

## Judging

The judges will be marking the ploughing against the following criteria. There are 20-points available for each section, 140-points in total.

Criteria	What it means
Opening	<p>All competition plots on stubble (as opposed to grassland) are required to perform an 'opening' (also called veer or split). The methods vary from competitor to competitor, but essentially the requirement is to create a shallow furrow into which the subsequent ploughing will be laid. Consider for a moment that one furrow creates a gap for the next furrow; the opening is the very first of these furrows.</p> <p>The judges will be looking for straightness, uniformity, cleanliness in the furrow bottom, and to ensure that all the ground has been ploughed. As the opening will be hidden by subsequent ploughing, all competitors will stop after completing their opening, while they are judged.</p>
Start (first 11- or 12-furrows)	<p>Once the openings have been judged, the competitors will commence the next stage, known as the 'start' (also known as the 'Middle'). This comprises the first 11- or 12-furrows around the opening (depending on the method of start being used). The competitors begin by laying furrows into the opening, first from one side, and then the other, and continue this process round and round; this is called gathering, and is generally clockwise.</p> <p>The depth of ploughing will typically be very shallow with the first furrows laid into the opening, but will gradually increase in depth until the minimum required depth is reached by the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> furrow. Once the start is complete, the competitors will then change direction, and begin ploughing against their neighbour's plot (into their neighbour's last furrow around his middle). This is called casting, and is generally anti-clockwise. The result of the casting is a continual reduction in the width of unploughed land between the competitor's own middle and that of the neighbour's middle.</p> <p>Despite the requirement to gradually increase the ploughing depth from the middle, and that at the centre of the start the furrows are very shallow, the competitors must make their starts as level as possible. There is a tendency for the middles to be high as each side meets in the middle, however!</p>
Seed Bed	<p>The whole point of ploughing is for an effective start of a process to prepare the land for subsequent planting of new crops. Therefore, the ploughing should reflect this, in terms of having buried all of the previous crop (and weeds) in order to reduce the need to apply sprays. Additionally, there should be sufficient soil made available for subsequent operations, and the ploughing should be even from one furrow to the next.</p>
Firmness	<p>It is conceivable that hollows are created as the furrow slices curl from the plough, or if large nubs of soil are created from the plough, leaving gaps. These hollows and gaps are poor from a weed-control perspective, and should be avoided. Hollows and gaps can also result in the ploughed land becoming very bumpy, which makes all subsequent field operations uncomfortable for the rest of the year!</p>
Uniformity	<p>Each and every furrow should look the same as its neighbour. For example, considering a 2-furrow plough, and the ploughing created from the front and rear furrows: not only should it be impossible to tell between the front and rear furrows on the current pass along the plot, but also from the rear furrow on the current pass against the front furrow on the next pass. This is called 'matching' and is also an essential requirement for a smooth field and uniform seed distribution when the field is planted. The furrows should also be clearly defined, straight and parallel.</p>
Finish (last 8-furrows)	<p>As the competitors cast away to their middle and to their neighbour's middle, the width of unploughed land will inevitably reduce. When this width has reduced to 8-furrows remaining, the competitor will commence the 'finish'. It is imperative that the competitor has kept both sides of the ploughing parallel, in order that the width of unploughed land is the same throughout its length. Additionally, the competitor will have been measuring this width to ensure this it is a correct multiple for the width of the plough, in order that all land is ploughed, but no land is ploughed twice!</p> <p>The finish should be uniform throughout its length, be straight, and not too deep.</p>
Ins and Outs	<p>These are the parts where the plough enters and leaves the ground. The 'ins' should be as 'short' as possible, in order that the wheel mark left by the tractor wheel in the furrow, is covered as soon as possible. All ins and outs should look as uniform as possible.</p>