



2025/2026 4-H MARKET LIVESTOCK SWINE PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

1. **Age Requirement:** The 4-H Member must have reached their **8th birthday by January 1, 2026** to sell a hog in the 2026 sale. A member may continue in the project as long as they are 4-H Eligible age. 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 grade of B or better on their most recent market animal notebook.
3. **Optional Additional Animal Registration:** Members may raise **one personal backup** or join a **backup pool** with others. A **\$5 fee per backup hog per member** is due by **4:00 p.m., June 1, 2026**. Pool backups must be listed on the “**Pool Backup Form**” with **photos, breed info, 4-H tags and MDARD tags**. (Pool limit: **5 backups**) If a primary animal becomes unfit, a **written explanation to use a backup** must be submitted to the **MSU Extension Office by August 3rd**. **Using a backup hog without approval may lead to disqualification. (Example: Pool Backup has 3 hogs—member would like to have access to all, would owe \$15 total). Do not register your primary animal for Oceana County as a primary animal for another county fair auction.**
4. **Backup Animal Notification Deadline:** The 4-H’er raising two animals will have until **Monday, August 3rd** to notify the MSU Extension Office, in writing, that 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. 60 hogs). **Applications available:** Oct. 22 – Jan. 2, 2026 at the MSU Extension Office pending available space. 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 must be completed** before submitting any project paperwork.
TIER 1 (Oct. 22–29): For members who completed the market swine 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 and received Livestock Committee and leader approval to 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 swine project. Sign up: **Nov. 8, 8:15–8:30 a.m. only**, then resumes **Nov. 10–Jan. 2, 2026** 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.
7. **Waiting List System:** Those placed on the waiting list will be notified if a space should become available. If a member is notified of available space prior to the June 1st deadline for breed, picture and ear tags, they must submit this information on or before June 1st. If a member is notified after the June 1st deadline, they will have 2 weeks to submit breed, picture and ear tag numbers. There will be no filling of open spots after July 1st.
8. **Animal Housing:** The location where the hog is housed must be recorded on your application form.
9. **Ear Tag Requirements/Deadlines:** All 4-H Market Livestock Swine project animals will be required to have one (1) **Oceana County 4-H Ear Tag placed in their hogs ear**. These tags will be available at the MSU Extension Office (1per member). All swine animals will also require a **Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) identification tag**. These tags will either be provided by who you purchase your animal from or by registering your farm with MDARD to obtain the necessary information to order your tags. Please see the attached information. MSU Extension. or the Oceana County Agricultural Society, will not be providing these tags. These numbers must be turned into the MSU Extension Office no later than **Monday, June 1, 2026**.

For those members registering additional animals, you will be required to get the extra Oceana County 4-H Ear Tags from the Extension Office prior to the June 1st deadline, as well as providing the MDARD Ear tag. All ear tags, breeds and pictures must be turned into the Extension Office by **Monday, June 1, 2026**. **Tags must be in the ears of the animal and clearly readable in the pictures. NO EXCEPTIONS!**
10. **Picture & Breed Requirement:** All 4-H Swine project members raising hogs will be required to submit a color picture of their animal (s) with a **visible ear tags** and animal breeds for both primary and backup animals by **Monday, June 1, 2026**. **NO EXCEPTIONS!**

11. **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. Limit to one (1) animal project.
12. **Lost/Fallen Out Ear Tags:** If ear tags are lost or fall out, the Extension Office must be notified at once. An Oceana County 4-H Ear Tag replacement tag will be issued from the MSU Extension Office. If the MDARD tag falls out, you will need to contact the farm you purchased your animal from for a replacement if the tag was provided at the time of purchase. Otherwise, you will use one of the tags you ordered following the MDARD Swine tag instructions (attached). Any project animal coming to the fair without a 4-H & MDARD ear tag will not be allowed to enter the barn. **All ear tag replacement numbers must be provided to the MSU Extension Office as soon as possible, but no later than July 31st.**
13. **Recommended Starting Weight/Feed Date:** All 4-H Swine project animals should be on feed by Monday, June 1, 2026 to reach the fair weight range of 220-330 pounds. The 4-H Market Livestock recommends a starting weight of 45-55 pounds.
14. **Replacement Deadline:** If the hog should die or some other special problem occurs prior to or on **July 1st of the project year**, the 4-H'er may request the 4-H Market Livestock Committee to grant a replacement. The MSU Extension Office must be notified prior to or no later than **July 1st** so that the Executive Committee/or Full Committee can be contacted for the 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 July 15, 2026.** Failure to do so will result in disqualification from project. Those raising additional animals, you may elect to have a "backup" animal as their new primary animal and would need to notify the MSU Extension Office in writing of this decision by August 3rd.
15. **Barrow and gilt market hogs** are eligible for 4-H market classes. A barrow is a completely castrated male. Animals with evidence of testicles, incomplete castration, or with late castration will be disqualified from the 4-H Market Livestock Swine program. **No boars will be allowed in the 4-H Market Project..**
16. **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.
17. **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**.
18. **Entry Day/Weigh-In: Arrival Deadline:** Hogs must be in assigned pens by **11:00 a.m. on Entry Day**. Hogs must be **washed** before arrival; **ear tags must be clean and visible**. Animals may arrive early to settle in with **feed/water** before weigh-in. **Weigh-in starts after lambs**, or no later than **11:15 a.m.**, at the designated central scale. **Weighing is to the nearest pound – no re-weighs allowed.**
Eligible weight range to sell: 220–330 lbs,
Over 310 lbs will sell as 310 lbs,
Over 330 lbs = overweight → not eligible to sell.
Under/overweight hogs may: Be taken home, or stay for show and **sell out of the barn** with a required **participation fee**. **Failure to pay fee = disqualification** from next year's program.
Hauling fees are extra for out-of-barn sales to market processors. If unpaid, the **4-H'er/buyer must remove the animal** at fair's end.
19. **Grading of Animals:** All registered 4-H market hogs will be graded at the Fair. Any animal determined to be of low 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.
20. **Showing/Selling Requirements:** All animals must be shown in both **showmanship** and **market classes** by the **registered owner** to be judged and sold. If a 4-H'er **withdraws from the auction** after participating in showing and market classes, they will be **ineligible to bring an animal the following year**. **Special exceptions** (e.g., health or college conflicts) may be granted if: **Pre-approved at least 1 week before fair**, and a **doctor's note** may be required for health-related issues. **Failure to request pre-approval** may result in **disqualification** from the project

21. **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 the 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.
22. **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.**
23. **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.
24. **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.
25. **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.
26. **Rules/Requirements Acknowledgement:** Signing the 4-H Market Livestock Hog project application and being accepted into the project indicates that you 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.
27. **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.
28. **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 Swine Project Dates
All deadlines are by 4:00 p.m., unless otherwise stated.

Market Swine 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)

Tier 3- 11/08/2025 from 8:15 a.m.– 8:30 a.m. (new to the project or did not meet requirements) and 11/10/25-1/2/2026, pending available space.

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

Pictures/Bred/Ear Tag Numbers - **Monday, June 1, 2026**

Little Buddy Registration Deadline - **Monday, June 1, 2026**

Replacement Request Deadline (death or special issue) - **Wednesday, July 1, 2026**

Paperwork for Replacement Animal - **Wednesday, July 15, 2026**

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

Written declaration of switch to "back-up" animal - **Monday, August 3, 2026**

Entry and Weigh-In at Fair - **Animals in pens no later than 11 a.m. Monday, August 24, 2026**

Notebooks - **Monday, August 24, 2026 at time animal is weighed and then entered in the Youth Exhibit Bldg. by 5:00 p.m.**

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