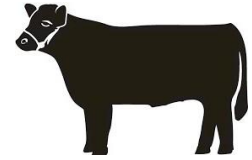




2026 JUNIOR BEEF PROJECT POLICES AND PROCEDURES



Species-Chair:

Amanda Wilkins ☐ **Jrbeef4h@yahoo.com** ☐ **231-357-0777**

IMPORTANT DATES		IMPORTANT INFO	
Registration	March 2 rd	Minimum Weight @ Fair	300lbs
Birth Date	After January 1 st ,2026	Maximum Weight @ Fair	700 lbs.
Possession	May 15 th	Hard Copy of Record Book (Both Market required) (Show only record book required if primary project)	Required Due: 9/14/26
Tagging	June 2026	Thank You Note	Required Due: 10/5/26

Participating 4-H youth must abide by all general rules and regulations listed in the Northwest Michigan 4-H Livestock Council's Policies & Procedures books and the Premium Book of the Northwestern Michigan Fair. This includes, but is not limited to, Code of Conducts, registration deadlines, showmanship and market requirements, record book and thank you letter requirements, etc.

Registration Requirements

- ☐ To participate in a 4-H market junior beef project, youth must attain the age of eight (8) or older by January 1st of that calendar year and be registered with 4-H Online 2.0
- ☐ All Jr. Beef Participants (Market, show only and Cloverbuds) MUST complete the online registration via the Northwest Michigan 4-H Livestock Council's website NO LATER THAN 11:59 the first Monday of March.
 - Optional: Each 4-H market junior beef participant may register an extra calf for \$10, to be paid on tagging day. The extra calf may only be used within the family that purchased the calf and only one (1) market calf may be brought to the fair per 4-H member. Bring your best calf!
- ☐ **Project Limit** -Each 4-H member may participate in **one (1) 4-H cattle project** Dairy Beef, Dairy Feeder, Jr. Beef or Large Beef.
- ☐ **Additional Animals** -Any additional cattle owned by the 4-H member(s) may still be shown, but **only in the Open Class divisions** of the Northwestern Michigan Fair.
- ☐ **Project Declaration** -Members must **declare their official 4-H cattle project** to their species chair by the registration deadline of the Northwestern Michigan Fair. All other 4-H cattle project registrations must be **withdrawn before the fair registration deadline.**
- ☐ To participate in the 4-H livestock shows and auction at the fair, youth must register with the Northwestern Michigan Fair by the deadline and follow all registration guidelines listed in the Premium Book
- ☐ To participate in the 4-H livestock auction at the fair, youth must register and compete

in the appropriate showmanship AND market classes.

- Youth must use the same animal for both showmanship and market classes.

Animal Requirements

- All cattle MUST have an official radio frequency identification (RFID) electronic tag in their ear before they leave the farm on which they were born.
- Junior beef calves must be born on or after January 1st of the current year. Junior beef calves must be in possession or under the care of the 4-H member by May 15th
- Junior beef calves must be 100% beef breed (no dairy): Angus, Herford, Simmental, Shorthorn, Belted Galloway, Charolais, etc. The calf can be a cross of 2 or more beef breeds but cannot be crossed with a dairy breed. (Smaller/Mini breeds such as dexter and highland cattle may only be used for cloverbud and show only projects, as they cannot be used in the large beef program.)
- Calf can be a heifer or a steer.
 - Heifer calves will be judged in their own market class
 - Junior beef steer calves must be properly castrated and the castration site should look healthy with no signs of swelling, discharge or decay upon check in at fair. This should be completed 4-5 weeks before the fair to ensure proper healing time.
- Not all beef breeds are naturally polled, calves that have horns need to be dehorned at least 2 weeks before fair. Horns cannot exceed 3 inches long.
- All junior beef calves must be vaccinated for the following: Bovine Rhinotracheitis (IBR), Parainfluenza 3 (PI3), and Bovine Respiratory Syncytial Virus (BRSV) ○ Suggested vaccines include (but not limited to): Inforce 3, Triangle 10 HB, Bovi-Shield Gold, Cattle Master Gold FP5 L5, or Express 5-HS
 - Be sure to ALWAYS carefully read and follow all the instructions printed on the label.
 - Vaccines should be given early in the project to help prevent illness.
 - Proof of vaccination is required and signed Animal health plan agreement. To unload at fair. Check with your breeder if the calf has already been vaccinated by the breeder you will just need the information for the health record.
- Junior beef calves must be weaned off milk at least 2 weeks before the fair.
- Junior beef Calves have a minimum weight of 300 pounds and a maximum weight of 700 pounds. Any Market calf that weighs less then 300 pounds and more then 700 pounds will not be able to participate in 4-H Market classes and auction. But can still participate in showmanship and open classes through the NWMI Fair.

