

ELKHART COUNTY 4-H BEEF CLUB RULES 2025-26

CO – ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERS - Phil Lechlitner & Jason Nine

ASSISTANT LEADERS - Steve George - Renee Klein - Kayla Catt – Brandi Henderson

Steve George – Director & Fair Board Representative

Treasurer – Derek Thwaits

PROJECT LEADERS - Pam Vander Wey - Collin Miller - Taylor Thwaits

WEIGH IN & TAGGING DATES

Saturday December 13, 2025 (9:00 – 12:00) Shipshewana Sale Barn

Saturday February 21, 2026 (9:00 – 12:00) Shipshewana Sale Barn

Key Date: All animals must be enrolled by May 15, 2026 to be eligible to show!

4-H BEEF JUDGING

Monday July 27th 1:00 P.M.

Showmanship – Seniors – Juniors- Beginners- Greenhand

Heifers - Market Animals

4-H CARCASS SCANNING

Tuesday July 28th 10:00 A.M.

Steers and Market Heifers

4-H CARCASS AWARDS

Wednesday July 29th 7:00 P.M. - Root Beer Floats

4-H FITTING CONTEST

Thursday July 30th 1:00 P.M.

AUCTION

FRIDAY JULY 31st 6:30 P.M. - BEEF/DAIRY ARENA

BANQUET

Saturday August 15th 6:30 P.M. - NELSON'S PORT-A-PIT - WAKARUSA

RULES

(Market Animals – Steers & Market Heifers)

1. There is a limit of two (2) market animals for each member that can be shown and sold at the Elkhart County 4-H Fair. There is no limit on the number of market animals that individuals or families may enroll. Individuals or family members must identify who is showing which market animal (s) at fair entry. These market animals must be weighed and enrolled at either December or February weigh in dates with the approved five digit state yellow ID tag. RFID tags will be put in if necessary, at a cost of \$5.00 per tag.
2. The minimum weight for steers and market heifers at fair weigh in is 900 pounds (except for Mini-Hereford and Belted Galloway the minimum weight is 800 pounds) to be able to sell at our auction. If you weigh less than the minimum weight you may show but cannot sell at the fair auction. *The leaders and advisory board recommend that market animals(s) should be born between January thru May (2025) in order to meet the minimum requirements for weight.*
3. Mini-Hereford steers must pass the rules for the Indiana State Fair and MHBA as far as height is concerned. Mini-Hereford steers cannot be over 48 inches tall (measured at the hip) at fair weigh-in or they will be placed into the crossbred steer division.
4. Suggested minimum weights at the weigh-in's for market animals to make a desirable weight for the fair. December weigh-in (700 pounds) February weigh-in (900 pounds)
5. There will be no minimum number for any individual market animal breed at the Elkhart County 4-H Beef Show as long as that breed is recognized as a state fair market animal breed. Dairy & dairy cross are not allowable breeds for any class at the Elkhart County 4-H Beef Show. Whenever the Indiana State Fair adds additional market animal breeds to their list of recognized breeds, the leaders and advisory board will vote on whether to add that market animal breed. For 2026 the Elkhart County recognized breeds are listed under the General section of these rules under “show order”.
6. All Angus, Belted Galloway, and Red Angus market animals must be polled. (No scurs) We are also requiring that all market animals have their heads clipped before they come to the scales at the fair weigh in. Any market animal from the above list that is found to have scurs, even if the member has registration papers for that particular breed, will be moved to the crossbred and or slick market animal division.
7. All market animals must be dehorned and can only have scurs 1 inch or less. Except those breeds listed in #6 above.
8. Market animals will be shown in classes not to exceed 10 calves and will be arranged in classes by breed and weight. (Exception: Market Heifers, Crossbred Steers & Slick Market Animals by weight only).
9. Market animals must be born on or after January 1, 2025.
10. No animals will be allowed at the Elkhart County 4-H Fair unless the member can properly handle and exhibit them. This is for the safety for all involved.
11. Any 4-H beef animal that gets away from an exhibitor 3 times can be dismissed from the ring or tied in the corner of the show ring. Under the discretion of the leaders and assistant leaders, an animal may be dismissed before the 3 times if the animal poses a threat to the exhibitor or any other exhibitors. The animal dismissed from the ring may still sell in the auction.
12. Members are required to wear appropriate attire while exhibiting and selling their calves. Tennis shoes, shorts, and inappropriate shirts will not be allowed.
13. Calves must be shown by their owners. In case of sickness, injury, family emergency, or another 4-H conflict, another current 4-H beef club member (with the permission of the leaders and

assistant leaders) will be allowed to exhibit the animal.

