

**A special thank you to our 4-H Sponsors for their support of the 4-H Program.
Their generosity is important and appreciated.**

GLOSSARY

Pre-fair entry sheets - All forms, project guidelines, and supporting information can be found on the Hamilton County 4-H webpage under 2026 Hamilton County Fair tab on our website.

You will be notified when you are able to pick up exhibitor packets which will include entry tags.

IDENTIFICATION SHEETS - ID sheets are required for every animal (beef, swine, sheep, and goat) that is to be exhibited at the County Fair. Animals need to be identified by their ear tag number, tattoo number, or descriptive drawing if required for the animal if other than the 4-H member has to be identified.

SF - Stands for "State Fair" and signifies that there is County and State Fair participation.

X###-9## - Stands for "County Only" classes and signifies participation is only available at the County level.

GENERAL RULES

4-H Educator/Superintendent: Emily Soll

4-H Program Coordinators/Assistant Superintendents: Barb Bonifas and Ruthie Goertzen

The following rules apply to all departments of the 4-H section of the County Fair. Rules which apply specifically to a particular department will be listed under rules for that department. In case the general rules conflict with the department rules, the department rules govern.

A. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR EXHIBITORS

1. Exhibitors must be enrolled in 4-HOnline by **June 15**. There will be no discrimination because of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, age, handicapped, marital status or sexual orientation.
2. Accommodations for exhibitors with special needs will be granted with the approval of the department superintendent and the Extension Educator.
3. A 4-H member must be 8 to 18 years of age as of January 1 of the current year. The last year of eligibility is the calendar year the member becomes 19.
4. Any youth living outside of the county but currently enrolled as a member of Hamilton County 4-H or FFA is eligible to show at the fair. Youth may not enter the same exhibit or animal in 4-H, FFA or Open Class shows or in another county or state.
5. **STATE FAIR** - In classes where the presence of the 4-H member is required for judging purposes, such as animal exhibits, judging contests, and Fashion Show, a 4-H member must be 8 by January 1 or turn 9 during the current year. The last year of eligibility is the calendar year the member becomes 19.
6. All exhibits competing for cash premiums shall be property of the exhibitor, and in livestock classes all animals shall have been property of the exhibitor at least (90) days prior to the opening of the fair, OR in accordance with 4-H rules. If it be ascertained that any exhibitor has made or caused to be made, any false statement in regard to any animal or article exhibited or if any exhibitor shall attempt to interfere with the judges performances of their duties by letter or otherwise, he/she shall be excluded from competition and exhibition for such period of time as the board of directors may determine and shall forfeit any premium already awarded him/her at this fair. In case the animal dies or is injured so it cannot be exhibited by a proper showing, another may be substituted per 4-H Extension Educator pre-approval.
7. In case of dispute as to the age of any animal, its certificate of registry will be required in evidence of the age, or otherwise, and its owner will also be required to file with the superintendent an affidavit that it is the identical animal there in described.

B. PROCEDURE FOR MAKING ENTRIES

1. All 4-H entries, pre-entries and identification affidavits must be made on appropriate forms provided by the Extension Office by specific deadlines. Read all communications from the Extension Office to be made aware of such deadlines. 4-H entries shall be entered in either the Ag Building or the Livestock Office (see official 4-H schedule).
2. A party making an entry of registered stock of any kind shall furnish the department superintendent, when called for, an authentic certified copy of pedigree of such stock, and failure to do so will render the exhibit ineligible. The superintendent may move it to a commercial class if available.
3. For cattle, the association register will be considered standard authority. All stock entered for exhibition must be on the grounds Wednesday before 9:00 p.m.

C. ENTRY DEADLINE

1. **STATIC** - Entries (Except Plant Science) will need to be pre-registered with the Hamilton County Extension office. Plant Science entries will be entered at Static Drop off. Entries (excluding Plant Science) not pre-registered will not be considered for top awards and may be dropped a ribbon placing.

