

2026 Manatee County Fair



13th Annual Hay Bale Decorating Contest

The 2026 Hay Bale Decorating contest is open to all 4-H Clubs and FFA Chapters in Manatee County.

All entries should be made as a 4-H Club or FFA Chapter project.

4-H Clubs and FFA Chapters must be entered by Friday, December 26, 2025.

All entries must submit a sketch and/or diagram of decoration and theme. You should use the fair theme “Celebrating America’s 250th Anniversary” to decorate the bale.

The Manatee County Fair will provide one round bale for each participating Club to decorate.

Entries will be judged on eye appeal, construction, use of materials and creativity as well as the use of the fair theme “Celebrating America’s 250th Anniversary”.

Hay bales will be placed around the fairgrounds by the committee. Hay bales may be decorated starting on Saturday, January 10, 2026, from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. All Hay Bale displays must be completed by Wednesday, January 14th, 2026, at 12 p.m. Entries will be judged Thursday morning January 15, 2026. The bales should be decorated with a good clean wholesome nature. No vulgar or suggestive decorations will be allowed—this includes people rolled up inside a bale with feet or head sticking out.

Bales can be placed lying on their side or standing on end. This will be your choice. Please specify position of bale on entry form. Each club or chapter may provide a maximum of 8 small rectangular bales for feet or decoration. For safety purposes, round bales will not have other hay bales of any size stacked on top of them. Also, please note that decorated hay bales will be displayed on concrete or grass.

Paint may be applied to the hay bale or grass. NO paint will be applied to the concrete, if display is set up on concrete.

NO Commercial or Political party signs of ANY KIND are allowed.

DECORATIONS SHOULD BE WEATHER AND WIND PROOF.

**BALES SHOULD BE CHECKED
THROUGHOUT THE FAIR WEEK BY A MEMBER OF YOUR CLUB TO
MAKE SURE YOUR DISPLAY IS COMPLETE AND UNDAMAGED.
ALSO, TO KEEP THE AREA AROUND YOUR BALE CLEAN AND FREE
OF TRASH.**

Decorations must be removed from bales on the last night of the fair, January 25th, after the Fair closes at 7 PM. Decorations not removed at that time may be discarded.

Premiums will be issued to the top three Clubs or Chapters
1st Place - \$500 2nd Place - \$400 3rd Place - \$300

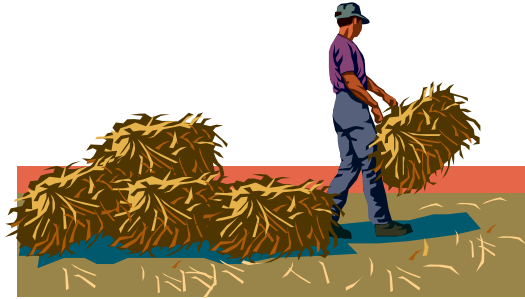
E-mail or deliver your entry to the Manatee County Fair Office, 1303 13th St. W.
Palmetto, FL. 34221 by Friday, December 27, 2024. E-mail address is
danny@manateecountyfair.com.

Hay Bale location selection will be in the order of received applications.

For additional questions please contact Danny Alfonso at the Manatee County Fair Office, 941-722-1639.

The Manatee River Fair Association, Inc. Board of Directors reserves the right to make the final judgment on the content of the Hay Bales.

Manatee County Fair



Hay Bale Decorating Contest

Club or Chapter Entry Form

Contest is open to all Manatee County 4-H and FFA Chapters

Club or Chapter Name: _____

4-H or FFA Leader: _____

Mailing Address: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Please mail, e-mail or hand-deliver to the Fair Office by Friday, December 26, 2025. For any questions please contact Danny Alfonso at the Manatee County Fair Office either at 941-722-1639 or danny@manateecountyfair.com.