General Rules and Guidelines

GENERAL

THERE WILL BE NO PARKING INSIDE THE FAIRGROUNDS STARTING THE EVENING OF AUGUST 8TH THROUGH THE MORNING OF AUGUST 16TH. VEHICLES MUST BE OFF THE FAIRGROUNDS BY 9PM. ALL OTHER RULES AND GUIDELINES ARE EFFECTIVE SATURDAY AUGUST 8TH, 2026 AT 6PM.

Only entries from the five counties of Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, and Leelanau will be accepted.

Animal registrations need to be submitted by July 1, 2026.
Non-Animal registrations need to be submitted by July 1, 2026.
There will be NO late registrations accepted. Payment for all entries must be submitted at the time of registration. NO ENTRY FEES WILL BE REFUNDED.

Exhibitors will be charged an entry fee of $1.00 for every classes entered. Exhibit tickets will be issued upon arrival. Special rules are given in each division. Please review department, section, and/or class rules for additional entry guidelines.

Every article or animal upon the fairgrounds will be under the control of the Executive Committee, and every precaution will be taken for their safekeeping but the association will not be responsible for any damage or loss that may occur, and upon this condition entries are received. No unregistered house hold pets will be allowed to be marketed on the fairgrounds.

Dogs camping on the fairgrounds must be kept on a leash no greater than 6 feet in length, under the immediate control of a responsible person and shall not be allowed to disturb any fairgrounds visitors or animals. DOGS MUST BE KEPT IN CAMP AREA OR DESIGNATED DOG AREAS AND BE KEPT ON A LEASH. Service dogs are allowed. The handler of any dog shall immediately remove all droppings and deposit in trash receptacle on fairgrounds.

Minors under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs will be reported to the Sheriff's Department and prohibited from returning to the fairgrounds. Additional sanctions may be imposed by the Northwest Michigan 4-H Livestock Council. Refer to Code of Conduct Policy in the 4-H section of this Premium Book.

Trailers, tents, RVs, and buses must acquire their parking spot from the Camp Host before parking.

General Rules and Guidelines

ALL CAMPER VEHICLES MUST BE PARKED IN NORTH CAMP PARKING LOT OR IN DESIGNATED SIDE LOTS. THERE IS NO PARKING IN PATRON PARKING LOT. Any vehicles NOT in designated areas will be towed at owner's expense.

The fairgrounds are private property operated by a private entity.

There will be no open carry of firearms or carrying of fixed blade knives permitted on grounds.

The fairgrounds are a drug free zone. There will be zero tolerance for the use of any illicit drug including recreational and medical marijuana. Any violator will be immediately removed from property.

Fighting will not be tolerated and can result in being removed from fairgrounds in addition to a one year ban.

NO BIKES ARE ALLOWED ON FAIRGROUNDS.
Kids wandering around after 11pm (curfew) will have consequences.

Violation #1: Escorted back to camp.
Violation #2: Parking lot clean up detail.
Violation #3: Parents and child will have a meeting with the Executive Fair and Executive Livestock Council Boards.

JUDGING
No animal or article deemed unworthy shall be awarded a premium. Where there is but one exhibitor in a class, the animal or article may be awarded any award the judge deems appropriate.

Exhibitors having questions regarding placing should check with the Division Superintendent as soon as the judging is completed.

No exhibitor, unless in the presence of the respective Superintendent, will discuss any placing with the respective judge.

APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS:
An exhibitor compelled to bring a complaint regarding conflict of interest of the judge, disqualification of an exhibit or exhibitor; exhibitor or superintendent's behavior, or eligibility of an exhibit shall make formal protest in writing to a Fair Board Executive Committee Member no later than 10 days following the end of fair. All protests shall be referred to a special committee which shall review the protest with interested parties and give parties an opportunity to submit evidence.

General Rules and Guidelines

Protest reports shall be made to the fair board for final decision on the protest 14 days following date protest issuance. The party against whom the protest was filed shall have the right to read the statement of protest. Exhibitor may file appeal to the Department of Agriculture within 45 days of filing the initial complaint if the exhibitor is not satisfied with the association's action.

The Department of Agriculture shall have 60 days after receipt of any appropriately filed appeal to investigate the complaint, and shall issue a finding of fact and notice of department action and any recommended actions for the association.

Ribbons and rosettes will be awarded for all places as listed for each class, unless otherwise specified.

EXHIBITS: NON-ANIMAL
Non-livestock exhibits will be received Saturday, August 8, 2026 between 10am to 2pm. Evelyn Heim Building - 10am to 2pm. Tanner Building - 12pm to 6pm. Please check department rules for exceptions and other instructions.