D. IDENTIFICATION

1. **ANIMAL** - An animal (beef, sheep, swine, meat goat, dairy goat, rabbit or poultry) may be identified in 4-H, in only one county. An animal (beef, sheep, swine, meat goat, dairy goat, rabbit or poultry) cannot be shown in more than one county fair. 4-H

members must be able to prove ownership and provide care for animals. All animal ID sheets, or vet certifications must be turned into the Hamilton County Extension office no later than **June 15th** to be eligible to be shown at the fair.

E. NUMBER OF ENTRIES - 4-H members may exhibit one (1) entry per class unless otherwise noted.

No entry can compete in more than one class.

F. PROJECT ENROLLMENT - Individuals will be permitted to enter only those items corresponding with the projects carried out during the current year. Entries are allowed in only one unit/level of competition. Those enrolled in a middle or advanced unit may not exhibit in a less advanced unit.

1. **4-H PROJECTS** - Items entered for competition in previous years are not eligible for competition again unless otherwise noted.

G. EXHIBIT SUPPORTING INFORMATION - Exhibits may require supporting information in order for the judge to know how the exhibit was completed. Check the appropriate area in the Fair Book to see if that applies to your exhibit. If you feel that the judge could benefit from an explanation of your project or the techniques involved, include an information sheet with the project.

H. SCORING - score sheets for 4-H exhibits can be found on the web and are available from the Extension Office.

I. EXHIBIT RELEASE - The release times for the Hamilton County Fair will be listed on the Hamilton County Fair schedule. No exhibitor is allowed to remove any article or animal on exhibition until the scheduled time. All animal stalls or areas must be cleaned, or premium will be withheld. Dogs, cats and companion animals may have varying entry and removal procedures as set forth by the board - please visit each department in the Fair Book. Premature removal of exhibits (animals or static) without authorization will result in forfeiting the premium.

J. PROTESTS

1. The superintendent of each division at the County Fair has the authority to make the appropriate decisions based on the rules and regulations of the County Fair Book, and these will be adhered to by all.

2. Written and signed protests are to be presented to the appropriate superintendent. Upon receipt of the protest, the superintendent shall meet at least two other superintendents and the 4-H Extension Educator as an advisor of policy. This committee of superintendents will decide the issue.

3. Written protests must include:

- a. Names of persons involved
- b. Nature of concerns
- c. Situation and documentation
- d. Recommendations for correction
- e. Specific action, rule, etc. in question
- f. Additional people the committee may contact for further clarification
- g. Procedures and/or steps carried out by the person involved prior to submission to the superintendent

4. The committee will review the written protest. They may discuss the situation with affected persons and show officials to include County Fair management if appropriate prior to making a final decision. The committee will recommend appropriate action to management in writing. The recommendations will be followed and communicated both verbally and in writing to the group or individual affected.

5. Management reserves the right to withhold premium and/or award. The exhibitor may also be excluded from the show if action warrants.

6. Protests concerning 4-H policy, animal, and youth eligibility can be protested further to the 4-H Council if the affected parties are not satisfied with the committee decision. Interpretation of show rules should not be brought to the 4-H Council. 4-H council decisions are final.

7. Protests will not be accepted after the exhibits are released from the 4-H division. In the case of a live contest or competition, protests will not be accepted after 8:00 PM on the day of the contest or competition.

K. DISCLAIMER OF RESPONSIBILITY AT COUNTY FAIR

1. **EXHIBITS** - 4-H exhibits at County Fair are entered and displayed at the risk of the 4-H member. The University of Nebraska Extension 4-H Youth Development, in cooperation with the County Ag Society accepts exhibits and will exercise due care to protect them. However, 4-H and the County Ag Society cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage that may occur to exhibits or exhibitors. 4-H members who have exhibits of great sentimental and/or monetary value should carefully consider whether such exhibits should be exposed to the hazards of the fair.

2. **PATRONS/PARTICIPANTS** - While the greatest possible care will be exercised by the County Ag Society to protect patrons/participants of the County Fair, each individual will be held personally responsible for any injury, accident and/or loss.

3. **SUBSTANCE ABUSE** - Use of possession of tobacco, alcoholic beverages or drugs (except for medical purposes) by any exhibitor who is participating in 4-H at the County Fair will result in immediate disqualification of that exhibitor's entry.

