

NATIONAL 4-H LIVESTOCK JUDGING CONTEST

Tuesday, November 18, 2025

Superintendent - Dr. Brian Bolt

Associate Superintendent – Dr. John Rayfield

Board of Directors, Chair – Dr. Mike Yoder and Vice-Chair – Bonnie Boyden

LIVESTOCK JUDGING CONTEST RULES AND REGULATIONS

ENTRY

Each state is invited to enter one 4-H Livestock judging team of three members. A team may also enter an alternate. When the alternate judges, the three members with the highest total scores will make up the state total. The contestant with the lowest score is eligible for individual awards. The team members will be selected in a manner determined by the State 4-H Program Leader. The contestants must be certified by the State 4-H Program Leader or their written appointed designee on entry form and filed with the National Youth Livestock Contest Vice - Chair by October 15 with all required entry materials and entry fee of \$600.00.

An entry fee of \$600.00 must be paid to **National Youth Livestock Contests**. Entries will be accepted until 11:59 pm on October 15. Late registration at \$1000/team will be accepted up to one week (October 22, 11:59 p.m.) Refer to the website – youthlivestockcontests.org for acceptable payment methods.

Each state that enters a 4-H livestock judging team is responsible for medical/accident insurance for all members of their team while traveling to and from the NAILE and during the National 4-H Judging Contest and other events associated with the NAILE.

CONTESTANTS AND ELIGIBILITY

1. Contestants must be bona fide 4-H Club members approved by the 4-H Program Leaders of their respective states. State 4-H Leaders are responsible for determining the eligibility of participants in the National 4H Livestock Judging Contest from their respective states.
2. Each contestant must have passed his or her 14th birthday and cannot have passed his or her 19th birthday by January 1st of the current year.
3. To be eligible to participate as a contestant in the National 4-H Livestock Judging Contest at the North American Livestock Exposition, an individual:
 - A) shall not have participated in or been a member of **any** post-secondary team (university, college, junior college or technical school) competed at a collegiate livestock judging/evaluation contest/event at any level. A competitive event is defined here as an event open to more than one educational institution (or it's students) in which scores are kept and awards are offered to any or all participants;
 - B) shall not participate in the North American International Livestock Exposition Junior College Judging Contest in the same year he/she is a contestant in the National 4-H Livestock Judging Contest.
 - C) Because the same classes of livestock may be used in one or more divisions (senior college, junior college, and 4-H) of the NAILE Livestock Judging Contests, collegiate (senior or junior) coaches are ineligible to serve as a coach or assistant coach for a 4-H team.
4. Contestants who have served as an official team member in the National 4-H Livestock Judging contest are ineligible to compete a second time.

5. Anyone who participates in the National 4-H Livestock Judging Contest shall not be allowed to exhibit or show a beef and/or sheep animal at the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE) during the period of Nov 14 - 18, 2025. The cattle and sheep youth must choose between exhibiting livestock at the NAILE or judging in the National 4-H Livestock Judging Contest during this period, they are not allowed to do both. You as an individual cannot exhibit or show a beef and/or sheep; however, they can have a beef and/or sheep shown with a substitute exhibitor if the request is made by November 1 to NAILE Management, please send an email to naile@kyvenues.com
6. Communication regarding the contest and any request shall only be received from the state team coach and/or state program leader only.
7. If the coach and/or state program leader believes, additional information may warrant reconsideration of the decision the coach/program leader must submit a written request with a \$250.00 fee to the contest superintendent, chair and vice chair. There will be no refund of said fee unless ruled in favor of the protest. At that time, the fee will be fully refunded. Cash and digital transfers only.

Violation of any of these rules shall disqualify all members of the entered team as contestants in this or future National 4-H Livestock Judging Contests. Further, the coach shall be barred from participation in the current, as well as, future contest.

METHOD OF CONDUCT

(Any amendment to the "Method of Conduct" section sent to State 4-H Leaders and/or their delegated contacts by July 1, 2025, will be in effect for the 2025 contest.)

