Diseases by Crops" finds the vegetable of interest displayed as seed packets, fact sheets available, together with photos of diseased tissue

that can be magnified online. Zitter said pictures will be updated regularly so that variations in disease appearance can be included.

"We're trying to make the Website as user friendly as possible for commercial growers and homeowners," he said, observing that many Cornell Cooperative Extension educators send him digital images of new diseases in the field for web publication.