Updated: 10/27/2026

Northwestern Michigan Fair Youth Program Committee

Livestock

Policies and Procedures

Left Blank Intentionally for Placement of Committee Members, Superintendents and Species Chairs.

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Important Dates - 2027

Species	Registration Date	Possession Date	Birth Date/Age
Dairy Beef	November 1, 2026	November 1, 2026	After December 1, 2025
Dairy Feeder	March 1, 2027	March 1, 2027	After December 1, 2026
Dog	May 1, 2027	N/A	At least 6 months old (At least 1 year for agility)
Goat	March 1, 2027	May 1, 2027	After November 1 (Market Only)
Horse	May 1, 2027	N/A	N/A
Junior Beef	March 1, 2027	May 15, 2027	After January 1, 2027
Large Beef	November 1, 2026	November 1, 2026	< 19 months at weigh in
Lamb	March 1, 2027	May 1, 2027	After December 1, 2026
Llama/Alpaca	May 1, 2027	N/A	N/A
Poultry	March 1, 2027		
Cornish Game Hens		June 30 - July 5, 2027	4 weeks at weigh-in
Ducks		May 26 – 31, 2027	9 weeks at weigh-in
Geese		April 7 – 12, 2027	16 weeks at weigh-in
Production Pullets		Oct 15, 2026 - Jan 31, 2027	6-10 months at weigh-in
Meat Chickens		June 2 – 7, 2027	8 weeks at weigh-in
Turkey		April 7-12	16 weeks at weigh in
Rabbit/Cavy	May 1, 2027		
- Pen of 3		May 1, 2027	Bred: April 24, 2027 Birth: May 26, 2027 Max Age 70 days
- Single Fryer		May 1, 2027	Bred: April 24, 2027 Birth: May 26, 2027 Max Age 70 Days
- Single Roaster		April 17, 2027	Bred: January 3, 2027 Birth: February 3, 2027
Swine	February 1, 2027	May 1, 2027	After December 1, 2026

Market Weight Requirements - 2027

Species	Minimum Market Weight	Maximum Market Weight
Dairy Beef	1,000 lbs.	None
Dairy Feeder	350 lbs.	None
Goat	65 lbs.	None
Junior Beef	300 lbs.	700 lbs.
Lamb	100lbs.	None
Poultry		
- Cornish Game	2 lbs. per bird	3 lbs. per bird
- Ducks	4 lbs. per bird	None
- Geese	8 lbs. per bird	None
- Production Pullets	None	None
- Meat Chickens	5 lbs. per bird	10 lbs. per bird
- Turkey	15 lbs. per bird	None
Rabbit/Cavy		
- Pen of 3	3.5 lbs. per rabbit	5.5 lbs. per rabbit
- Single Fryer	3.5 lbs.	5.5 lbs.
- Single Roaster	5 lbs.	8lbs.
Large Beef	1000 lbs.	None
Swine	225 lbs.	315 lbs.

2027 Arrival Times, Entry Gates, & Requirements

Species	Arrival times	Entry Gate	Requirements
Swine	6am – 10am	4	840 Tag, Health Record
Large Beef	7am – 10am	4	RFID Tag, 4H Tag, Health Record
Dairy Beef/Feeder	7am – 10am	4	RFID Tag, 4H Tag, Health Record
Jr Beef	7am – 10am	4	RFID Tag, 4H Tag, Health Record
Lamb	10am – 12am	4	Scrapies Tag, 4H Tag, Health Record
Goat (Market)	10am – 11am	4	Scrapies Tag, 4H Tag, Health Record
Goat (Breed)	10am – 11am	4	Tattoo w/ Scrapies Tag or Certificate of Registry, Health Record
Rabbit/Cavy	10am – 2pm	4	Ear Tattoo, Health Record
Poultry	10am – 2pm	4	Proof of Pullorum Free, Health Record
Llama/Alpaca	11am – 2pm	4	Health Record
Horse	Noon – 3pm	4	Coggins, Health Record

- All vehicles enter the main fairground entrance and head through Gate Four. Goats and Llama/Alpacas EXIT out Gate 2 if they have no other species drop offs, all other species exit at Gate 1.
- Animals walking in must stay on the dirt road. Do not walk any animal through the food court area.
- Exhibitor parking is provided across from the fairgrounds Gate 2 off Blair Townhall Road or North of the campground under the power lines. Livestock trailers can park under the powerlines or across from Gate 2.

