



## 2026 IOWA STATE FAIR 4-H DEPARTMENT

### SUPERINTENDENTS

Communications & Exhibit Building - Gail Castillo  
Livestock - Celine Beggs-Shoemaker

### 4-H OBJECTIVES for the IOWA STATE FAIR

#### FOR 4-H YOUTH:

- \* To provide a setting that encourages 4-H members to further demonstrate, learn and apply practical and university researched methods of production, management and/or marketing of their 4-H accomplishments.
- \* To assist in empowering youth to reach their full potential in becoming productive citizens, outstanding communicators, effective leaders and successful learners.
- \* To provide an opportunity for 4-H members to measure their progress and skills against individual goals and accepted standards.
- \* To provide an opportunity for 4-H members to participate in a variety of program opportunities beyond the county level.
- \* To provide an opportunity for 4-H members to gain personal satisfaction, meet new people, share ideas and learn to work cooperatively with others.

#### FOR PUBLIC:

- \* To create an updated, comprehensive image of Iowa's 4-H Youth Development Program to the Fair public.
- \* To provide a showcase for accomplishments of 4-H members.
- \* To stimulate interest and learn new ideas from the variety of 4-H projects and experiences available.

Unless otherwise specified, this department is open to youth who are participating in Extension 4-H Youth Development Programs.

### GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. **Eligibility for participation in Iowa State Fair activities. Please check carefully grade requirements for each event.**  
**All Exhibitors** - 4-H members who have completed 5th through 12th grade (or that equivalent) of the completed school year (2026) and are in good standing at the county and state levels.  
**Dairy Judging Contest** - Juniors - born in 2012 or later and completed 5th grade. Seniors - born in 2007-2011. (National Contest guidelines).  
**Communications Program** - Have completed 5th through 12th grade (or that equivalent.) \*  
**Extemporaneous Speaking Contest** - Participants must be in the 4-H Senior designated level, grades 9th through 12th.\*  
\* A 4-H member becomes ineligible to exhibit beyond the county level at the end of the calendar year of high school graduation (or that equivalent).
2. All judges' decisions are final.
3. Eligible exhibits are an outgrowth of work done as a planned part of the 4-H members participation in 4-H projects or programs during the current 4-H year.
4. Exhibitors in 4-H divisions are not eligible to exhibit in a similar division of FFA or vice-versa, with the following exceptions and clarifications:
  - A. **AGRICULTURE MECHANICS** - Exhibitors entered in the 4-H Science, Mechanics and Engineering classes may not enter in similar FFA Ag Mechanics classes or vice-versa.
  - B. **BEEF** - 4-H members who exhibit 4-H Market Beef but do not exhibit in 4-H Breeding Beef classes, may, if eligible, exhibit in the FFA Breeding Beef classes. Likewise, 4-H members who exhibit in 4-H Breeding Beef classes but not in 4-H Market Beef classes may, if eligible, exhibit in the FFA Performance Beef classes. Exhibitors in 4-H Market Beef classes may, if eligible, exhibit in the FFA Breeding Beef and/or FFA Performance Beef classes. Exception: Exhibitors in 4-H Breeding Heifer classes may, if eligible, exhibit in the FFA Cow/Calf and/or FFA Breeding Bull classes.
  - C. **DAIRY CATTLE** - Exhibitors entered in the Youth Dairy Cattle Show may show animals in either FFA or 4-H, but not both.
  - D. **DAIRY GOATS** - Exhibitors entered in the Youth Dairy Goat Show may show animals in either FFA or 4-H, but not both.
  - E. **HORSES** - Exhibitors in the 4-H Horse Department are not eligible to exhibit in the FFA Horse Department or vice-versa.
  - F. **MEAT GOATS** - 4-H members who exhibit 4-H Market Meat Goats, may, if eligible, exhibit in the FFA Breeding Meat Goat classes or vice-versa. 4-H members are not permitted to show Market Meat Goats in both 4-H and FFA classes. 4-H members who exhibit 4-H Breeding Meat Goats, may, if eligible, exhibit in the FFA Market Meat Goat classes.
  - G. **PHOTOGRAPHY** - Exhibitors entered in 4-H Photography are not eligible to exhibit in the FFA Photography Show or vice-versa.
  - H. **POULTRY** - Exhibitors in the 4-H Poultry Department are not eligible to exhibit in the FFA Poultry Department or vice-versa.
  - I. **RABBITS** - Exhibitors in the 4-H Rabbit Department are not eligible to exhibit in the FFA Rabbit Department or vice-versa.
  - J. **SHEEP** - 4-H members who exhibit Breeding Sheep in 4-H classes may, if eligible, exhibit Market Lambs in FFA classes or vice versa. However, 4-H members are not permitted to show Breeding Sheep in both 4-H and FFA classes even though the young person may have separate breeds for 4-H and FFA. 4-H members are not permitted to show Market Lambs in both 4-H and FFA classes. Carcass/Performance Lambs will be considered the same as Market Lambs. Exception: Exhibitors in 4-H Breeding Ewe classes may, if eligible, exhibit in the FFA Breeding Ram classes.
  - K. **SWINE** - 4-H members who exhibit Breeding Swine in 4-H classes may, if eligible, exhibit Market Swine in FFA classes or vice versa. However, 4-H members are not permitted to show Breeding Swine in 4-H and FFA classes even though the young person may have separate breeds for

4-H and FFA. 4-H members are not permitted to show Market Swine in both 4-H and FFA classes.

