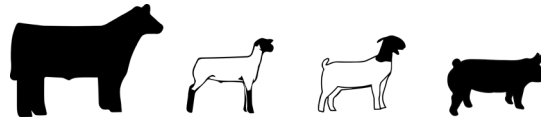


# MEATS EVALUATION



## OBJECTIVES

**Targeted Life Skills:** self-confidence, decision making, problem solving, critical thinking, and oral communication

This activity will train 4-H members in meat judging and meat identification. In their training prior to the annual state contest, the 4-H'ers should learn to evaluate and identify the retail cuts of each of the three species which they are to be evaluated: beef cattle, swine, and sheep. 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.

## ACTIVITY

The State 4-H Meats Evaluation Contest will be held Wednesday, April 15, 2026, at the University of Arkansas Red Meat Abattoir (1902 N Dvorachek Ave. Fayetteville, AR 72701). **All individuals must be registered via ZSuite by Monday, March 30, 2026.** **Agents will register all youth for \$20 per participant.** The county Extension agent will then declare their teams to the contest coordinator by Monday, April 6<sup>th</sup>. ISDs will be initiated from the State Office to bill the county after the registration deadline has passed.

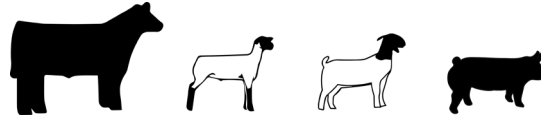
Registration will be from 12:30-1:00 p.m. the day of the contest. Contestants should be properly dressed by 1:00 p.m. for announcements about the contest. The contest will start at the conclusion of the announcements.

## ELIGIBILITY

- This contest has two divisions, Intermediate and Senior.
  - All participants must be enrolled in ZSuite by the registration deadline.
  - 4-H age is determined as of January 1<sup>st</sup> of the current year.
  - Intermediate Division is open to 4-H'ers 11-13 years old.
    - Junior aged 4-H'ers (ages 8-10 years old) are eligible to compete in the Intermediate Division at the discretion of the parent/guardian and county Extension agent. Contest content may be too advanced for some junior aged members.
  - Seniors Division is open to 4-H'ers ages 14-18 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.

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# MEATS EVALUATION



• *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.*

- Any senior 4-H members that have previously been on the State Champion team and attended the national contest are ineligible to participate as a part of a team in the state contest. These individuals may compete for individual awards only.
- 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.
  - A county may only enter one senior team.
  - A county may enter multiple intermediate teams.
  - A county may enter an unlimited number of individuals in either division.
- Contestants must not have participated in official post-secondary (university, college, junior college, or technical school) competitive events of similar nature in the same subject matter area, nor be a member of a post-secondary team undergoing training in preparation for such event.

## PROPER ATTIRE

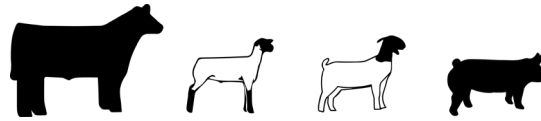
- Teams should provide their own clean frocks, cooler coats, and hard hats for contestants. Hair nets and beard nets will be provided. Do NOT put on frocks until entering the contest.
- Please dress appropriately for an extended period of time in the cool rooms. Closed-toe shoes and long pants are required.

## METHOD OF CONDUCT

- The contest shall be divided into two divisions – meat identification and meat evaluation. Meat evaluation scores will include placings, reasons, and questions.
- **Identification**
  - A total of 30 retail meat cuts (beef, pork, and lamb; fresh processed or variety) shall be identified as to:

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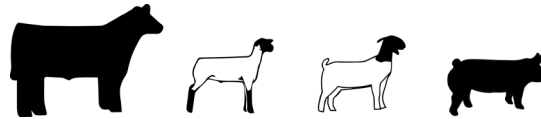
# MEATS EVALUATION



