



## 2026 STANISLAUS COUNTY FAIR LIVESTOCK MERIT AWARD APPLICATION

**Applications Due: Tuesday, March 31, 2026**

### **PURPOSE:**

The Stanislaus County Fair and the Livestock Committee would like to award financial assistance to students that will be exhibiting at the Stanislaus County Fair. The Merit Award Program is intended to assist with the costs associated with raising a market animal to be exhibited at the Stanislaus County Fair. This award can be used for Beef Cattle, Dairy Cattle, Meat Goats, Poultry, Rabbits, Sheep and Swine.

### **QUALIFICATIONS:**

Applicants must be eligible to exhibit in the **2026** Stanislaus County Fair. PREVIOUS MERIT AWARD WINNERS' **MAY NOT** APPLY FOR ANOTHER AWARD, EVEN IF IN A DIFFERENT SPECIE.

### **CRITERIA:**

Award recipients will be chosen based on experience, financial need, and the ability to carry their project through to the 2026 Stanislaus County Fair. See attached judging sheet for specific criteria.

Upon selection, recipients will be required to complete additional agreements and forms. Among other requirements, the recipient will be required to write at least two thank you notes and/or progress reports to the award sponsor(s). These notes will be spaced out between the time of selection and the 2026 Stanislaus County Fair.

### **APPLICATION PROCESS:**

- Only one application may be submitted per exhibitor. Exhibitors must choose to apply for **one** of the following: Beef Cattle, Dairy Cattle, Meat Goat, Poultry, Rabbit, Sheep or Swine.
- Applicants may be interviewed so they can share their project and experiences. **Note:** Selection to be interviewed will be based on application, not all applicants will be interviewed.

**Completed application must be received/postmarked no later than  
5:00 pm on Tuesday, March 31, 2026**

**Exhibitors are required to submit only the following information:**

- **Merit Award Application:** Completed and signed.
- **Merit Award Requirements:** This form must be signed by the applicant, his/her parent or guardian and his/her project leader/advisor or parent/guardian (if Independent).
- **Letters of Recommendation:** One must be from applicant's Leader/Advisor. Two additional letters must be included and may not be from an immediate family member or Leader/Advisor. Each letter must be returned in a sealed envelope with the signature of the person completing the form across the seal and the applicant's name printed on the front of the envelope.
- **Story:** Must provide a story (300-500 words) explaining why you deserve a Merit Award. Please explain the size and scope of your project (past, present, and future), the knowledge and skills gained from your project as well as your involvement including your leadership and community service experience. Please attach your story to your application.
- **Photo of Applicant:** Email digital high-resolution jpeg file to [klaughlin@stancofair.com](mailto:klaughlin@stancofair.com).

The above items make up the application packet. Any mailed packets must be postmarked no later than March 31<sup>st</sup>. Any hand-delivered packets must be received by 5:00 pm on March 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Applications can be:**

- **Delivered to:**  
Livestock Office  
900 N Broadway  
Turlock, CA 95380
- **Mailed to (must be postmarked no later than March 31, 2026):**  
Kassi Laughlin  
c/o Livestock Department  
900 N Broadway  
Turlock, CA 95380

**No late application packets will be accepted**

**AWARD WINNERS:**

Merit Award winners will receive, toward the purchase, care and feeding of their respective project:

- \$600 Merit Award for Beef Cattle and Dairy Cattle
- \$300 Merit Award for Goat, Sheep and Swine
- \$150 Merit Award for Poultry & Rabbit

Award winners will receive their award money after filling out and returning the Statement of Purchase, Recipient Agreement and providing copies of sponsor correspondence to the Stanislaus County Fair.

**QUESTIONS:**

If you have any questions, please contact:  
 Kassi Laughlin  
 (209) 632-2557  
 klaughlin@stancofair.com

**MERIT AWARD JUDGING CRITERIA**

<b>Story</b>	<b>Points</b>
• Size and Scope	10
• Involvement in 4-H, FFA and Grange Project	40
• Maintains Interest	10
• Creative	10
• Grammatically correct	10
• Involvement Outside of 4-H, FFA and Grange	20
<b>Application</b>	
• Completed with all Signatures	20
• Letters of Recommendations	50
• Neatness of Application	30
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>200</b>

# STANISLAUS COUNTY FAIR MERIT AWARD APPLICATION

Select One (Applicant may only apply for one specie):

**Beef** \_\_\_\_ **Dairy** \_\_\_\_ **Goat** \_\_\_\_ **Poultry** \_\_\_\_  
**Rabbit** \_\_\_\_ **Sheep** \_\_\_\_ **Swine** \_\_\_\_

Applicant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Club: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever exhibited at the Stanislaus County Fair before? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, how many times have you participated? \_\_\_\_\_

List the type(s) of livestock you have shown at previous Stanislaus County Fairs:

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Please list your activities, memberships and honors or awards in any organizations outside of 4-H, FFA or Grange (e.g., school, livestock, or Agricultural organizations, etc.)

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# STANISLAUS COUNTY FAIR MERIT AWARD REQUIREMENTS

I hereby make an application for the Stanislaus County Fair Merit Award. I agree that I will purchase one of the following:

- Market Hog
- Market Lamb
- Market Meat Goat
- Market Steer/Heifer
- Market Turkey/Poultry Meat Pen
- Rabbit Meat Pen/Single Fryer
- Replacement Heifer

I agree that I will feed and fit my animal to the best of my ability and that I will follow a feeding and fitting program recommended or approved by my project leader/advisor. I agree that I will exhibit this animal at the 2026 Stanislaus County Fair. I understand that if I do not complete the requirements of the Merit Award Program or do not exhibit this animal at the 2026 Stanislaus County Fair, I will return all merit award money advanced to me. I understand if I am selected as a winner, I cannot apply for this award again, even with a different species. I also understand I may not transfer this award.

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Signature of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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I hereby agree to permit my son or daughter to make an application for a Livestock Merit Award. If he or she is selected as a winner, I will offer reasonable help and encouragement to see this project through to a successful conclusion.

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Signature of Parent or Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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I consider this applicant a most worthy individual to represent his or her 4-H Club or FFA Chapter if selected as a recipient of a Livestock Merit Award by the Stanislaus County Fair.

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Signature of 4-H Leader or FFA Advisor \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_