14. All market animals will be classified by breed by the 4-H Beef Club Leaders, Assistant Beef Club Leaders, and the 4-H Beef Club Advisory Board at either weigh-ins. (Dec. & Feb.) The 4-H Beef Club Leaders, Assistant Beef Club Leaders, and the Advisory Board will make all final decisions. Should the above groups determine that there is a question about the breed of a steer, the 4-H member will have until May 15 to provide a registration paper to one of the leaders. A letter will also be sent to the member and parents to remind them of the deadline. If no registration paper is received by the deadline, then the steer will be put into the crossbred division. The member will also have the option to enter the slick market animal division at fair entry. A registration paper does not guarantee that you will stay in a breed division. Any steer removed from a breed class may be shown as either a crossbred and/or slick market animal.

15. Scenario's for switching breeds:

- A breed steer may switch to a crossbred steer or slick market animal at fair entry.
- A crossbred steer may only switch to slick market animal at fair entry.
- A market heifer may switch to slick market animal at fair entry.
- A commercial heifer may not switch to any other division.

16. Slick market animal class guidelines:

- Only steers and market heifers. No commercial heifers.
- No registration papers required.
- Steers and market heifers can have $\frac{1}{4}$ inch hair.
- A diagram will be provided to show what hair may be left on the animal.
- You may fit/groom the hair that is left on the animal.
- You may also cut the hair all off.
- You must enter the slick market animal division at fair entry.

17. All animals must be enrolled in both 4-H Online and the Fair Entry Systems.

- All market animals must be enrolled in the 4-H Online System by May 15.
- All market animals must be enrolled in Fair Entry between May 22 to June 25. No breed changes may be made after Fair Entry date.

18. If you miss the deadline for 4-H Online Animal Enrollment, May 15, you will not be allowed to show.

(Purebred & Commercial Heifers)

- Members may not enter more than two (2) heifers per age group per breed. Eligible heifer breeds are based on State Fair rules. Whenever the Indiana State Fair adds additional heifer breeds to their list of recognized breeds, the leaders and advisory board will vote on whether to add the breed. For 2026 the Elkhart County recognized breeds are listed under the General section of these rules under "show order".
- A copy of the certification of registration paper (plus RFID tag number) for heifers showing in specific breed classes, indicating that the member owned the heifer being exhibited either entirely or in partnership in accordance with the Indiana State Fair rules must be turned into (leaders or assistant leaders) by May 15. If you have a purebred heifer and think you might not get your registration papers turned in by May 15, then bring the heifer to one of the weigh in's (December or February) and tag her in as a commercial heifer. Subsequently, if you get your purebred heifer paper turned in on time, then she would be a purebred heifer instead of a commercial heifer.
- Commercial heifers must be brought in for either one of the weigh in's. Commercial heifers

will have both the approved state five digit yellow ID ear tag and a RFID tag put in if needed. Cost of the RFID tag will be \$5.00.

4. Non-acceptable registrations are in father's name only, farm name only, or in partnership with unrelated persons (such as "Smith View", "Smith Oak", "John Doe and William Smith (4-H member)", "Long Oak and William Smith (4-H member), etc. Acceptable registrations (1) in the 4-H member's name; (2) John Smith and sons; (3) John Smith, sons and daughters; (4) John Smith and family (family includes sons, daughters, and legal guardian – youth only; (5) Mark Smith (brother) and Mary Smith (sister); (6) Family Corporations, where the 4-H member's name appear as a holder of stock in the corporation, and proof of same must be supplied on or before the enrollment date; (7) Family partnership where the 4-H members father, mother, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, grandparent, and/or legal guardian is also in the family partnership and the 4-H member's name appears on the legal, notarized partnership. A copy of the written document must be submitted before the enrollment deadline. All registered heifer requirements will be based on the current Indiana State Fair guidelines.
4. We are also allowing any 4-H Beef Club member to show any purebred heifer at the Elkhart County 4-H Fair without having to transfer the registration paper to the 4-H member's name as long as the heifer was born in Elkhart County. These heifers which are not transferred to the 4-H member's name can only be exhibited with this type of paper at Bill George Memorial Open Summer Show and at our Elkhart County 4-H Show. These heifers would not be able to exhibit at the Indiana State Fair under these guidelines. If you elect to exhibit at open shows, you may exhibit as a commercial heifer.
5. Heifer age divisions

Junior Calf	Calves born January 1 to March 31, 2026
Senior Calf	Calves born September 1 to December 31, 2025
Summer Yearling	Calves born May 1 to August 31, 2025
Junior Yearling	Calves born January 1 to April 30, 2025
Senior Yearling	Calves born September 1 to December 31, 2024