L. INSURANCE - Accidental insurance (medical) is carried on 4-H members in the Hamilton County 4-H program. A report of all accidents must be made to the 4-H Office on the Fairgrounds or the Extension Office at the Courthouse within 24 hours after the accident. Your claim must be filed with the Extension Office within 10 days after the accident.

M. RIBBONS AND PREMIUMS AWARDED - In 4-H, exhibits are judged according to research-based standards that indicate level of performance or quality of work. Purple ribbons designate an exhibit of superior quality that has met and exceeded all of the standards. Blue ribbons denote an above average exhibit that has almost all of the standards in a way that surpasses the norm. Red ribbons indicate average quality and indicate that the exhibit has met the majority of standards in such a way that the benchmark was reached, but not exceeded. White ribbons indicate that the exhibit has not met the majority of the standards. Clover Kid ribbons denote participation. A participation ribbon is recognition of the 4-H exhibit's presence at the fair.

Exhibits must be either purple or blue quality to be named champion or reserve champion and/or qualify for related special awards.

All entries will be made in strict compliance with the premium list and awards made in accordance therewith. Parties therefore must be careful to have stock and articles entered just as they want them. For each premium number, there must be two or more exhibitors to constitute competition. When there is no competition, the exhibits, if worthy, will be awarded first, second, third or fourth place awards as merit warrants. Regarding an award in case of no competition the judge is to decide whether or not they are worthy.

ALL STATIC EXHIBITS MUST HAVE RECEIVED A PURPLE RIBBON AT COUNTY FAIR TO ADVANCE TO THE STATE FAIR.

- N. PREMIER 4-H SCIENCE AWARD** - The objective of the premier science award is to recognize 4-H youth static exhibits incorporating or demonstrating concepts from the areas of 4-H Science (Science, Technology, Engineering or Applied Math) at the Nebraska State Fair. Exhibits in all curriculum areas will be considered for the award.
- 1. CURRICULUM AREAS TARGETED:** Animal Science, Communications/Expressive Arts, Consumer & Family Sciences, Environmental Education and Earth Science, Healthy Lifestyles, Leadership & Citizenship, Plant Sciences, Science & Engineering & Technology (SET).
 - 2. EXHIBIT ENTRY: Youth will identify one exhibit to be considered for the Premier 4-H Science Award.** The Premier Science Award Application must be submitted along with a photograph of the exhibit to the County Extension Office by the county's entry deadline. The photograph will not be used for judging, only to locate it at the State Fair should we need additional information. The Extension Office will enter the exhibit into its original State Fair Class and the Premier 4-H Science Award Class (H101-001). **Only one exhibit per youth will be eligible for the Premier 4-H Science Award.**
- O. FORFEIT OF PREMIUM** - Exhibitors may be asked to forfeit their premium money under the following situations if not previously approved by the 4-H Council.
- a. Late 4-H enrollment
 - b. Late project enrollment
 - c. Late pre-fair entry or ID sheets
 - d. For not meeting the Dress Code requirements for a specific event
 - e. Removing exhibits without the proper paperwork
- P. DROP ONE RIBBON PLACING** - Exhibitors may be dropped one ribbon placing under the following situations:
- a. For entering an incomplete project
 - b. For entering a complete project that does not follow the specified dimensions, requirements, etc. for the project
- Q. NO FIREARMS OR ITEMS WITH A BLADE** - (BROAD HEADS, KNIVES, ETC.) OR RELATED ITEMS OF ANY OTHER KIND, MAY BE EXHIBITED. This applies to actual items, replicated items, and item parts. Shooting sports accessories are permissible as described in Conservation, Wildlife and Shooting Sports Section.
- R. VIOLATION OF RULES** - Exhibitor is subject to loss of premium monies, ribbons, other awards and/or elimination from the show.
1. No person except the judges on duty, ring assistants, officers of the County Ag Society and exhibitors will be allowed inside the arena during the judging of entries.
 2. No person shall be allowed to interfere with a judge; any exhibitor who, by letter or otherwise, does so will be excluded from competition.
 3. The management reserves the right to reject unworthy exhibits of any kind by refusing space, stalls, pens or admission to the grounds. No disorderly conduct of any kind will be permitted.
- S. DISQUALIFICATION/JUDGING** - Area superintendents have the authority to determine eligibility/ineligibility of an exhibit entry in their division. All ineligible items will not be judged and will not be displayed.
- T. SUPERINTENDENTS** - Each superintendent will be in their department at entry time to receive all articles belonging to their department and see that they are arranged in proper places of exhibition. They must be at their respective departments at set times during the fair and see that due care and precautions are used and that all visitors are properly advised. Superintendents of animals must notify the exhibitor in regard to bringing the different classes into the show ring. Superintendents shall in no way influence the judge's decisions. Superintendents must turn in judging sheets and award lists in their superintendent binder at the completion of judging. Superintendents must also adhere to the Member/Parent Code of Conduct listed below.
- U. 4-H POLICY COMMITTEE** - The 4-H Council interprets local policy in Hamilton County. The division superintendents will make decisions according to the fair book. Written protests of these decisions will be addressed by the 4-H Council in accordance with the outlined procedures above.
- V. JUDGING** - No judges will be permitted to serve in a class in which he/she may be competing for a premium or have ownership of any animal or article entered in such class. No judge shall award a premium which they have reason to believe is not what it is represented to be as it appears from the entry book or representation of the exhibitor but shall report the same to the superintendent of the department. He/she shall award first premium only when the animal or article has high merit in its class. All animals must be exhibited at such time and place as the superintendent of the class may direct. The judge will be instructed not to wait more than 10 minutes after the final call. Awards will be made by an expert judge or committee of judges whose decision shall be by ballot and without consultation. Two of the committee members shall agree before an award can be made. When an exhibit or animal is shown in a class in which it does not belong, the superintendent shall declare and will dismiss the exhibit or animal from the judging, stating the reasons, therefore. Exhibits that have been erroneously entered