- **Intermediate Contest:** total ID score is 180 points
  - Species (2 points each)
  - Retail cut (4 points each)
- **Senior Contest:** total ID score is 300 points
  - Species (2 points each)
  - Primal cut (3 points each)
  - Retail cut (4 points each)
  - Cookery (1 point each)
- **Placings**
  - Contestants shall place 6 judging classes from the following list:
    - 2 Retail cut classes – One beef, one pork
      - Beef retail cut placing/reason classes shall be selected from the following:
        - Beef Chuck, Arm Roast
        - Beef Rib, Rib Steak, Lip-on
        - Beef Rib, Ribeye Steak
        - Beef Loin, T-Bone/Porterhouse Steak
        - Beef Loin, Top Loin Steak, Boneless
        - Beef Loin, Top Sirloin Steak, Boneless
        - Beef Round, Round Steak (Bone-In or Boneless)
      - Pork retail cut placing/reason classes shall be selected from the following:
        - Pork Shoulder, Blade Boston Roast
        - Pork Shoulder, Blade Steak
        - Pork Loin, Blade Chop
        - Pork Loin, Blade Roast
        - Pork Loin, Rib Chop
        - Pork Loin, Loin Chop
        - Pork Ham, Smoked Center Slice
    - 2 Beef Classes (Wholesale cuts from the list below or beef carcasses)
    - 2 Pork Classes (Wholesale cuts from the list below or pork carcasses)
      - Beef Ribs (103/107\*/109/112A)
      - Beef Rounds (158\*/160)
      - Beef Short Loins, Short-Cut (174\*)
      - Beef Strip Loins, Bnls (180)
      - Pork Fresh Hams (401\*/401A)

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# MEATS EVALUATION



- Pork Shoulder Boston Butts, Bone-In (406)
- Pork Loins (410/411/412\*)  
\*Preferred choices, if available

- **Oral Reasons**

- There will be three reasons classes selected from beef, pork and retail classes.
- Senior contestants will give three (3) sets of oral reasons. Intermediate contestants will give one (1) set of oral reasons.
- The reasons classes will be chosen by the Judges and announced to the contestants at the start of the contest.
- The contestant may not use notes while giving reasons but will be provided note cards during the contest to be used for review and preparation for the oral reasons.
- Reasons should be given to the Judges, in the order of the contestant's placing. Major comparisons, criticisms and grants should be used, where appropriate.
- Contestants giving their reasons on a different placing than what they recorded on their placing card will automatically be penalized 5 points from their reasons scores.

- **Questions**

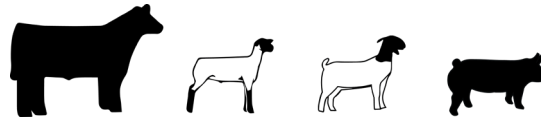
- Intermediate contestants will answer sets of 5 questions on two (2) classes.
- The questions classes will be chosen by the judges and announced to the contestants at the start of the contest.
- Participants may look at their notes during preparation for questions, but notes must be put away during the question period.

## **GENERAL RULES**

1. 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.
2. 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.

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# MEATS EVALUATION



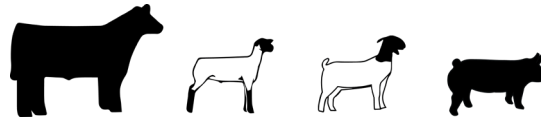
3. Each cut will be packaged in a tray with a clear wrapping cover and the most identifiable side displayed. Steaks or chops will not exceed 1-1/4 inches thick. Roasts will be 1-1/2 inches thick or more.
4. Contestants may not touch retail cuts at any time.
5. Twelve minutes will be allowed in the cooler per placing each judging class and taking notes for reasons or questions.
6. Contestants will stand back two minutes for reviewing judging class general characteristics except those classes designated as walk-by classes. Nine minutes will be allowed for close inspection of each class and one minute will be allowed for stand-back and filling out placing cards.
7. Two 12-minute periods will be allowed for identifying the 30 retail cuts, with no stand-back.
8. The Judges will decide all official placings and cuts for the contest. Efforts will be made to avoid borderline calls.
9. Immediately preceding the start of oral reasons, there will be a warm-up period of at least 30 minutes for contestants to study notes for their oral reasons. This time will include transportation to the reasons room at the Pauline Whitaker Animal Science Arena in Fayetteville.
10. Oral reasons may not exceed two minutes for any one class.
11. Contestants will be allowed a 10-minute study period to study their notes prior to questions. Questions will be read aloud to contestants and marked appropriately.
12. Cards not marked will be scored as a zero.

