

# Species Chair Application



Species Chair position for which you are applying \*

- Large Beef
- Lamb
- Llama & Alpaca
- Poultry
- Swine

Name \*

Nicolette (Nicki) Brown

Phone Number \*

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Complete Mailing Address \*

15266 Cinder Road Beulah MI 49617

County in which you are a registered 4-H volunteer \*

- Grand Traverse
- Leelanau
- Benzie
- Kalkaska
- Antrim

Describe your experience with 4-H in general and with the 4-H Livestock Council in particular. What other experience do you have with this particular species?

Our family joined 4-H in 2013 and in 2015 I took over as the leader of Sunshine Acres. That same year, our group took on the Buyers Luncheon (thirteen cloverbuds and three 4-Hers). In 2018, I volunteered to head up the database and manage all of the education credits for the Livestock Council. That year, we also had an under weight pig, so I gave all my time fair week to the Auction Committee and Swine barn. My husband and I helped setting up and taking down the arena, we ran boards all week during the shows and I helped the auction committee by entering the sale prices into the computer the entire day. This transpired to 2019 when I took on the educational database again, and I helped all day in the trailer again entering the sale prices. That year, we also became more acquainted with the swine barn to watch the process and flow of how things ran, especially when it came to set up and tear down. This year, even with COVID, I helped manage the data for ear tagging.

Describe how you will actively develop and promote your project area, both during the fair and the rest of the year.

The great thing about the swine barn is we have a lot of active participants who have a lot of knowledge of swine projects. We also have a lot of 4-Hers who enter shows all year long. The one thing I can see we can approve on is education of the process. Unless you know a person who shows pigs all year long, you might not understand the process, which shows to go to, what the basic steps are, etc. I believe we have some amazing 4-Hers in Northern Michigan and they would represent our region well across the state and country! During fair week, depending on numbers, I would like to bring the Super Senior program back for the swine barn for the 2021 year. I think it is important to allow the Class of 2020 to have one last year to go out with class.

What specifically do you plan to do to keep up-to-date on your species?

That is one perk of COVID-19, almost all of education seminars are online now via Zoom or other programs. Not only will I be attending as many of those as possible, I will also be building a network with MSU Extension so I can have contacts of other swine species chairs that will allow me to learn from. It would be great if I could have one of them be a mentor for me during the first year. The other thing I want to do is this winter travel south to fairs that are open to see how they run their program, build a database of ideas and work with our 4-Hers to vet those ideas on things they might want to see within our program. We are the administrators, but the 4-Hers are the customer. I believe it is important that they have a say in the program.

What do you see as the two most important issues currently facing your species or the 4-H Livestock Council?

The obvious one is COVID-19. I don't believe our fair next year will be the way we are used to it being. We will have to mandate all policies that are given to us by MSU and try to make the experience the best we can. It will take effort from all involved, but together, as a team, we can make this happen.

Our livestock council is one of the most dedicated councils in Michigan. I truly believe we are a family. I know we can just keep growing from here. Our fair board is large and have very dedicated individuals involved. One thing I believe we can always improve on is our relationship with our fair board. Through the years I have seen it dwindle and grow with strength. COVID 19 put us all to the test, but I believe with a focus on team, we can be stronger in the future.

What specific ideas do you have for your species' program that you would like to implement during your term in office?

Swine disease is real, we discuss PQA with our kids, but I believe the younger ones don't fully understand it. I want to set up modules and hands on education on off show days, where the older 4-Hers can run stations to help the younger 4-Hers. Mentoring the cloverbuds and 8-12 year old 4-Hers is something I believe we can start building within our species. Our little ones look up to our older 4-Hers and I want to magnify this relationship.

It takes many hands to do what we do each year. We are always scrambling for volunteers for set up of shows, tear down, running boards, helping with the barn, etc. I want to set up a system where people sign up to help, so we are not scurrying fair week to find help. Example: We need "x" amount of people to help on picture day, we have a sign up for people to run boards and maneuver pigs through the barn. Organization is the key.

What additional information would you like to provide?

I have a 12 and 8 year old in the swine barn. I am here for the long haul. I am a very organized individual that wears many hats in our community. I believe in the value that 4-H brings to our children and uphold those values in my own life. I want to bring continued success to the swine barn, as those before me. I understand the undertaking of this position and believe with leadership and delegation we can continue a strong program that allows are kids to shine. When I am given a challenge, I take it head on. If I don't know the answer, I will research it. I am honest and will always put the 4-Her first while aligning with our guide book. Working for MSU for 9 years now, I know how important our youth programs are to our state and I want to take the best and make it better.

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**In addition to this application, please be prepared to give a 2-3 minute speech at the October meeting of the 4-H Livestock Council. This should include comments regarding your willingness and ability to serve as a 4-H Livestock Council Species Chair, what you feel you can contribute to your particular species' program, and what you feel you can contribute to the 4-H Livestock Council in general.**

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