L. Individual animals must be identified as either a 4-H OR FFA project, not both.

M. Exhibitors in 4-H divisions may not exhibit 4-H or FFA exhibits in the same department in any other state fair.

5. **INSURANCE:** 4-H participants and volunteers (not Extension personnel) who are enrolled/registered and approved by the respective counties or campus program, are provided an excess accident/injury insurance policy. Insurance will cover the individual while en route to or from the fair as well as at the fair when participating in an approved 4-H Iowa State Fair event or program. A report of all illness and accidents must be made to the 4-H Headquarters Office within 24 hours after the accident or illness. All claims will be processed according to procedures established by the insurance company and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. Your report must be filed with the insurance company as soon as possible and not more than 20 days after the accident. 4-H participants and volunteers or their families are responsible for any expenses arising from accident/injury or illness due to participating in a 4-H Iowa State Fair event or program.

The Iowa State Fair Management will endeavor to protect participants from injury. The Iowa State Fair will not be held responsible for any incident, damage or loss. Should any incident occur, prompt attention is available at the First Aid Station maintained on the State Fairgrounds with a physician in-charge. All animals listed on entry forms must be entered for exhibition strictly in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Iowa State Fair and of the International Association of Fairs and Expositions contained in the Premium Book by which all exhibitors are governed. Exhibitors are responsible to maintain insurance to cover any loss to persons or property, which may occur as a result of said competition.

6. Lost and Found Departments are maintained at the 4-H Headquarters Office and in the Iowa State Fair Public Safety Office, located just inside the Grand Avenue Gate.
7. All youth who make entries in Livestock Exhibits, Dairy Judging Contest, Horticulture, Communication Programs and Project Exploration will receive **ONE free admission ticket**. Youth with entries in Livestock Exhibits, Dairy Judging Contest and Horticulture will be sent one admission ticket from the State 4-H Office. County Extension Staff will be asked for an estimate of the number of 4-H admission tickets needed for youth in Communication Programs and Project Exploration. Please note that children 6 - 11 years old will be charged admission at the gate; so you will need to order tickets for all participants. These tickets will be sent to the County Extension Office to distribute. All unused tickets (those issued to county offices only) are to be returned to the Iowa State Fair Office by August 23.
8. **Youth Ticket Order Form** - Additional exhibitor tickets may be purchased for \$11 each (\$7 each for children 6-11) at <https://www.iowastatefair.org/> or by printing the State Fair Youth Ticket Order Form available online at [www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/StateFair/livestock](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/StateFair/livestock). Ticket order form must be submitted online or postmarked on or before July 15 to allow for processing. Tickets may be ordered using MasterCard or Visa by calling the Iowa State Fair at 515-262-3111, extension 242, Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Phone order deadline is July 15. Tickets can also be purchased at the Iowa State Fairgrounds in the Entry Department.
9. **VEHICLE PERMITS.** Each exhibitor may purchase a vehicle parking permit at \$10 per day. Each exhibitor is limited to two Fairgrounds lot permits per day. Vehicle permits must be purchased in advance by indicating the specific days needed on the Ticket Order Form. Each vehicle permit will park one car or truck (no trailers) in a Fairgrounds lot for the specified day(s). Vehicle permits are required to park in Fairgrounds lots on a space available basis. Parking will not be available at the gate.
10. The Management will in no case assume or pay transportation or delivery charges on articles sent for exhibition.
11. The Iowa State Fair Management will use diligence to insure the safety of animals or articles entered for exhibition after their arrival and placement, but will not be responsible for damage or loss by fire, theft, etc. 4-H exhibits at the Iowa State Fair are entered and displayed at the risk of the exhibitor. The Iowa 4-H Youth Development Program of Iowa State University, in cooperation with the Iowa State Fair, accepts exhibits and will exercise due care to protect them. However, the 4-H Staff and Iowa State Fair cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage due to the conditions imposed by large crowds, the arrangement of the building in which displays are housed and the great number of exhibits.
12. As an Iowa State Fair exhibitor, I hereby acknowledge that my photograph may be taken by the official Iowa State Fair photographer for use by the Iowa State Fair and agree to release and hold harmless the State of Iowa, Iowa State Fair Authority, their officers, employees and agents and any and all parties to whom this or any photograph may be released. This photograph was taken for artistic reasons or newsworthiness and I agree that it may be released to any medium and may be used in any manner for any purpose whatsoever without compensation.
13. When the number of exhibits in a class is fewer than six for two consecutive years, that class will be reviewed by the Iowa 4-H Youth Development Program Staff (in consultation, as needed, with the Iowa State Fair) with a decision to be made to either discontinue the class or combine it with another class within the department unless evidence is found that indicates a need to continue it for an additional year.
14. Accommodation requests may be made orally and in person, up to the date of the event. However, the timing and manner of a request potentially reduces the Management's ability to determine a reasonable accommodation. Management requests an Accommodation Request Form (<https://iastate.app.box.com/v/4HP3300>) be submitted 30 days prior to the event or activity.