## **RESOURCES FOR TRAINING**

- The retail cuts to be used for the identification portion of the contest will be selected from the latest approved national 4-H Meat Identification Cut Master List (Retail Cut Identification Codes \*Updated January 2012) available from the American Meat Science Association ([www.meatjudging.org](http://www.meatjudging.org)).

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# MEATS EVALUATION



- Retail cuts and names shall be among those found in the Uniform Retail Meat Identity Standards approved list, and the Guide to Identifying Meat Cuts
- [2010 RMC Meat Judging Clinic, Bone Maturities and Quality Grading](#)
- Review the Retail Identification cuts from the [2004 National Contest](#).
- Visit [Texas A&M University's web page](#) for pictures of retail cuts used in the National 4-H Contest.
- Visit the [University of Kentucky's web page](#) for their meat id web site.
- [University of Nebraska](#) 4-H/FFA resource page
- University of Florida: <http://www.animal.ifas.ufl.edu/extension/meat/youth/judging-classes.shtml>.
- Meat Judging Materials, including cards and the Meat Evaluation Handbook, that are available from the AMSA. [Other Meat Judging Resources](#)
- [Click here for an example scantron](#) for State 4-H Meats Evaluation contest.

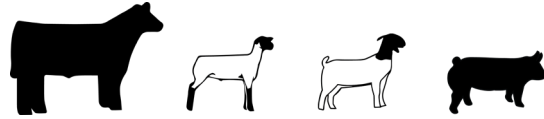
## SCORING

<u>Senior Contest</u>	<u>Possible Score</u>
Retail placing – 2 classes	100
Beef placing – 2 classes	100
Pork placing – 2 classes	100
Reasons – 3 sets	150
<b>Total evaluation score</b>	<b>450</b>
Retail cuts	300
<b>TOTAL SENIOR CONTEST SCORE</b>	<b>750</b>



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# MEATS EVALUATION



<b>Intermediate Contest</b>	<b>Possible Score</b>
Retail placing – 2 classes	100
Beef placing – 2 classes	100
Pork placing – 2 classes	100
Reasons – 1 set	50
Questions – 2 sets	50
<b>Total evaluation score</b>	<b>400</b>
Retail cuts	180
<b>TOTAL INTERMEDIATE CONTEST SCORE</b>	<b>580</b>

## **TIE BREAKERS**

- In case of a tie in team or individual overall scores, ties will be broken in the following manner:
  1. Higher total evaluation score
  2. Higher total reasons and/or questions score
  3. Lower total placing score in reasons classes
- In the case of a tie in team evaluation scores, ties will be broken in the following manner:
  1. Higher total reasons and/or questions score
  2. Higher total score overall
- In the case of a tie in team identification scores, ties will be broken in the following manner:
  1. Higher total overall score
  2. Higher total placings score

## **AWARDS**

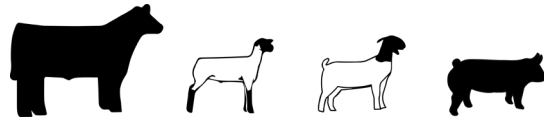
The following awards will be given in the intermediate and senior divisions of the contest:

- 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place overall teams
- 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> place overall individuals
- 1<sup>st</sup> place team in evaluation
- 1<sup>st</sup> place team in identification

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# MEATS EVALUATION



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The 1<sup>st</sup> place overall team will be eligible to compete at the National 4-H Meats Evaluation Contest at the American Royal held in Manhattan, Kansas. Partial travel funding will be available.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> place overall team will be eligible to compete at the National Western Round-up 4-H Meats Evaluation Contest in Denver, Colorado.

## CONTEST ADMINISTRATION

Allison Harman – Instructor, 4-H Youth Livestock

Janeal Yancey, Ph.D. – Instructor, Meat Science

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