1. Contestants and coaches are permitted to visit the North American International Livestock Exposition starting on Saturday, November 15. However, they are required to stay out of area where the contest will be held and the West Wing and Hall where the beef cattle are located. All participants and coaches shall avoid Broadbent Arena, including hallways on Monday during the Senior collegiate contest. Any violation could result in disqualification of the team. Contestants and coaches may visit the trade show and are allowed in the stands to watch the beef cattle show in Freedom Hall, (no individual listed on the entry form shall be allowed on the floor, show ring or ringside of the Arena or in beef tie-outs). Contestants and coaches must stay out of all beef and sheep stalling areas.
2. A coaches meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, November 17 in the Crowne Plaza, Louisville Airport Hotel, Meeting Room. At that time, the program will be explained and contest instructions will be given. Coaches should be prepared to check names, addresses, and ages of their contestants.
3. All contestants and coaches will report to the North American on Tuesday, November 18 at 7:30 a.m., location to be determined. Contestants will receive final instructions regarding the remainder of the contest.
4. No contestant shall wear any clothing, pins, or badges that will in any way reveal his/her identity or the state that he/she represents. The contest will be held inside so dress accordingly. No hats are to be worn during the contest.
5. All electronic communication devices of any kind are prohibited. Please advise your contestants to remove these devices prior to the start of the contest. If a contestant's phone should ring, or if they are discovered using such electronic devices during the contest, the contestant and their team may be disqualified.
6. Contestants will be divided into groups for the contest and will remain with their assigned group throughout the contest and the delivery of oral reasons. While the contest is in progress, there will be no conferring between contestants or between a contestant and anyone else except as directed by the Superintendent or his/her representative. Offending contestants may be disqualified.

7. The contest will be comprised of eleven (11) classes of livestock. Of these eleven classes, four will be beef, three will be swine, three will be sheep, and one will be a class of meat goat does or market wethers. In the event that a high quality goat class cannot be located, the committee has the right to add a fourth sheep class. Sheep Breeds for class consideration shall also include hair type sheep. All classes will be comprised of four animals, and the animals will be designated with numbers 1-2-3-4. At least one breeding class from each species will have performance data and a scenario included. However, contest administrators and officials will strive to include performance information and scenarios for all breeding classes, if possible. See the Guidelines: National 4-H Livestock Judging Contest for a description of scenarios and performance definitions. Of the four species being evaluated, a minimum of one class may be made up of intact males.
8. Reasons will be given on four classes (two beef, one swine, and one sheep). Questions will be asked on three classes. One swine (breeding or market); one sheep or meat goat (breeding or market); one beef (breeding or market) that will comprise the question classes. A beef breeding class with performance records will automatically be an oral reasons class. Contestants will be provided a blank notebook/pad on the morning of the contest. Contestants are not permitted to use notes while giving oral reasons.
9. Two minutes will be allowed to give oral reasons on each class.
10. Contestants will be allowed twelve (12) minutes to place each non-reasons class.
11. Contestants will be allowed fifteen (15) minutes on each reasons class, to make their observations, take notes, and fill-out their placing.
12. Contestants must stay in assigned groups. Once time has been called and judging on a class has been completed, contestants must immediately turn back to class. Groups will rotate to the next class. Contest reserves the right to modify this rule as needed.
13. At the conclusion of the first round, contestants will go back to the holding room to fill out their scantron cards for the first round and prepare for questions. At the conclusion of 2nd round contestants will return to holding room to fill out their scantron cards and turn into group leaders.
14. Breeding cattle and steers will NOT be handled. All judging of non-reasons cattle classes will be done from a distance of 10-15 feet. Close inspection may be allowed. This will be determined after selection of the classes.
15. Breeding sheep and goats will not be handled since they will be judged loose in a pen. When handling market lambs and meat goat wethers, contestants will stand in line and will be allowed 15 seconds to handle each lamb or goat individually. Lambs and goats will not be rehandled at any time.
16. All official 4-H coaches and assistants as listed on the state entry form (spouses if they want to) must be available and shall be required to assist during the morning of the contest to assist with the running of the contest. Job responsibilities will be assigned at the coaches' meeting on Monday evening prior to the contest.

