

DATE: August 3, 2026

TO: All 4-H Beef Cattle Project Members Who Registered in the 4-H Carcass Beef Contest
and all 4-H Beef Project Leaders

FROM: Kayla Mitchell - 4-H Youth Development Program Coordinator

RE: 2026 4-H Carcass Beef Contest

Contest entrants include:

2026 Carcass Participants

1. Jasper Johnson
2. Regan Noga
3. Luke Frost
4. Madison Kulpinski
5. Larson Cardella
6. Inez Ultz
7. Freddie Stears
8. Katelyn Trattles
9. Cooper Stears
10. Linda Ultz

Alternates in order of eligibility:

11. Jackson Noga
12. Taylor Trattles
13. Anita Ultz
14. Braden Bower
15. Leland Wolfe



MSU EXTENSION
St. Joseph County

612 E. Main St
Centreville, MI 49032

Phone: 269-467-5511
Fax: 269-467-5641
www.canr.msu.edu/st_joseph

Attention Participants: It is your responsibility to call the St. Joseph County MSU Extension office right away if you decide to drop out of the program for any reason.

The following is important information you need to know regarding participation in the **2026 4-H Carcass Beef Contest:**

1. The purpose of the program is to provide members with an opportunity to learn about the relationship between live animal evaluation and carcass composition and quality.
2. Entry in the contest will be limited to ten (10) entries. If more than 10 participants submit their entry forms, selection of the 10 participants will be based on a combined factor of exhibitor's age plus number of years in the beef project.
3. Eligible animals include any of the 4-H project beef registered in a given member's name. **Note:** Any and all potential carcass animals were required to be ear-tagged and registered in the St. Joseph County MSU Extension office by **June 4, 2026**.
4. The 4-H Carcass Beef Contest will take place according to the following schedule:
 - **Live Beef Weigh-in/Drop off:** Saturday, September 12, 2026, from **10:00 - 11:00 a.m.** at the fairgrounds in Centreville. All animals entered in the Carcass Beef Contest **MUST** be delivered to the fairgrounds by **11:00 a.m.** for weigh-in.
 - **Carcass Steer Evaluation Workshop:** Tuesday, September 15, 2026, at **7:00 p.m.** at Bontrager's Custom Meat Processing, 53541 Correll Rd., Leonidas, MI 49066. Please remember to bring a winter-weight coat and gloves along to wear in the meat cooler where the workshop will be held, as the cooler is maintained at 34°F!

(continued on page 2)

5. **Attention!** All 4-H members participating in the Carcass Beef Contest are required to attend the Carcass Beef Evaluation Workshop to receive a premium and any associated awards. College students will be exempt from attending the Carcass Beef Evaluation only if approved by the 4-H Program Coordinator by August 15. Any member who fails to meet this requirement will have his/her animal disqualified from the contest.
Special Note: All 4-H Beef/Dairy Beef Project members and leaders, and all other interested persons are **welcome** and **invited** to attend the Carcass Evaluation Workshop, since an important goal of this contest is to provide as many 4-H members as possible with an opportunity to learn about beef carcass evaluation.
6. **Minimum Weight Rule:** Carcass beef animals (steer or heifer) must weigh a minimum of 1,000 lbs. for market beef and 1,100 lbs. for dairy market beef at weigh-in at the fairgrounds on Saturday, September 12, 2026, to be eligible to compete.
7. **Cleanliness of Beef:** All beef must be CLEAN (meaning free of caked-on manure/dirt) to be entered in the contest. If your animal's coat condition meets these criteria, then it does not need a bath unless you want to give it one. However, if your animal's coat condition is such that it has caked-on manure/dirt, then it definitely needs to be washed to be entered in the contest. If in doubt, bathe!!!
8. **Securing of Beef:** Animals entered in the contest **MUST** be broken to lead.
9. The animals will be slaughtered and the carcasses prepared (for judging) at Bontrager's Custom Meat Processing.
10. Each member making an entry in this contest is responsible for arranging for a "private treaty" sale of his/her steer before it is delivered to the fairgrounds on Saturday, September 6, for weigh-in. **Exception:** The **Champion** and **Reserve Champion** beef carcasses **MUST** be sold in the 4-H Large Animal Sale on Thursday, September 24, 2026. Therefore, when you make arrangements for a "private treaty" sale of your carcass animal, it must be with the buyer's understanding that the animal will be sold in the Large Animal Sale if it wins Champion or Reserve Champion honors.
11. It is also the member's responsibility to inform the buyer of the carcass that he/she is responsible for the slaughter and processing costs (which will be directly payable by the buyer to Bontrager's Custom Meat Processing).

The "Processing (Cut) Sheet" which can be found at https://www.canr.msu.edu/st_joseph/4-h/4_h_fair#carcass must be filled out completely and signed by the buyer. Give the buyer one (1) completed copy to keep, and turn a second copy in on Saturday, September 12, 2026, prior to unloading your steer for weigh-in.

"Thank You's" For Contest Support:

- Each member who places an entry in the Carcass Class is required to write a "thank you" letter to **Bontrager's Custom Meat Processing** (see address below) to thank this business for the vital role it plays in making the 4-H Carcass Beef Contest possible.
 - * "Thank you" note must include complete donor address, your return address, and must be affixed with a \$0.78 postage stamp.
 - * Attractive 4-H "thank you" note stationery (including a stamped envelope) will be available for sale at \$2.00 each at the 4-H Fair office starting on Sunday, September 20.
- **Deadline for Submitting "Thank You" Note:** Completed "thank you" note **MUST** be turned in to the 4-H Fair Office by 10:00 p.m. on **Saturday, September 26.**
- **Penalty For Not Submitting "Thank You" Note:** Your fair premium check will be held at the St. Joseph County MSU Extension office until your "thank you" note has been submitted in a properly prepared, stamped envelope.

The mailing address for **Bontrager's Custom Meat Processing** is as follows: Bontrager's Custom Meat Processing
c/o Willie Bontrager
53541 Corell Rd.
Leonidas, MI 49066

Please do not hesitate to call the MSU Extension at 269-467-5511 if you have any questions regarding the information contained in this letter.

cc: Bontrager's Custom Meat Processing