In no case shall any article be brought upon the grounds and placed upon exhibition except by and at the expense of their authorized agent.

EXHIBITS: ANIMAL
Please refer to individual departments and sections for additional rules and guidelines.

Exhibitors aged 5-7 years old are required to be accompanied by a parent or responsible adult in all show rings in order to participate in the class.

RFID tags are required for all Beef projects & Swine projects & (4-H identification tags are required for all market projects.) Scrapies tags are required for sheep and goats.

Animals will be received Saturday August 8th, 2026, 6:00am to 3:00pm (please refer to your species specific time and will remain on the grounds until Sunday, August 16, 2026 at 6:00am (poultry department refer to department rules). Animals will not be permitted to leave early without appropriate arrangements. Exhibitors will forfeit the premium awarded if animals are removed before times slated. Exercise, feeding, and cleaning times for animals shall be before 9:00am and between 4:00pm and 6:00pm. All barns will be closed by 10:00pm. All barns and animal pens must be ready for public viewing by 9:00am daily.

An accredited veterinarian shall be on-call during the fair. Any individual services and/or disbursement of medication provided by the veterinarian shall be the responsibility of the individual.

General Rules and Guidelines

Sawdust bedding will be furnished for all animals, with exception of fiber animals or waiver by veterinarian. Exhibitors are required to furnish all feed and supplies.

Stalls and pens will be provided for animals and assigned in the order of application. All beef and dairy animals will be secured by a neck tie, and secured by a nylon rope or chain to a secured pipe.

Hay nets/ hay bags will be allowed at the discretion of the barn superintendent. If it poses as a threat to the safety and wellbeing of the animal, the hay net/bag will be removed and returned to the owner. This applies to goats and horses.

Animals occupying stalls and pens must be appropriately entered in the judge's book of the section and shown in competition.

Due to Bio Security, there will be no animals allowed off the trailer until they are inspected by the Superintendent.

Any prescriptions written pertaining to care of, special treatment or use of equipment to feed or supply water to any animal on the fair grounds during the week of fair will be written on an individual basis. No group/family/farm prescriptions will be accepted, i.e. each horse, steer, chicken, etc will have its own individual prescription for care.

Copies of registrations, statement as to breeder, feeding and management of stock will be required from all exhibitors.

All exhibitors must be neat and cleanly dressed and must put the stalls, pens, and floors in a neat and tidy condition by 9:00am daily. Tack will be kept out of walkways. Infractions of these rules or other barn rules directed by the Superintendent in charge may result in dismissal of the exhibitor and their animal from the fairgrounds.

All Animals entered for exhibition must be placed in the department prior to 3:00pm on Saturday, and if not so placed, the owners will forfeit all rights to exhibit or compete for premiums unless relieved from such results or forfeiture by order of the Superintendent of the department in which they are entered.

4-H market animals to be sold in the auction must be weighed on assigned scales only. Market livestock exhibitors are prohibited from entering NWMI Fair if the exhibitor has entered any 4-H market animal at any other fair in this calendar year.

Any animal suspected of being on tranquilizers or other drugs may be subject to testing at the direction of three or more members of the NWMI Livestock Council and NWMI Fair Board.

General Rules and Guidelines

The NWMI Fair may perform livestock testing by an "at random" or "for cause" selection process by following these steps:

1. The initial complaints in writing must be received by the fair board detailing complainant's reason for requesting testing.

2. A written reply from the exhibit owner regarding their response to the complaint must also be received by the fair board.

3. The fair board will review the case and may, at their discretion, request a licensed veterinarian to collect a sample of urine, blood, tissue or other specimen for testing. If the fair board requests a sample be collected, it will be done within 12 hours of the complaint being received by the fair board.

The Northwestern Michigan Fair reserves the right to disqualify any animals, either alive or slaughtered, wherein the exhibitor/owner of the animal entered into competition refuses to allow the animal to be tested, or the drug test is positive for substances not approved by the Food and Drug Administration, the United States Department of Agriculture or the Michigan Department of Agriculture. This includes, but is not limited to diuretics, steroids, repartitioning agents, tranquilizers, and analgesics. Exhibitors will notify the fair veterinarian before administering any medications to any animal brought in for competition. The exhibitor will forfeit auction privileges, premiums, and awards. Other animals will not be moved up in placing.

Michigan Department of Agriculture 2026 Health Requirements for Livestock Exhibited In Michigan

All livestock exhibitors must be in compliance with the animal health requirements as defined by the Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development.