SUPERINTENDENT

1. It shall be the duty of the Superintendent to see that all rules and regulations of the contest are followed. He/she shall determine the answers to all questions which may arise in connection with the interpretation of the rules governing the contest.
2. The superintendent shall have assistant superintendents and helpers to assist with contest management.
3. The Superintendent will not serve as an official judge nor listen to oral reasons.
4. The Superintendent shall take charge of all records and shall have all scores tabulated and totaled.

5. All decisions by the Superintendent, Chair and/or Board of Directors shall be deemed final and shall not be further challenged.

CONTEST HELP

Any handlers, clerks, assistants and attendants, etc. shall be under the direction of the Superintendent. They shall carry out all assignments in an orderly manner; and no contest help shall confer with a contestant, contest committee, contest's official Judges, or anyone from the public or other coaches while serving in their official contest capacity unless directed by the Superintendent.

DETERMINATION OF RATINGS

1. Fifty (50) points shall constitute a perfect mark for placing classes and 50 points a perfect mark on oral reasons.
2. Highest total score overall wins.
 - a. If there is a tie then the highest total reasons score breaks the tie.
 - b. If still tied then the lower placings in reasons classes wins.
 - c. If still tied then the highest total questions score wins.
3. Highest reasons score wins.
 - a. If there is a tie then the lower placings classes wins.
 - b. If there is still a tie the highest total overall score wins
4. Highest score within the species wins.
 - a. If there is a tie then the highest total reasons score within the specie wins.
 - b. If still tied then the highest total reason score overall wins.
 - c. If still tied then the highest total score overall wins.
5. The records tabulated and submitted by the Superintendent to the Manager of the North American International Livestock Exposition shall be final, once they have been publicly announced.
6. Team alternates are eligible for individual awards.

JUDGES

1. A committee of judges shall place all classes and listen to oral reasons. If the number of teams entered indicates that additional judges are necessary to expedite the process of listening to oral reasons, the Superintendent shall have the authority to appoint such judges.
2. The judges shall place the classes while the contestants are working in the area. The judges shall mark their placings, indicate the cuts to be made and file that placing with the referee judge.
3. Contestants will **NOT** be offered their placing as they appear before an official judge to give their oral reasons. When a contestant has finished giving oral reasons on a class, the judge will place the official reasons score on a master sheet that will be used for tabulation.

CONTESTANTS AND TEAMS WILL BE SUBJECT TO DISQUALIFICATION FROM THE CONTEST FOR INFRACTIONS OF THE RULES AND REGULATIONS

ENTRY MATERIALS due by October 15:

- 1) State Entry Form – with all the required signatures (Program Leaders and Coaches), youth and coaches information
- 2) Signed National 4-H Livestock Contest Code of Ethics for coaches.
- 3) An entry fee of \$600.00 maybe paid by check to the National Youth Livestock Contest or paid with credit card on the official website –<https://youthlivestockcontests.org/>
- 4) All forms, required materials and if paying via check must be sent to Vice-Chair Bonnie Boyden. You may email the forms to bboyden@umd.edu and mail the check or mailed to 9501 Crain Highway, Box 1, Bel Alton, MD 20611. **All documents and payments must be**

received by October 15. Late registration of \$1000/team will be accepted up to one week (October 22) till 11:59 pm. After that date no late or incomplete entries will be accepted.

Failure to submit all entry materials by the deadline shall deem the state's entry incomplete and thus ineligible to compete in that year's National 4-H Livestock Judging Contest.

WEBSITE FOR ALL INFORMATION FOR THE 2025 CONTEST:

<https://youthlivestockcontests.org/>

If you have questions about the livestock judging contest or desire additional information, please contact the Superintendent:

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