



2025/2026 4-H MARKET LIVESTOCK BEEF PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

1. **Age Requirement:** The 4-H Member must have reached their **10th birthday by January 1, 2026** to sell their animal at the 2026 sale. A member may continue in the project as long as they meet 4-H age requirements. 4-H Eligible age is 5 to 19 as of January 1st of the current 4-H year. Members who are 4-H age but have graduated High School will only be allowed to sign up during Tier 3.
2. **Returning vs New Member:** A “Returning” Market Livestock Member is a 4-Her that has been enrolled at least one year in a market livestock project. A “New” Market Livestock Member is a 4-H’er enrolling in a market livestock project for their first year. All returning 4-Her’s must have achieved a B or better on their most recent market animal notebook entry at the Oceana County Fair.
3. **Optional Additional Animal Registration:** Members may raise **one personal backup** or join a **backup pool** with others. A **\$5 fee per backup steer per member** is due by **4:00 p.m., December 1, 2025**. Pool backups must be listed on the “**Pool Backup Form**” with **photos, breed info, and RFID tags**. (Pool limit: **5 backups**) If a primary steer becomes unfit, a **written explanation to use a backup** must be submitted to the **MSU Extension Office by August 3rd**. **Using a backup steer without approval may lead to disqualification.** (Example: Pool Backup has 3 steers—member would like to have access to all, would owe \$15 total). **You should not register your primary animal for Oceana as a primary animal for another county fair auction.**
4. **Backup Animal Notification Deadline:** The 4-H-er will have until August 3rd to notify the MSU Extension Office with a written explanation of why they will be bringing their backup animal. If notification is not made, the primary animal will be the one expected to come to fair. If a 4-H’er brings the backup animal without notification, in writing, to the fair they may be disqualified from exhibition and the 4-H Market Program. Requests made after this date will be addressed on a case by case basis.
5. **4-H Enrollment:** 4-H’ers must have completed the 4-H Enrollment through <https://v2.4honline.com/>
6. **Enrollment is first-come, first-served**, based on available space (max. 48 steers). **Applications available:** Oct. 22 – Dec. 1, 2025 at the MSU Extension Office. I may submit my application at the MSUE Office, through mail, email at wassonj3@msu.edu or fax (873-3710) during the appropriate time. Please note that signing up at the MSUE Office potentially may take precedence over mail delivery, email printed, or fax received. **Online enrollment at [mi.4honline.com](https://v2.4honline.com/) must be completed** before submitting any project paperwork.

TIER 1 (Oct. 22–29): For members who completed the market steer project last year and met all requirements in the 4-H Automatic Enrollment Policy. Bring your **signed buyer’s receipt (2024/2025)** as proof of delivering your buyer’s picture and thank you for application to be accepted. **TIER 2 (Oct. 30–Nov. 5):** For those who *did not make weight* but: Completed 6 club meetings, Received a B or better on their notebook, requested Committee and leader approval to continue stay in the same project area (*see Automatic Enrollment Policy – Additional Guidelines #4*). **TIER 3:** For new members, high school graduates, or those who didn’t complete last year’s market beef project. Sign up: **Nov. 8, 8:45–9:00 a.m. only**, then resumes **Nov. 10–Dec. 1** during normal business hours. **Only the 4-H-er, parent/guardian, or sibling** may submit the application on Nov. 8. A **waiting list** of at least 5 members will be accepted—see project rules for details.
7. **Waiting List System:** Those placed on the waiting list will be notified if a space should become available. Applications will be numbered in the order they are received. There will be no filling of open spots after July 1st.
8. **Ear Tag Requirements/Steer Weigh-In/Pictures:** Animals must be on feed by **December 1, 2025**, and have a **15-digit RFID tag in the animal’s ear** before the **mandatory Steer Weigh-In on Saturday, December 6**, held at the **Oceana County Fairgrounds Beef Barn, 8:00–10:00 a.m.** At weigh-in, steers will be weighed and photographed. Members attending the **Winter Beef Show** the same weekend must notify the **MSU Extension Office in advance**. Their show weight can be used, but **breed, RFID, and photos must be submitted by Dec. 1**. Backup animals not attending the Winter Beef Show **must** be brought to the Steer Weigh-in. A parent or sibling may bring the animal **only with prior approval** from the Executive Committee. **Attendance is mandatory** unless officially excused by the 4-H Market Livestock Committee. **Non-compliance will result in disqualification.** (s) .
9. **Lost/Fallen Out Ear Tags:** If the RFID ear tags should get lost or fall out, the Extension Office must be notified at once. You will have to contact the farm where your animal was purchased to get a replacement RFID tag. Once the replacement tag has been acquired, **you need to contact the MSU Extension with the new number as soon as possible**, so there is time to get their records updated, and who will be the person putting the tag in the animal’s ear. **The Market Livestock Committee will send a committee member, if possible, out to your animal’s location to put in the new tag.** Beef animals must have an RFID tag in order to be transported within the State of Michigan. Any project animal coming to the fair without a proper ear tag will not be allowed to enter the barn.
10. **Animal Breeds:** The Beef/Low Line/Dairy Beef Project permits members to raise all beef breed animals and dairy beef breeds. New for 2025/2026 is the addition of Low Line Beef Breeds. If a 4-H member has chosen a low line breed they will indicate that on their application form and the animal will meet the following finish guidelines. It will have a height of 38” - 48” tall and weigh between 700-1000 lbs. Any low line breed not within the height or weight will either be consider a normal beef animal for those above these guidelines or be disqualified for those under these guidelines. Members will not be permitted to claim the low line beef breed if it is not indicated on their application.