Exhibitors may access requirements at:

https://www.legislature.mi.gov/Laws/MCL?objectName=MCL-ACT-466-OF-1988

4-H NON ANIMAL EXHIBITS

Non-Animal Exhibits Registration Deadline:
JULY 1, 2026

4-H NON ANIMAL EXHIBITS

DEPARTMENT 71 – 4-H EXHIBITS IN THE TANNER BUILDING

DEPARTMENT RULES:

4-H Club Booth Displays:

• Tanner Building set up occurs the week prior to the fair. Thursday and Friday from Noon-9pm and Saturday from 9am to 1pm. All displays must be completed NO LATER than 1pm on Saturday.

• All active 4-H clubs from Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, and Leelanau counties are eligible to participate.

• Each 4-H club must design and display a sign stating the name of the club in their booth display.

• Exhibits must be within the club's assigned area, and clubs may only be assigned one booth space (5.5' wide x 6' deep).

• Best 4-H Club Booth Display award is based on 4-H member participation, appropriate theme, originality, and creativity. First, second and third place awards will be given.

• Judging of the booth displays will occur between 2pm and 6pm on Saturday. Club booths are judged as a whole unit. The winning booths will receive a 1st, 2nd or 3rd place ribbon. The first place display will receive the first place banner and $100, second place will receive $75 and third $50 in gift cards and will be provided at the awards celebration on Saturday of Fair to the top three booth display winners.

Exhibitor Rules*:

• Exhibitors may exhibit as part of a club booth display, and/or participate in an interview/Allidemonstration. Cloverbuds will earn participation ribbons for interviews and demonstrations.

• 4-H booth entries are to be the work of the exhibitors and a current year project.

• Exhibitors may choose to provide a demonstration about a project they have completed in the past year. This may or may not be a part of their club booth display. Demonstrations are to be no more than 15 minutes. Ribbons (Cloverbud participation, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place) will be awarded in age groups (Cloverbud, 8-11, 12-15, and 16-19) for demonstrations and interviews.

• Exhibitor Project Demonstrations can be completed in the Tanner Building on Monday of Fair, between 11am and 3pm.

*Special note: there are no longer 4-H independent judged projects in the Tanner Building. If 4-H youth would like to have independent projects judged, please register them with the Evelyn Heim building (using the online fair registration form).

Interviews:

• Any active 4-H member eligible for the fair may register for an interview. 4-H Exhibit Barn Interviews will be held on Monday from 11am-3pm.

• Judges will award 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place ribbons for youth in the 8-11, 12-15, and 16-19 age groups.

• Cloverbuds may interview for a participation ribbon.

Clover Award:

• Youth ages 10-19 from Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, and Leelanau counties are eligible to apply for the Clover Award. Applications are due the Wednesday before fair.

• The three Clover Award finalists, chosen by committee based on their written applications, will be interviewed on Monday of fair between 11am and 3pm (by appointment).

• The Clover Award ($100 gift card, certificate, and ribbon) will be presented at the 4-H Awards Ceremony held on the final Saturday of Fair.

4-H NON ANIMAL EXHIBITS

DEPARTMENT 1: 4-H CLUB BOOTH DISPLAY

Objective: To provide an opportunity to showcase what the club has done in the past 4-H year. This may include photos, posters, reports, narratives, articles, crafts, and other projects made by the youth. Each year there is a theme shared by the Tanner Building Committee in the information flyer.

DEPARTMENT 2: 4-H INTERVIEW AND DEMONSTRATIONS

Objective: To provide an opportunity for individual 4-H'ers to discuss their experiences in 4-H and/or a project(s) they have completed in 4-H. This will allow 4-H youth to practice public speaking, interview, and demonstration skills.

DEPARTMENT 3: Educational Posters (Not Considered for Auction)

Project consists of posters made to demonstrate a topic or skill a youth has learned. Poster must be constructed by the youth and demonstrate details that are age appropriate, and consider the following:

- How & why did you choose this topic and/or skill?
- What did you need to do to start this project?
- What was your intended project goal?

In completing this project, what three (3) things did you learn that you did not know before?

- Did you accomplish your intended goal, or did you meet an unexpected goal?

1.Education poster

DEPARTMENT 4 : Animal Products

No meat products will be accepted under this or any category.

DIVISION 1. Animal Fiber

Fiber must be clean and appropriately prepared. Projects should demonstrate understanding of fiber quality and handling. Fiber should be in ONE piece and sealed in a clear plastic bag.

1. Sheep wool
2. Llama wool
3. Alpaca wool
4. Angora Wool
5. Cashmere
6. Mohair

DIVISION 2. Honey

Project consists of honey and bees wax items produced by bees managed or studied by the youth. Honey must be properly sealed and labeled and follow food safety guidelines.