6. Commercial heifers will be shown in classes not to exceed 10 calves and will be arranged by weight.
7. All heifers need to be in the possession of the 4-H member by May 15.
8. Mini-Herford heifers must pass the rules for the Indiana State Fair and MHBA as far as height is concerned. Mini-Herford heifers cannot be over 45 inches tall (measured at the hip) at fair check in or they will be placed into the commercial heifer division.
9. Any registered heifer that switches to the commercial division at the Fair Entry must meet the registered heifer guidelines before being weighed. (Tattoo must match registration paper and RFID tag must match entry form)
10. All animals must be enrolled in both 4-H Online and the Fair Entry Systems.
 - c. All heifers must be enrolled in the 4-H Online System by May 15.
 - d. All heifers must be enrolled in Fair Entry between May 22 to June 25. No breed changes may be made after Fair Entry date.
11. **If you miss the deadline for 4-H Online Animal Enrollment, May 15, you will not be allowed to show.**

Grand Champion Elkhart County Born Heifer

1. The heifer must have been born in Elkhart County.
2. This show will occur after the top 5 heifers in the 4-H show are selected.
3. If any of the top 5 heifers are Elkhart County Born, then the highest placing top five heifer will be the Grand Champion Elkhart County Born Heifer. Otherwise, the top placing Elkhart County born heifers from each breed will show for the Champion Elkhart County Born Heifer. There may be more than one heifer from an individual breed in this show.

Showmanship

1. Showmanship classes will be divided into:
 - a. Greenhand: first year members who have completed grades 3 or 4
 - b. Beginners: members who have completed grades 4 or 5
 - c. Juniors: members who completed grades 6, 7, & 8
 - d. Seniors: members who have completed grades 9, 10, 11, & 12
2. Participants must show calves that are entered in the Fair Entry in their name. (Not family name) You must also show in your age division unless you have advanced because of winning your age group the prior year. Once a member wins in her/his age group classification, they must advance to the next age group regardless of age. The senior winner will represent the 4-H Beef Club in the Round Robin Showmanship competition on Thursday evening of the fair. If the senior winner has already won the Round Robin Showmanship competition, the 2nd place senior will represent the Beef Club in the competition or if the winner declines the competition.
3. Fitting for showmanship is OPTIONAL. This decision is up to the 4-H member based on when their calves show in the show order. The judge will be notified ahead of time that this is an option for 4-H members.

Grooming Rules

1. "Anyone can assist with livestock grooming as long as the 4-H member is actively participating in the fitting process as well," This is meant to allow the 4-H member the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills of preparing the animal for show. This is not meant to have someone do the complete grooming and preparation of the animal for show day. If a 4-H member is caught not following this rule the punishments are:
 - a. First Violation: Warning given.
 - b. Second Violation: Will fall under the 4-H Grievance Fraud policy.
 - Grooming rule for the Bill George Memorial Open Show on Saturday, and the 4-H Show on Monday: No false switches (tails) and the use of artificial hair are prohibited. Only natural growing hair in its original location will be permitted.
2. Rules for where beef animals may be fitted. (Monday) This would include chutes and tents.
 - Anywhere in the Beef Barn.
 - Between the Beef Barn (North Side) and the Swine Barn. (South Side).
 - Between the Beef Barn (South Side) and the Dairy Feeder Barn (North Side).

4-H Auction

1. Market animals will sell at their initial weight on Thursday at check in.
2. All market animals must be shown on Monday to be eligible to sell in the auction.
3. Sale calves will be identified by stickers. This will be done Thursday evening of the fair.
4. No animal that is offered for sale or goes through the 4-H Beef Auction will be allowed to show at the Indiana State Fair.
5. Each animal to be sold will be assigned a support price prior to the sale by one or more livestock buyers.
6. Every beef club member will sell their first animal (unless you have 2 champions or reserves or a 10-year beef club member) live in the arena. When you sell your second animal, you will walk into the arena without your calf.
7. Stall rent of \$30 per head for market animals (steers and market heifers) and \$20 per head for heifers (purebred and commercial) will be collected during the June 4-H meeting. Proceeds provide banquet tickets for buyers, auctioneers, summer open show entry fee, and help defray club expenses.