NORTHWESTERN MICHIGAN FAIR
CODE OF CONDUCT

Participants in the Northwestern Michigan Fair are subject to the observance of the program rules. All Fair Attendees will:

1. Show respect for, and cooperate with fellow attendees, volunteers & Directors.

2. Follow Northwestern Michigan Fair (NWMI) Youth Program policies & procedures when participating in any fair sponsored event.

3. Under no circumstances, attend any activity or event on Northwestern Michigan Fair property under the influence of alcohol and/or controlled substances (including tobacco, electronic cigarettes, etc.).

4. Under no circumstances bring dangerous or unauthorized materials (such as fireworks, explosives, weapons, or similar items) to any event or activity that happens on the property of the Northwestern Michigan Fair.

5. Abstain from hazing, harassment or bullying of another participant, volunteer or staff member (either face-to-face interactions, through social media or other communication venues), particularly when the behavior is based on a person's appearance, race, color, national origin, gender identity, religion, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status or other protected category under Federal Anti-Discrimination Policy.

6. All physical alterations, youth or adult, will be turned over to the Grand Traverse County Sheriff and are a violation of this code.

7. By completing the NWMI Fair Registration you agree to abide by this Code of Conduct. Any participant who violates this Code of Conduct is subject to discipline that may include:

1. Removal from the activity/event or the property where the event he or she is participating in is being held, including the Northwestern Michigan Fairgrounds.

2. Disqualification from all activities including the fair week and off-season events that full calendar year. Zero tolerance.

3. In cases involving possession or consumption of illegal drugs or possession or consumption of alcohol the proper law authorities will be contacted. Zero tolerance.

4. During the week of fair, the Northwestern Michigan Fair Directors have the right to discipline as they see fit in compliance with the Premium Book.

Exhibitor Responsibilities:

1. Pre-register for species by listed registration date on page 8.
2. Attend 1 hour of a WORK BEE clean-up events at the fairgrounds each year.
    i. Register for the work bee via the Sign-up Genius system.
    ii. Dress appropriately and bring the necessary tools to participate in that workbee's activities. Notifications are sent via email as to what is needed.
    iii. No make-up sessions will be scheduled.
3. Register for Livestock Classes under Youth Category by July 1, 2027
4. Participate in required activities while at the NWMI Fair, including:
    i. Obtain and wear a wristband indicating your participation as an exhibitor throughout the week of fair.
    ii. Attend the MANDATORY meeting on the first load in day for all participants of the NWMI Fair.
    iii. Properly care for the animal(s) throughout the week of fair:
        1. Wear protective footwear at all times when working with your animal.
        2. Abide by posted feeding and exercise times for each barn.
        3. Properly clean the animals' pen/stall/cage(s):
            a. Daily as posted in the rules for each barn.
            b. Prior to leaving the NWMI Fair's grounds.
        4. Show in the appropriate Youth showmanship, market, and/or breed classes and participate in the Northwestern Michigan Fair Market Auction if appropriate.
            a. Classes and auction line-up will be posted in each barn.
        5. Fulfill species-specific duties, including barn duty, as scheduled by the species chairperson. Rules and responsibilities to be discussed at the barn's meeting and posted in each barn.
        6. Pose with your animal(s) for a "Buyer's Photo" to be taken by a professional photographer at the assigned time and location for the species.
            a. Must occur at the specified location – NOT in the auction or show ring.

MANDATORY for all exhibitors:

1. Abide by the 11pm mandatory CURFEW for all exhibitors.
    i. All youth members need to be at their campsite by curfew.
2. Market Projects: Write a THANK YOU NOTE to the buyer and deliver it along with a 5x7 copy of the "buyer's photo" that was taken at the fair to the buyer no later than October 1, 2027.
    i. Exhibitor turns in copy of thank you letter to the representative on the Youth Program Committee collecting Thank You Card copies.

Northwestern Michigan Fair Youth Programs Committee Exhibitor Age Policy

The following age requirements have been established for the NWMI Fair Youth Programs Committee in the five counties in our area that participate in the NWMI Fair.

1. **Youth Market & Showmanship –** To participate youth must be between eight (8) and nineteen (19) years of age on or before January 1st of that calendar year. For safety reasons, to participate as an exhibitor in the Large Beef or Large Dairy Beef program, the exhibitor must attain the age of thirteen (13) or older on or before January 1st of that calendar year or twelve (12) with two years of prior market cattle experience.