1. Honey – Ineligible for Auction
2. Bees wax candles

DIVISION 3. Eggs – Ineligible for Auction

Eggs must be clean, uniform, and displayed in carton. Refrigeration requirements must be followed, and eggs must be produced within food safety guidelines.

1. Chicken Eggs (1 doz)
2. Duck Eggs (1 doz)
3. Goose Eggs (1 doz)
4. Quail Eggs (1 doz)

4-H NON ANIMAL AUCTION EXHIBITS

Department 5: Plant Science

Division 1 Flowers

- All live plant material must have been grown in Michigan by the exhibitor.
- Cut flower and rose entries must be in a clear plastic container with no labels, except for arrangements which can be in any appropriate watertight container.
- Container grown plant must have been in the current container for a minimum of three (3) months.

1. Cut annuals
2. Cut perennials
3. Potted annuals
4. Potted perennials
5. Silk/Artificial flower, self-crafted

Division 2 Vegetables

- All entries must have been grown in Michigan by the exhibitor.
- Entries should be displayed on a paper plate or in a box, except when impractical or otherwise indicated.
- Individual vegetables must be labeled. Use plate or box appropriate in size to the number of vegetables. Sturdy, clean boxes ONLY.
- Judging criteria includes representation of variety, conformity, maturity, color, freedom from pest and disease injury, cleanliness and adherence to class description.

1. Sunflowers
2. Cucumbers
3. Zucchini
4. Squash
5. Gourds
6. Pumpkins
7. Watermelon
8. Melons
9. Corn
10. Potatoes
11. Other root crops

Division 3 Fruits

- All entries must have been grown in Michigan by the exhibitor.
- Entries should be displayed on a paper plate or in a box, except when impractical or otherwise indicated.
- Individual fruits must be labeled. Use plate or box appropriate in size to the number of fruits. Sturdy, clean boxes ONLY.
- Judging criteria includes representation of variety, conformity, maturity, color, freedom from pest and disease injury, cleanliness and adherence to class description.

1. Apples
2. Pears
3.Peaches
4. Cherries
5. Apricot
6. Raspberries
7. Blackberries
8. Strawberries
9. Fruit bush or tree

Division 4 Herbs

- All entries must have been grown in Michigan by the exhibitor.
- Entries for Fresh Herbs should be displayed in a small potted container, preferably plastic, and properly labeled.
- Entries for Dried Herbs should be displayed in a clear plastic container and properly labeled.

1. Fresh Herbs
2. Dried Herbs

Division 5 Flower Arrangement

- Arrangements must be arranged by the exhibitor.
- Flowers used in this section need not be grown by the exhibitor.
- Entries will be judged on design, color, conformity, originality, conditions and mechanics.

1. Flower Arrangements
2. Silk/Artificial Flower Arrangements

4-H NON ANIMAL AUCTION EXHIBITS

Division 6: Textiles

Please display entry on a plastic or felt clothes hanger.

1. Needlework
2. Sewed clothes
3. Sewed toys
4. Woven rugs
5. Wall hung quilt
6. Embroidered clothes
7. Embroidered pillows
8. Candle wicking
9. Cross stitched clothes
10. Other cross stitched items
11. Other sewed items
12. Quilted potholder
13. Quilted tabled runner
14. Quilted pillow
15. Doll quilt
16. Twin sized quilt
17. Crocheted scarf
18. Crocheted clothes
19. Other crocheted items

Department 6: Creative Arts and Crafts

- Entries in this Department are preferred to be of original composition.
- Entries created from kits will be judged as participation and not eligible for awards or Auction.

Division 1 Basket Making

- - Baskets must be structurally sound.

1. Baskets
2. Beading - Must be securely assembled.
3. Beaded Jewelry
4. Beaded Decorations

Division 2 Beading

- Must be securely assembled.

1. Beaded Jewelry
2. Beaded Decorations

Division 3 Ceramics

Must be safely finished. Small or unstable entries MUST BESECURED to base, pedestal, or shadowbox.

1. Clay sculptures
2. Pottery hand thrown
3. Pottery wheel thrown
4. Jewelry - Must be safe and wearable.
5. Non-beaded jewelry
6. Leatherwork
7. Leather crafts
8. Leather tooling/carving

Division 4 Mosaic

Art created from assembled pieces, of original composition by the exhibitor. Small or unstable entries MUST BE SECURED to base, pedestal, or shadowbox.