General

1. The 4-H Beef Club Advisory Board, 4-H Beef Club Leaders, Assistant Leaders, and Extension Youth Educators will rule on any special problems arising during the year and their decisions will be final.
2. THE 4-H BEEF MARKET ANIMALS SHALL NOT CONTAIN any identifiable foreign substances, including drugs, steroids, or chemicals greater than those be standards established by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) or Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as permissible for sale for consumption as human food both on the day of the show and day of shipment to market from the fair. Test samples collected from any 4-H animal exhibit shall be free of any foreign substance including steroids, drug or chemicals affecting the central nervous system (for example, stimulants, depressants, or pain killers). Refusing such tests will result in disqualification and forfeiture of all awards.
3. It is illegal to use a pump and hose or a garden hose to gut fill your animal. A drench gun is permissible if you are administering nutritional supplements. Calf calming products are permissible, just make sure they have no withdrawal time. All medications that need to be given to an animal while on the fairgrounds must have a veterinarian script or be given under the supervision of a veterinarian. This must be on file with the 4-H club leader prior to this happening. If a 4-H member is caught not following this rule the punishments are:
 - a. First Violation: Warning given.
 - b. Second Violation: Will fall under the 4-H Grievance Fraud policy.
4. Fans may be used during the Elkhart County 4-H Fair. However, any fan used must be mounted from the barn rafters or show fan cages. Also, all fans must be mounted on the side so they face the east! Fans placed at ground level (e.g. butt fans) are unsafe for people walking through the barn and will not be allowed. Exception: A butt fan may be used behind a calf that is in a chute during the open show on Saturday or the 4-H show on Monday!
5. Before stalling in the barn, all beef cattle must be visually inspected by a Leader(s), and assistant leader(s) an /or advisory board member.
6. Beef Club members and parents are expected to assist with barn set up before the fair, arena clean up after each show, and arena clean up after the auction.
7. All 4-H beef cattle may only be shown with approved ear tags. The approved ear tags are the

five digit state yellow ID tag, and the RFID tag. No farm tags or auction tags. All others must be removed before coming to check in at the fair.

8. Any market animal not selling at the auction or heifers may go home after the show on Monday evening.
9. All tack, feed, hay, chutes, etc., must be taken home on Friday evening after the auction.
10. Arrival times for 2026 Elkhart County 4-H Beef Cattle. We are requiring all 4-H Beef Cattle be brought to the fairgrounds on Thursday, July 23 between the hours of 3:00 pm - 9:00 pm. No animals will be allowed to unload until 3:00 pm unless there are extenuating circumstances and arrangements are made ahead of time with the club leaders. You must weigh and check in your animals immediately off the trailer. One re-weigh will be allowed immediately after the first one. You must then take the second weight.
11. The scanning for the carcass show will be Tuesday morning (10:00AM) This carcass scanning is for steers and market heifers.
12. All animals showing in the Bill George Memorial Open Show must show as the breed entered for the 4-H show in Fair Entry.

Geraniums Sales and Selection of Stalls

The Elkhart County 4-H Beef Club has always been one of the top selling 4-H Clubs in our county for geraniums. It has been one of the major fundraisers for our club. Funds from this have helped the beef club in various projects. For example, improvements to the beef barn and additional premiums for our summer open show. This money also benefits the 4-H corporation. The funds are also used for ribbons at the fair, 4-H manuals, and sponsors 4-H trips and county workshops. So, as you can see, the geranium sales are a big part of our beef club finances. We have also used the geranium sale totals to select stalls in the beef barn during fair week.

1. Every 4-H beef club member, not family, must sell at least one flat of flowers or (2) hanging baskets to be eligible to be in the stall selection procedure. If you elect not to sell flowers, then the member or family, will go further down in the stalling process.
2. The advisory board voted to allow 4-H Beef Club members whose parents are leaders and assistant leaders to be stalled before the top sales person or family at the discretion of the stalling committee. This will allow the adults to fulfill their requirements at the beef office.
3. The top selling person or family will have first pick of the available stalls. This person or family may add additional beef club members to their group. This group may have up to 12 animals (the one exception would be an individual family with more than 12 calves) and there is no limit on the number of families. Each individual 4-H member of this group must have sold at least one flat of flowers or 2 hanging basket to be included in this group.
4. The rest of the stall selection process will follow the number of flowers sold per individual and /or group. If you elect not to sell flowers, then your selection will be determined by a blind draw at the end of the process.
5. If there are ties in the number of flowers sold, a blind draw will be used to determine the order of those individuals or groups.
6. When your position in the stalling order comes up, you must choose your stalls at that time. If you pass you will move down to the bottom of the list.
7. When it is your turn to select, you can select at either end of the sections. (East or West ends – not in the middle of sections)
8. No cash donations to replace an order of flowers. We suggest you order flowers and donate them to the beef barn decorating committee.

Show Order for the 4-H Show on Monday (Start at 1:00)

Showmanship: Seniors
Juniors
Beginners
Greenhand

Heifers: (Subject to change depending on what breeds are entered)

Belted Galloway – Charolais – Charolais Composite - Chianina – Gelbvieh - Hereford – Limousin - Maine - Mainetainer – Mini Hereford - Red Angus – Red Poll - Shorthorn – Shorthorn Plus – Simmental - Sim Solution – Commercial - Angus

Market Animals: (Subject to change depending on what breeds are entered)

Belted Galloway - Charolais – Chianina – Gelbvieh - Hereford - Limousin - Maine - Market Heifer – Mini Hereford - Red Angus -Shorthorn -Shorthorn Plus – Simmental – Slick Market Animal – Crossbred - Angus