### **CONDUCT RULES**

15. All exhibitors, 4-H volunteers and 4-H staff are expected to be cooperative, courteous and good 4-H representatives while on the Iowa State Fairgrounds and participating in 4-H events.
16. Use or possession of alcoholic beverages, tobacco or drugs on the Iowa State Fairgrounds will result in disqualification of the exhibitor's entry and/or continued participation by the 4-H member in the event.

### **HOUSING**

17. Youth Inn privileges will be available to those 4-H and FFA members, families, leaders, advisors, chaperones and staff who will abide by the rules and regulations and who will cooperate with the Iowa State Fair Management and Youth Inn Supervisors.
18. The Youth Inn will open on Monday, August 10 at 3:00 p.m. and will close at Noon on Sunday, August 23. All other days registration is from 7:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m. However, beds will be assigned on a first come, first served basis. Check-in is 2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Reservations will be null if not checked in by 6:00 p.m. unless prior arrangements are made with the Youth Inn Office. Pre-registration is recommended. Registration forms will be accepted beginning April 1.
19. The Hillcrest Dormitory will only house Grandstand Ushers, Free Stage Attendants and State FFA Officers.
20. 4-H and FFA exhibitors staying overnight on the Fairgrounds are to sleep at the Youth Inn except members staying with parents. All individuals or groups must have a chaperone. Siblings are allowed to stay if their parent is a chaperone.
21. For security purposes, each person staying at the Youth Inn will receive a pass at registration which will be required for admittance into the dorm. Personal items are not guarded so expensive items should be left at home or locked up.

## **IOWA STATE FAIR \* AUGUST 13-23, 2026 \* 4-H GENERAL RULES**

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22. All **chaperones will be responsible for their State Fair participants' conduct while in the dormitory**. Should the chaperone leave before the members check out, they must make arrangements with another chaperone to be responsible for their members. Any substitution must be reported to the dormitory supervisor or director.
23. Lights will be turned out at **11:00 p.m.** in the Youth Inn and Hillcrest Dormitories. All occupants of the dormitories are to remain quiet for satisfactory sleep beginning at these times. The doors will be closed at **12:00 a.m.** Anyone who returns later will be reported to his/her chaperone or school administration for necessary action.
24. Meals will be available for purchase in the Youth Inn Dining Hall. Breakfast will be served from 6:00 a.m. until 8:30 a.m., lunch from 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. and dinner from 4:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m.
25. **No food or drink may be taken into the dormitories**. This is to prevent attracting insects and/or rodents. The Youth Inn Office has a designated area to store these items which are watched by Staff during the day and locked up at night.
26. Due to privacy issues, **cell phones are not to be used in the dormitory**. This includes text messaging, etc. Calls will be allowed from the Office, the cafeteria and on the balcony.
27. Each individual should bring his/her own bedding, towels and toiletry items along with "show clothes" and enough clean clothes to last their stay at the Fair. It is also suggested to bring a jacket, flashlight, fan and extension cord with adaptor.
28. A fee of \$15 per night for youth (including all 4-H/FFA exhibitors) and \$20 per night for adults (18 & older) will be charged for each person receiving overnight lodging in the Youth Inn. Pay this non-refundable fee to the Iowa State Fair Youth Inn Manager upon arrival at dormitory. Payment must be in the form of card or cash, no checks. **Do not send Youth Inn registration fees with entries. 4-H Show Workers may stay in the Youth Inn at no charge. Pre-registration is recommended.**

### **APPROPRIATE DRESS**

30. See respective departments for more specifics.
  - a. When exhibiting livestock: Iowa State Fair exhibitor's t-shirt or white dress shirt and jeans, slacks or skirt (white trousers for Dairy Exhibitors). No hats will be allowed in the show ring except where designated by specific department rules. Closed toe shoes are required while showing.
  - b. Educational Presentations and Working Exhibits Presenters - Iowa State Fair exhibitor's t-shirt or apparel appropriate to the presentation or representative of the 4-H Youth Development program.