1. Glass mosaic items
2. Stone mosaic items
3. Metal Mosaic items
4. Stained Glass - Must be safely edged and framed.
5. Stained glass items
6. Yard Art - Outdoor decorative items. Art must be weather-appropriate and safe.
7. Yard art items
8. Paper Craft - Projects created primarily from paper. Must demonstrate technique beyond simple assembly.
9. Scrapbooks
10.7 Cards
11. Decoupage
12. Origami
13. Other paper crafts
14. Calligraphy
15. Stenciling

Division 5 Upcycled / Recycled Items

Items created from reused materials. Original transformation required.

1. Upcycled/recycled items

Department 7: Expressive Arts

Division 1 Photography

Must be 8 or more prints, mounted on mat board or displayed in album. Central theme/title must be evident and visible. 4x6 minimum size.

1. Black and white prints
2. Color prints

Division 2 Drawing

- All Exhibits MUST be framed and/or matted and equipped for hanging. No Glass in Frames.

1. Chalk drawing
2. Charcoal drawing
3. Ink drawing
4. Pencil drawing
5. Color pencil drawing
6. Other medium drawing
7. Pastel drawing

4-H NON ANIMAL AUCTION EXHIBITS

Division 3 Painting

- All Exhibits MUST be framed and/or matted and equipped for hanging. No Glass in Frames.

1. Acrylic painting
2. Oil painting
3. Water color painting

Division 4 Sculpture

- Three-dimensional art. Small or unstable entries MUST BE SECURED to base, pedestal, or shadowbox.

1. Metal sculpture (Welded)
2. Other non-ceramic sculpture

Division 5 Digital Arts

- Digitally created designs. AI use must be disclosed in artist statement/verbal interview judging. All Exhibits MUST be framed and/or matted and equipped for hanging. No Glass in Frames.

1. Graphic art
2. AI art - Artwork created using AI tools.

Division 6 Writing

- Original written work. For work longer than 3 pages, please submit to 4-H Program Coordinators for content review 2 weeks prior to fair.

1. Poem
2. Short story
3. Novel

Department 8: Science and Inventions

- Projects that are operational: must be capable of being safely displayed in a public setting. Power sources, moving parts, or electrical components may be limited and/or restricted by 4-H staff.

Division 1 Music and Sound Technology

Projects involving sound or music technology.

1. Music and sound technology

Division 2 Computer Technology

Digital or hardware-based projects.

1. Computer technology

Division 3 Robotics

Robotic builds or programming projects.

1. Robotics

Division 4 Automotive

Automotive-related projects.

1. Automotive technology

Division 5 Engines

1. Model engine

Division 6 Agriculture

Agricultural machinery-related projects.

1. Tractor models
2. Other agricultural technology

Division 7 Health Technology

Health-related technical projects.

1. Fitness technology
2. Medical technology

Division 8 General Inventions

Must be clearly explained within display or artist statement.

1. Original inventions

Department 9: Food and Nutrition

- Canned Goods MUST be labeled – including processing method.
- MUST attach recipe on 3x5 card. Typed preferred, if handwritten – MUST be legible
- For baked goods, no commercial mixes are allowed. Must be made from scratch.
- Dried Veg/Fruits MUST be in a sealed, transparent display for protection.
- Use current USDA Guidelines. Call your local MSU Extension Office for info.
- No items in this Department are eligible for Auction.

4-H NON ANIMAL AUCTION EXHIBITS

Division 1 Food Preservation

1. Canned fruit
2. Jam
3. Jelly
4. Pickles
5. Relish
6. Sauces
7. Canned vegetables
8. Butter
9. Dried fruit and vegetables

Division 2 Baked Items

1. Cake
2. Other decorated deserts
3. Bread
4. Cookies
5. Pies

Division 3 Candy and Confections

1. Fudge
2. Hard Candy
3. Other Candy

Department 10: Woodworking

- Entries in this department are preferred to be of original composition.
- Entries created from kits will be judged as participation and not eligible for awards or Auction.
- Projects must be safely created.

Division 1 Wood Projects

1. Wood carving
2. Wood burnings
3. Wood Crafts
4. Other wood projects

DEPARTMENT 73 – 4-H YOUTH EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS DIFFERENTLY ABLED PROGRAM

Species Chair – Beth Stephens and Rosie Belles
Assistant Species Chair – Allison Wittkopp and Jen Stephens

DEPARTMENT RULES:

• Differently Abled 4-H Members (youth with special needs) may participate with the assistance from the Differently Abled Program. Special trained advocates work to ensure 4-H members success in showing their project to the best of their ability.

SECTION 1: 4-H DIFFERENTLY ABLED SHOWMANSHIP

1. Showmanship

NWMI FAIR REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Paper registrations are no longer accepted.

Please follow the link on our website or scan the QR code to complete registrtion.