11. **Recommended Starting Weight/Feed Date:** All 4-H Beef project animals should be on feed by Monday December 1, 2025 to reach the Fair weight range of 950-1600 pounds. For low line breeds the weight range is 700 lbs. to 1000 lbs. with a height range of 38"-48" tall. The 4-H Market Livestock recommends a starting weight of 450-700 pounds. All beef to be sold at the 2026 Market Livestock Auction must have been born in 2025.
12. **Replacement Deadline:** If the animal should die or some other special problem occurs prior to or on **March 2nd of the project year**, the 4-H'er may request the 4-H Market Livestock Committee consider granting a replacement. The MSU Extension Office must be notified prior to, or no later than, March 2nd so that the Executive Committee/or Full Committee can be contacted for replacement permission. Replacement animal requests will only be considered after the deceased/special problem animal has been viewed by the leader, 4-H Market Livestock Committee member or submission of a veterinarian's written explanation of the cause of death or special problem. **All pictures, ear tags and breeds for replacement animal must be on file at the Extension Office no later than Tuesday, April 1, 2026. Failure to do so will result in disqualification from project. If raising additional backup animals, you may elect to have the "backup" animal as your replacement animal and would need to notify the MSU Extension Office in writing of this decision by April 1, 2026.**
13. **Stags/Castrated Animals/Horns:** No stags will be allowed at the Fair. **It is recommended that all male animals be knife castrated** by January 1, 2026. Heifers will be permitted. All animals must be dehorned. No scurs will be allowed. Any re-growth must be removed. If a stag is determined after slaughter, a \$.25 per pound adjustment will be made.
14. **Selling in the Small Animal Auction:** A 4-H Market Livestock member will be permitted to participate in the 4-H Small Animal Auction in project areas that are not filled. Upon completion of the registration process for those 4-H members participating in 4-H Small Market, Large market members may sign up during April 1—8th, 2026 for projects that are not currently filled. All guidelines for these Small Market Project related to animal weights, breeds, non-club points, buyers names etc. will apply. Limited to one (1) animal project.
15. **Notebook Requirements:** Each member must complete a **project notebook** documenting time and care spent with their animal. The notebook must include: **Table of contents** (in order), **appendices** for extra materials, a **mandatory "Journal of Care"** record. To qualify for next year's project, your notebook must earn a **"B" ribbon or better. Bring notebook at weigh-in; failure to do so = ineligible to sell** at the auction. Submit your notebook to the **4-H Exhibit Building by 5:00 p.m. on Entry Day. No edits** allowed after submission. If the fair is held virtually, notebooks must still be completed and submitted to your leader for **pass/fail** review.
16. **Potential Buyer's Names: Due Date:** Submit **in person** to the Extension Office **by Friday, July 31 at 4:00 p.m.**
Required Information for Each Buyer: Full **mailing address** (with zip code), **Phone number**, **Email address** and **after-hours number** (if available). Lists **must be legible**, use the **provided sheet** (not one name per sheet), and include **3 different buyers per member**, not shared with siblings. Lists will be **stamped and initialed** by Extension staff upon submission. Incomplete lists will be returned for correction; failure to resubmit with complete info = **ineligible to sell**. Returned mail due to incorrect addresses is the 4-H'er's responsibility (e.g., P.O. Box vs. street address). The Extension Office **will not** research new addresses—those buyers will be **removed from the list**.
17. **Entry Day/Weigh-In:** All beef animals must be weighed at the designated central scale upon arrival and immediately stalled—no tying outside the barn.
*Weighing is to the nearest pound; no re-weighs allowed.
***Standard Beef & Dairy Beef** must weigh **at least 950 lbs.** No max weight, but anything over **1600 lbs** will be recorded/sold as **1600 lbs** (scale limit).
***Low Line Beef Breeds** must weigh **700–1000 lbs** and stand **38"–48" tall**, and be registered as Low Line on the application. Those outside these limits may be moved to Standard Beef or disqualified from sale.
*Animals not making weight **will not sell** in the auction but may:
*Stay for showmanship,
*Sell out of barn with a **\$25 marketing fee** (includes "4-H For Sale" sign),
*Pay extra for hauling if sold and delivered to processor.
***Non-payment** of fees may lead to **disqualification** from next year's project
*Unruly animals may be sent home at the **Beef Superintendent's** discretion.
*Check with the Beef Superintendent for exercise ring access on entry day.
18. **Grading of Animals:** All beef animals will be graded at the Fair. Any animal determined to be below quality by weight, age, or grade by the judge will not be eligible to be sold at the Market Livestock Sale at the Fair. All eligible animals must be sold at the 4-H Market Livestock Sale.
19. **Showing/Selling Requirements:** Animals must be shown in **both showmanship and market classes** by the **registered owner** to be judged and sold. **Beef animals must be shown on a halter; mouth/lip chains and nose leads are prohibited** unless special permission is granted. **Withdrawing from the auction** after showing/judging = **ineligible to bring an animal the following year**. **Special considerations** (e.g., health or college conflicts) may be granted by the Committee if: **Pre-approved at least 1 week before the fair**, health-related requests may require a **physician's note**. Failure to request approval on time may result in **project disqualification**.

