



# Broiler & Market Bird Alternatives to Live Bird Activities at 4-H & Youth Poultry-Related Shows & Events



On May 1, 2024, the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) announced they would stop all 2024 poultry and waterfowl exhibitions in Michigan until such a time that the state goes 30 days without a new detection of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in domestic poultry. This decision may affect poultry shows at county and regional fairs, as well as other local events in the 30-day window.

In the event live poultry shows are not held at fairs, Michigan State University (MSU) Extension has identified opportunities for 4-H'ers with avian-related projects to showcase their work. The following approved alternatives to poultry shows and other live bird activities can offer valuable learning experiences in the project area.

**Important:** Check with your fair management to determine what their current processing procedures are. The following are guidance that Michigan 4-H Poultry used in 2015 and 2022. Above all else, if you or your fair management have questions, call MDARD at 1-800-292-3939.

## Broiler & Market Bird Auction Alternatives

Descriptions of the three approved substitutions for sale of meat bird projects that are part of youth poultry shows follow. These options are based on the processing facility used by the fair and are the only alternative class options that will be accepted at 4-H shows and exhibitions to replace traditional market animal classes involving live birds. County 4-H programs must follow these steps explicitly and are not permitted to create their own alternatives for these classes. In addition, fairs or auction committees must do their due diligence to comply with processing regulations and requirements for market poultry.

Under these alternatives, meat birds do NOT need to be pullorum tested before being processed.

## ***Options for Fairs That Use U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)- or MDARD-Approved Processing Facilities***

**Note:** The only USDA-approved facilities for poultry in Michigan are Munsell's Poultry Processing in Fowlerville and Scotts Hook & Cleaver, doing business as Pease Packing, in Scotts. There are several other facilities in Michigan with USDA approval for the slaughter of other species and poultry processing, but not poultry slaughter.

### ***Without Food Establishment License***

Fairs that use a USDA- or MDARD-approved processing facility but choose not to obtain a Food Establishment License may only allow exhibitors to display photos or videos of their birds during live or silent auctions. Exhibitors must transfer the ownership of the birds through a live or silent auction before having the birds processed. This is considered Custom Exempt processing. The USDA allows Custom Exempt processed meat and poultry to be used for the use of the owner of the live animal, their immediate family and their non-paying guests. Once sold, the birds must be taken to a designated off-fairgrounds location to be transported to the processor. Optionally, birds can be evaluated as live animals at this time and location; however this is not a requirement.

If evaluating the live animals:

- » All birds at the collection point must appear healthy or be sent home.
- » Immediately after each bird is evaluated, the bird must be placed in a holding crate for transportation to the processing facility.
- » Birds may not be removed from the holding crates for further evaluation or comparison to other birds.

**Note:** Projects cannot be evaluated before they are sold as live birds and carcass evaluation is not permitted with this option unless the processing facility is maintaining control of the processed birds and the consumer is picking up the processed birds directly from the processor.

### ***With Food Establishment License***

Fairs that use a USDA- or MDARD-approved processing facility may apply for a Food Establishment License from MDARD. The \$73 licensing fee includes an inspection of handling procedures. Learn more at [www.michigan.gov/mdard/licensing/food/foodest/michigan-food-establishment-license-applications](http://www.michigan.gov/mdard/licensing/food/foodest/michigan-food-establishment-license-applications).

- » MDARD issues Food Establishment Licenses for fairs on the spot at the fair, not ahead of time. If you have a concern prior to that, contact your area inspector.
- » **Important:** Check with your fair management to determine if your fair has already obtained this license in order to serve food on the grounds. If so, make sure the license contact informs the inspector that you plan to have processed birds on the grounds. In addition, some 4-H clubs may already have a license for food concessions. If so, processed birds can also be covered under this license by working with the inspector.

### ***Live Bird Judging With a Food Establishment License***

Once a license has been obtained, birds can be taken to one designated off-fairgrounds location to be transported to the processor. Birds can be evaluated as live animals AT THIS LOCATION ONLY, but evaluation is not a requirement. If evaluating the live animals:

- » All birds at the collection point must appear healthy or be sent home.
- » Immediately after each bird is evaluated, the bird must be placed in a holding crate for transportation to the processing facility.
- » Birds may not be removed from the holding crates for further evaluation or comparison to other birds.

### ***Carcass Judging Alternatives***

Fairs and/or county 4-H programs can elect to have bird carcasses evaluated, instead of live animals, as long as proper food safety and handling procedures are followed as required by the Food Establishment License. The processed birds (regardless of having been evaluated or not) can be sold through live or silent auctions held during the fair.

**Note:** If the processing facility is maintaining control of the processed birds and the consumer picks up the processed birds directly from the processor, the fair does not need a Food Establishment License.

### ***Options for Fairs That Do NOT Use USDA- or MDARD-Approved Facilities for Poultry Processing***

Exhibitors must transfer the ownership of the birds through a live or silent auction before having the birds processed. The purchaser will indicate where the bird should be processed. This is Custom Exempt processing. The USDA allows Custom Exempt processed meat and poultry to be used for the use of the owner of the live animal, their immediate family and their non-paying guests. After completion of the sale, birds can be evaluated and processed.

The bird evaluation process is strictly optional and is not a requirement of the sale. If evaluating the live animals:

- » All birds at the collection point must appear healthy or be sent home.
- » Immediately after each bird is evaluated, the bird must be placed in a holding crate for transportation to the processing facility.
- » Birds may not be removed from the holding crates for further evaluation or comparison to other birds.

**Note:** Projects cannot be evaluated before they are sold as live birds and carcass evaluation is not permitted with this option.

## ***Sale & Auction Options***

No matter what form of sale will be used at a fair, exhibitors should provide the following information for all birds to be sold: exhibitor name, 4-H club or group name, and bird identification (That is, leg or wing bands). If processed before the sale, also include dressed bird weight. If not processed at time of sale, birds should be sold as one whole unit (not per pound).

### ***Silent Auctions***

Each animal will have a display, created either by the exhibitor or the fair for the silent auction that includes a place for potential buyers to place bids.

### ***Live Auctions***

Exhibitors proceed through the sale ring as usual, but without their birds. If a computer, projector and screen are available, exhibitors may submit one picture of themselves with their live project birds to be displayed on the screen during the auction.

## ***Virtual Auctions***

Fairs may choose to host a virtual auction and may select the platform of their choice. MSU Extension and Michigan 4-H have contracted with FairEntry; this system is available to all counties, along with support and related resources provided by MSU Extension, for a reduced fee. However, each local county can make their own decision about which platform they will use.

In virtual auctions, youth submit photos or videos of their projects which are posted online for a set period of time at a specific online link where buyers can bid. Birds sold through an online auction will be sold by the head. Fairs will/may still arrange for pooling, transportation and processing of birds from/to a central location as permitted above.

Additional virtual auction resources for staff can be found online at: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/virtual-showcase/fair-managers-staff>. Additional virtual auction resources for youth can be found online at <https://www.canr.msu.edu/virtual-showcase/Youth-Members/>. Additional virtual auction resources for potential buyers can be found at <https://www.canr.msu.edu/virtual-showcase/Potential-Buyers/>.