Fair Week Requirements

- General Requirements:
 - Weigh-in takes place on the first Saturday of the fair.
 - Youth must be present at weigh in, unless prior arrangements have been made with the species chair.
 - Closed-toe leather footwear is highly recommended while working with animals.

- No food, bags, or supplies are to be left in the barn (everything must be stored at the campsite).
 - Youth are responsible for keeping their pens clean all week.
- Animal Care Requirements:
 - Animals shall be treated humanely. Any reports of unethical, inhumane, and/or abusive treatment or actions that cause distress and/or suffering to an animal will be evaluated by the Species Chair, Fair Superintendent, Fair Veterinarian, and/or other appropriate individuals and may lead to disqualification and removal from all 4-H and Open Livestock Shows held at the Fair.
 - Youth are responsible for feeding, watering, and caring for their animals the **entire** week.
 - Water shall always remain full and fresh
- Show day Policies:
 - For the safety of the exhibitor and the public all cattle barns will be closed 2 hours prior to the first Cattle show.
 - During barn closure times, only the 4-Her and one (1) support person of their choice may enter the barn and/or wash rack area's
 - The 4-Her and support person may be asked to wear an identification badge.
 - The 4-Her and their support person may fit and prepare the calf for show.
- Fair End Responsibilities:
 - Completely clean and scrape down pens
 - Pen boards and stall mats need to be taken home fair. *All boards not taken home at the end of fair become the property of the fair*
- Bars on the pen dividers need to be scrubbed and wiped down.

After Fair Requirements

- Record books are due at the September Livestock Council Meeting.
- *Youth are required to turn in one completed record book (showmanship or market). If youth are exhibiting in market or in multiple species, you are required to complete the record book for your market project. Examples: Jane shows beef cattle in showmanship and market; Jane completes a record book in beef cattle. John shows swine, horses, and goats, and markets his hog; John completes a record book for hogs. Sally shows chickens, rabbits, and dogs all showmanship only, and decides to complete the record book for rabbits.*
- Completed hardcopy Record Books are due at the September NWMI 4-H Livestock Council meeting. Those not submitted by the November NWMI 4-H Livestock Council will be suspended from 4-H livestock classes and auction at the NWMI Fair the following year.
- A Thank you and 5 x 7 auction photo must be given to your buyer and a copy of the thank you note is due at the October Livestock council meeting.
- Copy of Buyers Thank you note is due at the October NWMI 4-H Livestock Council meeting. Those not submitted by the November NWMI 4-H Livestock Council will

be suspended from 4-H livestock classes and auction at the NWMI Fair the following year.”

Important Information & Tips for a Successful Jr. Beef Project

□ Cost:

- Most calves will cost between \$750 and \$2500. This will fluctuate with the current market prices for beef.
- Average cost of feed to raise a junior beef project is \$500 □ Housing: Calf must:
 - Be kept out of drafts
 - Be sheltered from weather
 - Have room to move
 - Have proper bedding (straw, wood shavings, or sand) □ Nutrition:
- Fresh, clean water available to the calf at all times .

Be sure to keep grain, hay, and water fresh and clean of feces ○ Increase the amount of feed as the calf grows. Consult your nutritionist, junior beef species chair, or feed supplier for advice.

- Start the junior beef calf out slowly on grain to keep it from getting a digestive upset.
 - ▷ First 2-3 days: Feed hay only
 - ▷ Next 3 days: Feed ½ pound of grain twice a day along with hay ▷ Day 7-10: Feed 1 pound of grain twice a day ▷ After Day 10 do the math!
 - Weight of Calf x 2.5% = Pounds of grain for the day
 - Keep refiguring your calculations as the calf grows so you are feeding the correct amount

Average daily gain should be about 2 pounds. ○

Calf should be fed at the same times every day ○

Different Feeds:

- ▷ Energy – a mixture of cracked or rolled corn, oats, protein pellets, and vitamins – Calves should not be given whole corn as they cannot process it well
- ▷ Protein- Calves should be feed 16-18% protein.
- ▷ Roughage – hay, silage
- ▷ Supplements – soybean meal, processed supplements from feed mill/store □ Health:
 - Observe daily: Note any difference in behavior (not eating, not getting up, sluggish, ears down, etc) or any difference in appearance (bloating, runny nose, mucus eyes, etc). Changes in behavior or appearance usually indicate something is wrong; seek help or advise from a veterinarian immediately
 - It is highly recommended that the calf be treated for internal and external parasites before fair.
 - Wash and clip your calf several times before the fair so it gets used to it ▷ When

washing, use soap specifically for livestock.