20. **Animal Care During Fair:** You are responsible for feeding, cleaning and removal of your animal until the end of the Fair. The 4-H Market Livestock Committee permits the use of sawdust (provided by the Fair Board) or kiln-dried wood shavings (you may provide) as bedding material. **NO STRAW PERMITTED! All pens/stalls must be cleaned before 9:00 a.m. each day the Fair is open.** Failure to comply with this rule can result in forfeiture of premiums, \$50.00 disciplinary charge from sale proceeds and/or a one year suspension of 4-H Market Livestock Project privileges. Borrowing of cleaning equipment should be done with permission granted by equipment owner. If your animal requires a veterinary exam during fair, the 4-H'er will be responsible for the cost of the vet service.
21. **Non-Club/Club Points:** Members must earn **9 total points** to sell a market animal:
6 points from club meetings,
1 point from a fairgrounds workbee (*max of 2 workbee points may count towards the non-club points*),
2 points from non-club 4-H events (must be on approved list or pre-approved by Extension Staff/Superintendents). For events requiring **Extension Staff signatures**, you must fill in the **event name, location, and date. No signatures will be given on fair setup day or entry day. Failure to earn all 9 points = ineligible to bring a market animal to the fair.**
22. **Auction Sale Checks:** **Sale checks** will be distributed **no earlier than the Annual Meeting**, once all buyer payments are received. **Deductions** from checks include: Program expenses (percentage + flat fee), Picture fee (two 8x10s by official photographer), Hauling fee (if applicable), and Industry promotional fees (if required). To receive a check, 4-H'ers must submit a **signed Buyer's Receipt** confirming picture and thank-you delivery. Checks can be picked up at the **Annual Meeting** or later at the **Extension Office**. Checks are **valid for 60 days**; a **\$25 fee** applies to reissue expired checks. **"Sold Out of the Barn"** animals are **private sales** between 4-H'er and buyer. If help is needed, you may reach out to the Extension Office after the auction. There will be no credit, ribbon or photo provided to the buyer.
23. **Disciplinary Action:** If disciplinary action is warranted, the 4-H Market Livestock Committee reserves the right to impose one or more of the following actions: additional percentage deducted from 4-H'ers Animal Sale proceeds, suspension from 4-H Market Livestock Project areas and/or forfeiture of premiums.
24. **Financial Loss:** The exhibitor will bear financial loss of any market livestock animal until that animal leaves the Fairgrounds at which time the hauler or buyer assumes responsibility unless the animal is condemned for any reason.
25. **Rules/Requirements Acknowledgement:** Signing the 4-H Market Livestock Beef project application and being accepted into the project indicates that the 4-H member and family have read all the rules and requirements for the project in addition to the Oceana County Animal Project Code of Ethics and agree to abide by these rules.
26. **Issues/Complaint Process:** In questioning project rules or issues with your project you should contact the following people/groups in this order: 1) Your leader; 2) MSU Extension—4-H Program Coordinator; 3) 4-H Market Livestock Committee. If you should have any issue related to your project during Fair, please contact the following people/groups in this order: 1) Your leader; 2) Leader will contact Barn Superintendent; 3) Barn Superintendent will contact Executive Committee of project area; 4) Executive Committee will contact Youth Council Members.
27. **Final Authority:** The 4-H Market Livestock Committee will be the final authority on all matters of concern and can grant exceptions to the above rules. They will consult with Youth Council if necessary.

Market Beef Project Dates: All deadlines are by 4:00 p.m., unless otherwise noted!

Market Beef Project Automatic Enrollment for returning Members who meet requirements:

Tier 1 - 10/22/25– 10/29/25 (completed 6 meetings, got a passing grade on their notebook and sold at auction)

Tier 2 - 10/30/25 - 11/5/25 (completed 6 meetings, got a passing grade on their notebook but had extenuating circumstances such as did not make weight and followed steps outlined in the Automatic Enrollment policy (attached))

Tier 3- 11/08/25– 12/1/25 (new to the project or did not meet requirements)

Replacement Request Deadline (death or special issue) – **Monday, March 2, 2026**

Paperwork for Replacement Animal – **Wednesday, April 1, 2026**

4-H Small Market Animal Project Sign-Up—**Wednesday, April 1—Wednesday, April 8, 2026**

Potential Buyer's Names – **Friday, July 31, 2026**

Written declaration of switch to "backup" animal – **Monday, August 3, 2026**

Entry and Weigh-In at Fair – **Animals/Notebooks weighed 8:00-12:00 p.m. Monday, August 24, 2026; note books entered in the Youth Exhibit Bldg. by 5:00 pm**

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