2. **Pre-Showman –** To participate in the NEED NEW NAME OTHER THAN CLOVERBUD program, the youth must be between five (5) and seven (7) years of age on or before January 1st of that calendar year.

3. **Super Senior Showman -** Super Senior is a term used with the NWMI Fair Youth Program Committee of youth who have graduated from high school and are eligible to participate in our local fair with an animal project a year after graduation. Super Seniors may not be able to participate in selecting species due to overcrowding in the barns.

4. **Adaptive Youth Program (formerly Differently Abled) -** Members of the Adaptive Youth Program may take part in exhibitor activities through the age of 26. Adults with disabilities over the age of 26 may be able to participate at the discretion of the Adaptive Youth Program (formerly Differently Abled)

Northwestern Michigan Fair Youth Exhibitor Registration

Online Pre-Registration Forms:

Registration MUST be submitted online no later than 11:59 p.m. on the day of the posted deadline. Registration links can be found on the Northwestern Michigan Fair Youth Program website.

Registration Regulations:

1. Members may only register one (1) MARKET animal.

2. If a member wishes to drop after registration, he/she must communicate with the appropriate species chair as soon as possible. Once dropped, registration will not be reinstated.

3. Pre-Registration for species does not constitute registration for classes of exhibitor and their species which must be registered on the NWMI Fair website with the NWMI Fair Premium book in July.
    a. All online forms must be filled out completely and submitted to the NWMI Fair no later than the posted deadline.
    b. Members must register for ALL classes including Youth and Open. No additions to classes will be allowed following the registration deadline.

4. Registration with the NWMI Fair PROHIBITS market livestock participants from participating in any other market program at any other fair the same calendar year. Violation of this rule will result in suspension for the NWMI Fair the following year.

Northwestern Michigan Fair Youth Program Committee

Animal Project Requirements

General Requirements for all Animal Projects:

1. The exhibitor must be the primary caregiver of the animal from possession date until the end of the fair.
2. Cloverbud exhibitors who are 5-7 years of age must be always accompanied by parent, guardian, or species volunteers when feeding, working with, or showing an animal. The exhibitor must be able to work with and handle the animal him/herself. The adult is present to provide support and guidance should a problem occur.

Market Project Requirements:

1. Exhibitor may only register one (1) MARKET animal/project.

2. All market animals must be ear tagged according to MDARD standards. Ear tags must be fully intact in order to unload at the fair (Species specific is listed on page 10).

3. All market animals are weighed on the first Saturday of the fair on annually certified scales. Weights at that time are the official sale weight for the auction.

4. Showmanship requirements for market projects:
    a. In order to market a large animal (beef, Jr beef, dairy beef/feeder, swine, lamb) the exhibitor must use the same animal in their Youth showmanship class as they will show in their market class for placement in the livestock auction.
    b. In order to market a small animal (goat, poultry, rabbit) the exhibitor must show an animal that they own in a Youth showmanship class from that species.
    c. In order to sell a market animal on NWMI Fair Youth Program auction day, the exhibitor must be present and show in the appropriate showmanship and market classes, except by permission of the chair or co-chair of the NWMI Fair Youth Program Committee and the respective species chair. This permission will be clear and in writing.

5. All market participants MUST have a professional photo taken of them with their animal while at the fair. Photos taken in the show and/or auction ring do NOT count. In extenuating circumstances, show photos may be used upon approval of the species chair.

6. Market Project Fees:
    a. All fees will be deducted from the sale check before it is presented to the participant.
    b. Commission – Each participant will be assessed a commission of 4% of the gross sale price, up to $400 received at the auction sale. This money goes to the NWMI Fair and is used to cover the cost of the committee including: the buyer luncheon, advertising, educational events, resources, and necessary supplies. The commission shall cover all fees including buyer photos, trucking, mandatory livestock promotion fees, etc.
    c. Buyers' Photos – Additional copies can be purchased from the photographer directly.

d. National Beef, Pork, and Lamb Promotion – These are nationally required fees for the sale of beef, pork, and lamb. These fees are subject to change.

e. Trucking – All 4-H auction animals going on a processing truck have a trucking cost which is paid for by the 4% commission. Non-auction animals can be shipped to processing for the following fees:
$50 per lamb or goat, $75 per swine, or $100 per large cattle.

