



# Egg & Special Contest 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 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.

## Market Egg Classes

MDARD's stop of live poultry shows does not apply to market egg classes. However, MSU Extension requires that all market eggs be thoroughly cleaned with soap and water before exhibition. In addition, eggs should be disposed of at the end of the exhibition. Eggs can still be sold through 4-H and youth auctions, however the eggs must be disposed of after the fair and not consumed by the buyer. Disposing of eggs that have been on display for an extended period of time is a good food safety practice and is not related to avian influenza or the MDARD stop of poultry shows. We suggest this practice every year.

## Other Special Poultry Contests

Because the loss of traditional 4-H classes involving live birds will disappoint many young people, MSU Extension encourages county 4-H programs and county and regional fairs to consider supplementing this year's fair poultry experience with additional contests, such as those listed in this section. **Note:** Alternative contests are strictly prohibited from using live birds or any part of a live or recently processed bird (such as feathers) during an active 30-day stop.

## Poultry Quiz Bowls

Contestants demonstrate their poultry-related knowledge through a quiz bowl competition. A list of sample questions is available to MSU Extension staff at [michiganstate.sharepoint.com/:f:/r/sites/CANR/chldnyth/Documents/2022%20HPAI%20Resources](https://michiganstate.sharepoint.com/:f:/r/sites/CANR/chldnyth/Documents/2022%20HPAI%20Resources). For more information on study materials, question selection and how to conduct a quiz bowl contest visit <https://national4hpoultry.ca.uky.edu/content/avian-bowl>.

The National Avian Bowl Manual can be purchased at [https://secure.touchnet.net/C20569\\_ustores/web/product\\_detail.jsp?PRODUCTID=1587&SINGLESTORE=true](https://secure.touchnet.net/C20569_ustores/web/product_detail.jsp?PRODUCTID=1587&SINGLESTORE=true).

## Poultry Egg & Meat Judging Contests

Have a judging contest using various grades of eggs, poultry parts and whole birds. (**Note:** All eggs and meat products for this contest must be obtained from a licensed retailer, such as a grocery store.) For more information on this contest visit <https://poultry4hyouth.ces.ncsu.edu/poultry-judging/>. Note: this resource references a three-pronged contest involving live birds, egg and meat judging. If using these guidelines, the process and total scores will need to be amended to remove live bird evaluation.

## Chicken & Turkey Barbecue Contests

The contestants will be scored on their barbecue skills, a sensory evaluation and their presentation of barbecue products. (**Note:** All meat products for this contest must be obtained from a licensed retailer, such as a grocery store.) Contest procedures and score sheets can be found at:

- » **Chicken** – <https://national4hpoultry.ca.uky.edu/content/chicken-barbecue>
- » **Turkey** – <https://national4hpoultry.ca.uky.edu/content/turkey-barbecue>

## **Egg Dish Preparation Contests**

Each participant must present a demonstration on the preparation of an egg dish. (**Note:** All egg products for this contest must be obtained from a licensed retailer, such as a grocery store.) Contest procedures and score sheets can be found at <https://national4hpoultry.ca.uky.edu/content/egg-chef-challenge>.

## **Poultry Skill-A-Thons**

Hands-on skill-a-thons using cleaned and sanitized equipment (such as that found in the Ohio State University Learning Lab Kits) will test members' poultry-related knowledge and skills. (**Note:** Many county MSU Extension offices already possess Ohio State University Learning Lab Kits.)

The contestants will have 3 to 5 minutes at each of five to 10 stations to complete tasks such as identifying poultry breeds and equipment. Contestants who need help with reading or writing must request such assistance before the contest starts. No talking will be allowed between contestants once the contest has started. (**Note:** If using eggs and meat products for this contest, they must be obtained from a licensed retailer, such as a grocery store.)

Resources for creating poultry skill-a-thons can be found at:

- » <https://www.canr.msu.edu/otsego/uploads/files/Skillathon%20Study%20Guide%20-%202022%20Poultry.pdf>
- » <https://www.canr.msu.edu/otsego/uploads/files/Skillathon%202021%20-%20Poultry%20-%20study%20guide.pdf>
- » <https://www.citruscountyfair.com/content/files/2021-2022%20Poultry%20Skill-a-thon%20Booklet.pdf>
- » <https://bit.ly/3zs6PTi>

## **Build a Bird Contests**

Participants build models of their birds using synthetic materials such as polystyrene, decorative feathers purchased from a craft store and other craft supplies before the county fair begins. Creativity is welcome – the exhibitors' model birds don't have to be replicas of their live project birds. The completed models can be placed in coops and displayed with autobiographies or short stories written by the youth. The models and written works are judged on creativity.

All building materials for this contest must be human-made; no live birds or parts of live birds, such as feathers, are allowed during an active 30-day stop. Exhibitors should properly clean and sanitize their hands and work space before constructing and handling their project, to minimize the risk of infection.

Model birds must be constructed of materials that have not come in contact with live birds or anything that has been in contact with live birds. (For example, you may not use a crate that has housed a live bird.) This reduces the risk of contamination.

County 4-H programs are permitted to decide whether the model birds will only be used for display or will also be judged. If the models are judged, the Danish Rating System (A, B and C ratings) should be used.

## **Educational Displays**

Contestants create educational displays on poultry-related topics such as breed characteristics, common diseases, management practices, nutrition, and egg and meat production to inform fairgoers of the many facets of the poultry industry.