may, at the discretion of the superintendent, be transferred to their proper class prior to judging. No person shall be allowed to see entries or have access to the entry books until after the entries have closed, and judging completed.

W. VOLUNTEERS - The Hamilton County 4-H program will recognize 4-H members and volunteers of the 4-H program in which they are enrolled irrespective of their place of residence. A member cannot enroll in the same 4-H project area in more than one county or state in the same year. With the exception of shooting sports, if a discipline is not provided in one county, then the youth may enroll in multiple counties. To enter 4-H classes, the exhibitor must be enrolled in a Hamilton County 4-H project or club. A youth who is a member of 4-H and FFA may show in the same curriculum area but must use different projects. For example, an individual may show livestock but must use different animals; may enter static exhibits but must be two entries. If you need further information, please contact the Extension Office.

W. OPEN CLASS INVITATION - 4-H Clubs, sororities and other organizations within the county will be awarded a \$15.00 premium if 80 percent or more of their members exhibit in open class. Entrants must list their organization affiliation on each entry tag.

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA - LINCOLN ACCOMMODATIONS

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln is committed to providing accommodations necessary to allow individuals with disabilities to function effectively and safely while participating in 4-H events. If you believe you may need accommodation, please contact Faculty/Staff Disability Services at aces@unl.edu or call 402-472-3417.

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA - EEO STATEMENT

Nebraska Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture. The 4-H Youth Development program abides with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska - Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.

MEMBER/PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Character Development is the cornerstone of the 4-H program, and therefore we expect all people involved with the 4-H program to exemplify the six pillars of character, which are Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship. Please make yourself aware of these expectations:

1. Treat members, parents, Extension Staff, judges and others with respect, courtesy and consideration. Avoid and prevent put-downs, insults, name-calling, yelling and other verbal and non-verbal conduct likely to offend, hurt or set a bad example.
2. Model kindness and compassion for others and be a team member, discouraging selfishness.
3. Practice fair-mindedness by being open to ideas, suggestions, and opinions of others.
4. Obey laws and rules as an obligation of being a good citizen and promote the responsible treatment of animals and stewardship of the environment.
5. Provide and maintain a safe environment, not carelessly or intentionally harming youth or adults in any way: verbally, mentally, or physically.

Anyone who disrupts or damages any show, or judging process may be removed from the grounds and not permitted to return.