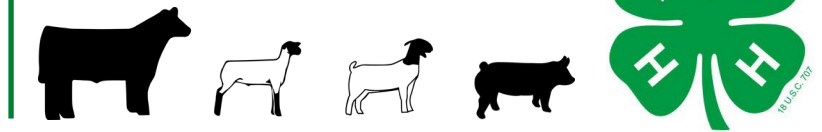


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# LIVESTOCK JUDGING



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## OBJECTIVES

**Targeted Life Skills:** self-esteem, decision making, problem solving, critical thinking, communication, cooperation, and teamwork

This activity will train 4-H members in live animal evaluation of breeding and market animals. In their training prior to the annual state contest, the 4-H'ers should learn the parts of each of the four species which they are to be evaluated: beef cattle, sheep, swine, and goats. They should also learn breed differences within the species. 4-H members should learn to make their own decisions based upon the best available information. Experience is given in developing their speaking ability through the use of oral reasons and critical thinking skills through a questions class. The oral presentation justifies the contestant's placement of the class and can be the most beneficial part of the contest. Individuals and teams are encouraged to compete in livestock judging contests as they are available for additional training prior to the state contest.

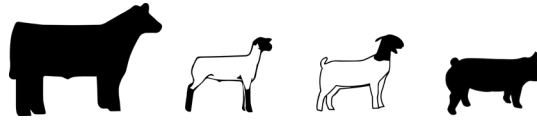
## ACTIVITY

The State 4-H Livestock Judging Contest will be held Thursday, April 16, 2026 at the Pauline Whitaker Animal Science Center in Fayetteville, Arkansas. **All individuals must be registered via ZSuite by March 30, 2026.** The county Extension agent will then declare their teams to the contest coordinator by April 6, 2026. The cost per participant will be \$20. Internal Service Deliveries (ISDs) will be initiated from the State Office to bill the county after the registration deadline has passed.

Registration will be from 8:00-9:00 a.m. the day of the contest. Contestants will be moved to the stands at 9:15 a.m. for contest announcements. Once youth enter the arena, there will be no more conferring with coaches or teammates. The contest will start as close to 9:30 a.m. as possible. Placing classes and questions will be completed in the morning and scantrons will be turned in. A lunch and short break will be provided before reasons start. Contestants are not allowed to leave the designated areas during the break.

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# LIVESTOCK JUDGING



After the last reasons scores are entered, scores will be calculated and coaches will be handed a slip of paper with their team and individual scores for them to check for errors. Coaches will have 15 minutes for error disputes. Once scores have been finalized, the awards ceremony will start.

**Note:** Only contest officials, agents, and leaders assigned to the contest will be allowed on the arena floor during the livestock judging contest. Classes may be reviewed after the contest is complete.

## ELIGIBILITY

- The contest is open to active Junior, Intermediate and Senior 4-H members. There will be three contest divisions following the age guidelines below.
  - Juniors must be 8-10 years old.
    - Junior members are youth aged 8-10 as of January 1.
    - Junior members are permitted to compete in either the Junior or Intermediate Division. To compete in the Intermediate Division, a junior must participate in all parts of the Intermediate Division contest.
  - Intermediates must be 11-13 years old.
    - Intermediate members are youth aged 11-13 as of January 1.
  - Seniors must be 14-19 years old.
    - Senior members are youth who are 14 as of January 1 and who have NOT reached their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday by January 1 of the current year.  
*Example: If a 4-H'er is 18 on January 1 and turns 19 on January 2, they are eligible to compete because they were 18 on January 1. If a 4-H'er turns 19 on December 31, they are ineligible to compete because they were 19 as of January 1.*
  - All participants must be enrolled in ZSuite by the registration deadline.
- For a county to be eligible for team competition, it must have at least three entries. A county may enter four individuals, but only the top three scores will count toward the winning team.

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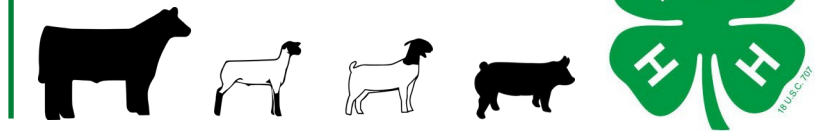
- A county may only enter one senior team.
  - A county may enter multiple junior and/or intermediate teams.
  - A county may enter an unlimited number of individuals in any division.
- Any senior 4-H members that have previously competed at the National 4-H Livestock Judging Contest in Louisville, Kentucky are ineligible to participate as a part of a team in the state contest. These individuals may participate in the contest as individuals only.