- Dish soap can remove minerals and oils from the skin causing dry flakes
- Do not put soap directly on the calf, mix into a bucket of water
 - ◻ Just rinsing the calf is good, especially in hot weather
 - ◻ ALWAYS start with the legs so that the calf can get used to the cool water; putting cold water on their body first can cause them to go into shock
- Keep pen clean and dry. A clean calf environment promotes a fly free atmosphere ◦ Keep fly strips in the barn and pen, high enough so the calf and children cannot reach them
- Keep calf fly spray on hand for when the flies get bad and bother the calf. This will help with health and training
 - ◻ Don't overdo the fly spray; it can give the calf diarrhea and they may go off feed when that happens ◻ Training:
- Start slow: Begin by just watching and talking to your calf ◦ When going to touch your calf, talk to it and stay close to his side so you don't get kicked.
-
- After about a week, tie your calf to a fence post or secure object for an hour or two at a time. This will get it used to being restrained and standing still. This is also a good time to brush it down so that it gets used to being touched. For safety reasons, NEVER leave your calf alone when it is tied up
- Brush your calf daily to help train the hair ◦ Spend time with your calf while he/she is eating ◦ Expose your junior beef to as many sights and sounds as possible, i.e. play a radio in the barn, have other animals around like dogs, geese, horses, etc
- Work your calf with a rope halter first; walk him/her around. Then start to use your show halter and show stick.
- It is ideal to work your calf twice a day, morning and evening, when it is not too hot
- Attend as many showmanship practices as possible. You can learn even just by watching and taking notes ◻ Fair Week Show Attire:
- Clean pants or jeans (free of rips or holes) ◦ Long or short sleeve dress shirt (button-down is recommended) ◦ Protective boots ◦ A show comb for your back pocket
- Calf will need a leather show halter and show stick

Tips

- ◻ BEFORE you bring the calf home, be sure to have the pen ready and grain or milk replacer (bottles), if necessary, on hand. The ride home is hard on them, so put water and food in pen right before the calf arrives. Once your calf is in the pen let it settled in for a couple of days. Watch the calf, but stay back.
- ◻ Junior beef Calf Selection:
 - Don't be afraid to ask the farmer's opinion ◦ Pick a healthy calf ◦ Twins are often weaker and grow slower and therefore are not usually a desirable choice

NOTE: A twin heifer to a bull calf is called a freemartin and is often unable to be bred

- When getting your calf, it is important to ask the farmer the following and record it on the Jr. Beef Health Record form:
 - Vaccinations: Did the farmer give any vaccines and if so, what?
 - Dewormer: Was the calf dewormed? If so, when and what kind of dewormer was given?
 - Breed: What breed is the calf? (i.e. Angus/Hereford cross) ○ Castrated: If the calf is male, has it been banded or cut? If it has not yet been banded or cut, it is your responsibility to make sure it gets done more than 4 weeks before fair
 - Twin: Is the calf a twin? Remember: A twin heifer is most likely not breedable
ASK QUESTIONS!!! If you encounter a situation or a question that you don't know the answer to, be sure to ask for help. Reach out to the species-chair, your club leader, another member raising a junior beef, or any member of the Livestock Council board. If that person does not have the answer, they WILL help you get it.
- Education – Attend as many education sessions and events as possible to help further your knowledge of your species
- Keep Good Records – Use a calendar to track purchases, weekly feeding schedules, weight gain, and medications. This information is important for your record book and also is a great guide to use for the next years project
- Basic Supplies Needed:
 - Feed Dish & Water Bucket
 - Weight Tape
 - Nylon Halter with Chain and Lead Rope
 - Leather Show Halter
 - Show Stick
 - Scotch Comb (carried in your back pocket during shows)
 - Soft Bristle Brush
 - Shampoo, Scrub Brush, Hoof Brush
- Bedding
 - Grain & Hay
 - Bottle with Nipple & Milk Replacer
 - Fly Spray
 - Boots
 - Show Clothes
 - Chain or Neck Tie (to tie calf in the stall at fair)
- Stall mat

Cloverbuds

- 4-H members who are 5-7 years of age (as of January 1st of the current year)
- Cloverbuds have their own showmanship class. It will be held on the same day as the other cattle showmanship classes, usually Tuesday or Wednesday of fair
- Cloverbuds may bring their own calf to the fair OR they may choose to show someone else's calf
 - If showing another 4-H'er's calf please put that 4-H'er's name on your registration

form

- Cloverbuds are not allowed to market their calves
- A parent, leader, or other adult must be present at all times when the cloverbud is working with their calf, including in the show ring

Cloverbuds are encouraged to complete one of the Cloverbud activity books, found on the website, and turn them in at the September meeting.