7. Post Fair Requirements:
   a. **Thank You Notes (Market Projects Only) –** Copy of Thank You notes are due at the October NWMI Fair Youth Program Committee meeting. Those not submitted by the November N NWMI Fair Youth Program Committee meeting will be suspended from Youth livestock classes and auction at the NWMI Fair the following year. Please make sure to deliver a thank you note along with a 5x7 copy of the buyers' photo to the buyer no later than OCTOBER 1st.

8. Market checks will be issued at the October NWMI Fair Youth Program Committee meeting. Checks must be cashed within 90 days. If the participant is delinquent in cashing the check, a $25.00 reprocessing fee will be added. The original check must be presented when the new check is received. If the check has been misplaced, an additional $35.00 fee will be assessed to stop payment on the original check.

9. If a large animal market project (lamb, cattle, swine) dies during the project, the participant should notify the species chair and chair of the NWMI Fair Youth Program Committee. Permission to replace the animal may be granted by the species chair in conjunction with the NWMI Fair Youth Program Committee. No replacements will be considered after June 1st, except for Jr. Beef projects which will be considered until July 1st.

Non-Market & Breed Projects:

1. A youth exhibitor may register as many non-market and breed animals as they can adequately care for at home and handle at the fair. When registering multiple animals, consider the possibility of overlapping show schedules.

2. Breed animals may NOT be shown in market classes.

3. All non-market and breed animals MUST be ear tagged or tattooed to meet MDARD standards.

4. All participants with a non-market or breed animal project MUST show in the appropriate showmanship class for that species.

2027 Northwestern Michigan Fair Youth Program Sub-Committees

Everyone's help is needed to provide a wide range of quality learning experiences for exhibitors.

The current sub-committees of the NWMI Fair Youth Program:

Auction Committee –

It has a CORE Committee that consists of 10 people and a Volunteer Committee that helps with miscellaneous items and the auction. Their responsibilities are to keep the computer information up to date and accurate with all of the Youth Exhibitors Livestock Registration Sheets, handle weigh-ins, placings, auction packets, auction day, and trucking reports. They also help prepare the exhibitor checks for distribution, accept the Thank you notes, hand out checks to exhibitors, and place the thank you ad in the local paper. This committee should have a chair and a co-chair.

Auction Refreshments - Coordinate snacks and refreshments for buyers inside the auction arena.

Auction Snack Gathering – Coordinates the donations of snacks and refreshments and packages them for auction day.

Auction Ring Setup and Teardown- Assists with setting up and tearing down of auction arenas in the Rosa and Haberlein arenas.

Awards Ceremony - Helps with organizing and distributing awards/ribbons on show days and the award ceremony.

Buyers Luncheon - Secure catering and work with the catering company to serve our buyers and Youth Exhibitors food on auction day.

Friday Youth Dance - Host the dance in Rosa Arena on Friday night, including hiring a DJ, securing donations, set-up, clean-up, and securing chaperones.

Fair Set Up - Work with Youth Program Committee in setting up the Livestock part of the fair and assist the fair board on any jobs that must be done.

Fair Take Down - Work with Youth Program Committee in tearing down the Livestock part of the fair and assist the fair board on any jobs that must be done.

Fun Saturday - Coordinate kids' games for all the youth exhibitors on Saturday in the Haberlein Arena. Seeks donations and organizes prizes.

Fun Classes - Planning and organizing and executing Fun Classes on Friday. Secure donations of prizes awarded.

Photography - Coordinate pictures of animals and the Youth Exhibitor. Contact photographers, set-up date, time, price, etc. Choose an area for photos and set up backdrops. Pick up pictures from the photographer(s) and coordinate distribution at the September NWMI Fair Youth Program Committee meeting.

Pizza Party- Coordinate pizza party after the mandatory meeting on the first Saturday of Fair. Setup and cleanup.

Work Bees – Each Youth Exhibitor is required to work a one (1) hour work bee on the fairgrounds prior to the fair to participate. Everyone working must bring equipment to work. This committee determines what clean-up, repair, tasks, etc. need to be done before fair with the chair of the building and grounds committee. Chairperson will organize and track requirements being fulfilled.

Showmanship Showdown - Coordinate the competition on Saturday in the Haberlein Arena with each Grand Champion Showman. Secure donations for prizes.