## METHOD OF CONDUCT

1. Contestants should be prepared to place 8-12 classes of beef cattle, swine, sheep, and goats. (The final class number and selection will be based upon availability of suitable animals.)
2. Oral reasons will be required in the Intermediate and Senior Divisions. Contestants in the Intermediate Division will give two sets of reasons. Contestants in the Senior Division will give three sets of reasons. Contestants in the Junior Division will not give any set of reasons.
  - Contestants using notes while delivering oral reasons will accept a penalized score. The maximum score for a participant using notes during oral reasons will be 25.
3. One class will serve as a questions class. All divisions of the contest (Junior, Intermediate, Senior) will participate in the questions class. Contestants will be asked specific questions pertaining to one class designated by the contest officials.
  - Intermediate and Senior contestants are not allowed to use notes while answering questions. Junior contestants will be permitted to use their notes while answering questions.
4. At least two classes will have sets of evaluation data and a production situation statement. Junior Division participants will not receive performance data.
5. Contestants shall not wear any clothing that will reveal what county they are from.

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6. Contestants are highly encouraged to wear business casual. No T-shirts or hats are to be worn during the contest.
7. All electronic devices are prohibited. If a contestant's phone should ring, or if they are discovered using an electronic device during the contest, the contestant will be disqualified.
8. Contestants will be divided into groups for the contest and will remain with their assigned group throughout the contest and the delivery of oral reasons.
9. While the contest is in progress, there will be no conferring between contestants or between a contestant and anyone else except as directed by contest officials. Offending contestants may be disqualified.
10. Contestants will be provided a scantron and blank paper before the contest. Contestants are allowed to bring their own blank paper or empty steno pads if preferred. Contestants should bring pencils and a clipboard.

## **OFFICIALS COMMITTEE**

A committee of judges shall place all classes, listen to oral reasons, and come up with questions. One judge will listen to one specific set of reasons for all contestants in the Senior Division.

## **DETERMINATION OF RANKINGS**

- Fifty (50) points shall constitute a perfect score for placing classes, reasons, and questions.
- Teams and individuals shall be ranked in order of total score (placings, reasons, and questions) for the classes comprising each species or award category. The team or individual having the highest score shall be declared the winner in each category of the contest. There will not be species or reasons awards categories in the Junior Division.

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# LIVESTOCK JUDGING



- In case of a tie in team or individual overall scores, ties will be broken in the following manner:
  1. Higher total reasons score
  2. Lower total placing score in reasons class
  3. Higher total questions score
- In the case of a tie in team or individual scores within species or category, ties will be broken in the following manner:
  1. Higher total reasons and/or questions score within species/category
  2. Higher total reasons score overall
  3. Higher total score overall
- In the case of a tie in team or individual reasons scores, ties will be broken in the following manner:
  1. Lower placing score in reasons classes
  2. Higher total overall score
- The scores tabulated via the scantron machine, reviewed by contest officials, and team coaches and submitted to JudgingCard shall be final once they have been publicly announced.

## RESOURCES

For examples of past contest materials, please visit: <https://4h.uada.edu/programs/plant-animal/livestock.aspx>. The 2026 contest will use the [Universal Form A Scantron](#).

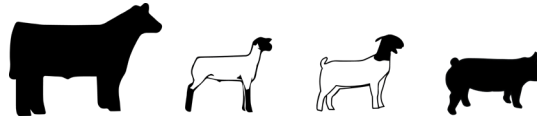
## AWARDS

The following awards will be given in all divisions (Junior, Intermediate, Senior).

- 1st-3rd Overall Team (4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Overall Team will be recognized in the Senior Division only)
- 1st-10th Overall High Point Individual

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The following awards will be given in the Intermediate and Senior Divisions only.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place Cattle Team
- 1st-3rd Place Cattle Individual
- 1<sup>st</sup> Place Swine Team
- 1st-3rd Place Swine Individual
- 1<sup>st</sup> Place Sheep Team
- 1st-3rd Place Sheep Individual
- 1<sup>st</sup> Place Goat Team
- 1st-3rd Place Goat Individual
- 1<sup>st</sup> Place Reasons Team
- 1st-3rd Place Reasons Individual

National trips for the Senior Division winners:

- Overall 1st Place Team
  - National 4-H Livestock Judging Contest in Louisville, Kentucky **(partial travel funding will be available)**
- Overall 2nd Place Team (travel funding will not be available)
  - Western National Round Up 4-H Livestock Judging Contest in Denver, Colorado **OR** American Royal 4-H Livestock Judging Contest in Kansas City, Missouri
- Overall 3rd Place Team (travel funding will not be available)
  - Western National Round Up 4-H Livestock Judging Contest in Denver, Colorado **OR** American Royal 4-H Livestock Judging Contest in Kansas City, Missouri (Whichever contest 2<sup>nd</sup> place team does not compete in)

## CONTEST ADMINISTRATION

Allison Harman – Instructor, 4-H Youth Livestock

Bryan Kutz, Ph.D. – Assistant Professor, Animal Science

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