2026 DOG PROJECT
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Species-Chair:
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IMPORTANT DATES			IMPORTANT INFO	
Registration	June 1, 2026		Record Book	Due: 9/07/26

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 dog project, youth must attain the age of five (5) or older by January 1st of that calendar year, be a current member of a dog project 4-H Club, and be registered with 4-H Online 2.0
  - Members who are 5-7 years of age will participate in the 4-H Cloverbud program and will have their own Cloverbud classes.
- All dog program participants, including Cloverbuds, MUST complete the online registration via the Northwest Michigan 4-H Livestock Council's website NO LATER THAN midnight the first Monday of June.
- To participate in the 4-H shows at the fair, youth must follow all registration. requirements listed in the Northwestern Michigan Fair's Premium Book.

Animal Requirements

- Members may show only ONE obedience, ONE showmanship, ONE rally, and ONE agility class at Fair. A member may use no more than 2 dogs.
- Two competitors cannot show the same dog except Cloverbuds.
- Female dogs in season will NOT be allowed to show at the fair.
- For the Obedience, Rally and Showmanship classes, puppies must be 6 months of age or older. And, for the Agility class, puppies must have reached the age of 12 months and older.
- Any dog with a physical disability, such as the loss of a leg or eye, will be allowed to show, if a current (within the current year) statement of fitness is provided by your veterinarian. Please email documentation to Gretchen Sauvage, ***ges5250@gmail.com*** when you have completed the show registration. If the injury occurs after the online registration has been completed, please bring a couple of copies with you to the show (one for the registration table and one to carry with you to the rings).
- Dogs may be subject to an additional exam at check in at the discretion of the species chair.

- Agility will offer a 4" jump height class for smaller dogs or dogs with a disability accompanied by a statement from the vet allowing the dog to be shown in agility in all divisions.
- Exhibitors and dogs must be able to demonstrate attendance and experience with equipment and class expectations that they are participating in. This can be regular Club Meeting attendance and practices, emphasis will be placed on practice attendance v. regular Club meetings.
- **Animals shall be treated humanely at all times. 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.**

Fair Week Requirements

- Dogs are NOT allowed in the barns, midway or food court area of the fairgrounds.
- Owners are responsible for cleaning up after their animals.
- A copy of each dog's immunization record is required to be turned in PRIOR to show day.
  - Dogs are REQUIRED to be vaccinated for Distemper/Parvovirus/Adenovirus (Hepatitis), Rabies, AND Leptospirosis.
  - Bordetella immunizations are highly recommended.
  - Flea & Tick Prevention is also highly recommended.
- Appropriate collars and leashes will be required in each class. You CANNOT have dog tags on the collars.
  - **Retractable leashes are NOT PERMITTED in ANY 4-H Dog competition with Northwest Michigan 4-H Livestock Council.** Youth will be automatically disqualified if they come to competition with a retractable leash due to safety concerns.
  - In **Showmanship class**, use a showmanship lead; it is best if it matches your dog's coloring as closely as possible.
  - In **Obedience class**, use a buckle collar, chain collar, martingale collar, or snap collar and a 6 ft leash (this is for pre-novice class).
  - In an **Agility class**, use a buckle collar and leash.
  - Dogs running in off-leash classes shall remain on leash until in the ring. The leash will be handed to the leash runner for Agility or placed where instructed by the judge for Rally & Obedience (& on leash portions of Beginner Novice).
- Show attire:
  - Clothing worn in the show ring shall not draw undue attention to oneself or distract other handlers, spectators, or judges.
  - Blue jeans, T-shirts, sweatshirts, halter tops, low-cut blouses/sweaters, and mini- skirts, are not allowed.
  - Shorts are permitted for Agility, Rally, and Obedience if the Specie Chair determines temperatures warrant. Shorts shall be no shorter than the bottom of fingertips when arms are extended at sides. Shorts are not permitted for Showmanship.
  - If wearing a skirt, it is recommended it be loose.
  - Skirts and dresses must be a respectable length.

- Respectable length is defined as being as long or longer than the tips ofthe individual's finger when arms are fully extended at their side.
- NO sandals, boots, or high heels.
- NO clothing with club name and/or personal identification will be allowed.

After Fair Requirements

- 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.
- Failure to submit a completed, hard copy record book at the September Livestock Council meeting WILL result in suspension from the 4-H Livestock classes held during the NWMI Fair the following year. Suspended youth who complete their record book and submit it to the 4-H Livestock Council by the November meeting that same year will again be eligible to register for 4-H Livestock classes held during the NWMI Fair the following year.

Cloverbuds

- 4-H members who are 5-7 years of age (as of January 1st of the current year)
- Cloverbuds have their own dog classes on Sunday of Fair, after the older classes have completed for each discipline.
- Cloverbuds may bring their own dog to the fair OR they may choose to show someone else's dog.
- For safety reasons, ALL Cloverbud Showman MUST have a parent, legal guardian, or GOLD 4-H Volunteer/Club Leader with them while they are handling their animal at all times during fair week to ensure the overall safety of the Cloverbud and the animal.

Tips

- The dog should be well-matched to the exhibitor and not exceed what the 4-H member can handle.