

GUIDELINES, RULES, AND PROCEDURES
FOR
2026 POLK COUNTY FAIR QUALITY MEATS PROGRAM

2026 Committee

Chair - Craig Scholz, Deer Park – 612.751.3236 – 4-H Beef Committee Chair
Vice Chair – Jake Loen, Balsam Lake – 715.557.0138 – 4-H Beef Committee Vice-Chair
Secretary – Amy Strobach, Clear Lake – 715.491.0342 – 4-H Sheep Committee Chair
Treasurer - Gus Swenson – Amery – 715.554.4620 – 4-H Swine Committee Vice-Chair
Kylene Black, Amery – 715.781.6906 – 4-H Sheep Committee Vice-Chair
Tyler Kuhl, Amery – 715.410.6024 – 4-H Swine Committee Chair
Jeanne Alling, Centuria – 715.553.2488 - 4-H Goat Committee Chair
Julia Erickson, Balsam Lake – 715.944.5491 – 4-H Goat Committee Vice-Chair
Hans Johnson, Star Prairie – 715.781.3902 – Polk County Fair Society Representative
Brian Waltz, Ag-Ed Instructor, St. Croix Falls School
Lindsay Spindler 4-H Program Educator, Balsam Lake

*All Quality Meats Program documents and paperwork are available for download at our website:
<http://polk.uwex.edu/quality-meats/>*

GENERAL GUIDELINES OR RULES

1. **All exhibitors are required to attend TWO educational events sometime during the year between the end of the previous fair and the current fair weigh-in. This applies to exhibitors of all species. In addition to these two educational events exhibitors must also have Youth Quality Care of Animals (YQCA) certification to participate in the Polk County Quality Meats program.**
2. Any 4-H, FFA, FCCLA, Scout member, or any other organized youth group member **born before January 1, 2016**, and after January 1, 2006, enrolled in the beef, sheep, pork or goat production project or enterprise may participate. All exhibitors must complete a fair entry form for quality meats animals.
3. A member of 4-H, FFA, FCCLA, Scout Member, or any other organized youth group that is based in Polk County may sell only one animal at the auction sale.
4. A member may enter more than one species; all entries must be weighed at the fair. The animal to be sold must be selected or withdrawn from the auction sale by **4:00 p.m. on Friday** of the County Fair.
5. To be eligible to sell an animal at the Polk County Fair Quality Meats Auction, exhibitors are required to enter and participate in a showmanship class for one of the Quality Meats Program species. The Committee encourages participation in showmanship for all species shown.
6. A sale commission of 5% will be charged to cover program expenses and improvements. 1% of the sale commission will go towards covering educational expenses. All Beef, Hogs, and Sheep will also be assessed the current Checkoff fee set by the species governing board.

7. No drugs may be administered to animals at the fair or prior to the fair that would cause meat to be condemned. All withdrawal periods must be adhered to including administered medications and medicated feed. The exhibitor will not be paid for the animal if it is condemned.
8. A maximum of ninety (94) animals will be sold. A maximum of thirty-four (34) steers will be allowed to sell. Nineteen (19) lambs; thirty-six (36) hogs and five (5) goats will be sold. If there should be a shortage in steers, hogs, lambs, or goats it may be made up from one of the other species at the discretion of the Quality Meats Committee. The judge's rank in the show will be used to determine eligibility to sell hogs, lambs, steers, and goats. Steers, hogs, lambs, and goats will be intermixed by random number allocation. Decision of judge is final.
9. All entrants must turn in all paperwork by **6 pm** Wednesday of Fair week. Animals will be allowed to cross the scale only once at the fair weigh-in. Paperwork that is to be turned in include: Drug Withdrawal Sheet (per animal); Feed Worksheet (per animal); (2) Buyers signatures (per family); Polk County Livestock Project Card; Origin of Animal Card (swine only).
10. **All animals must be trained to handle and be clean & dry before weigh-in at fair time or will be disqualified.**
11. Once an animal is sold, it becomes the property of the buyer. However, the exhibitor has the responsibility of caring for the animal until it leaves the fairgrounds. All animals are to remain in the barns until specified loading time.
12. An exhibitor shall be determined ineligible to be in the Polk County Quality Meat Program if entered in a similar county fair Quality Meat Program.
13. Changes to the auction catalog must be given to the Quality Meats Committee by 8 p.m. on Friday. The auction sale will be on Saturday.
14. No animal may be sold more than once. The auction sale will only include lots printed in the sale catalog.
15. **All exhibitors are required to help set-up and tear-down the auction ring, regardless if an exhibitor is selling an animal in the auction or not.**
16. All animals entering sale ring must be sold at the sale and must be slaughtered at the designated locker plant and entered in the carcass contest.
17. All carcasses will be evaluated for quality meat by using accepted carcass contest data.
18. Following the fair there will be a meeting that includes a carcass review by species and a picnic for all registered buyers and exhibitors.
19. All sale trophy winners must make weight, grade and be sold at the sale.
20. Trophies or plaques will be presented to the following Sale Animals (Plaques may be adjusted according to number of exhibits entered):
 - a. Exhibitor of the Sale Grand Champion of each species
 - b. Exhibitor of the Sale Reserve Grand Champion of each species
 - c. Exhibitor of the Carcass Grand Champion of each species

- d. Exhibitor of the Carcass Reserve Grand Champion of each species
- e. Exhibitor of the Sale ADG Champion of beef
- f. Exhibitor of the Sale ADG Reserve Champion of beef
- g. Exhibitor of the Total Performance Champion of each species
- h. Exhibitor of the Total Performance Reserve Champion of each species

21. The Total Performance Champion of beef, sheep, and goats will be determined by adding the live animal placing, the carcass placing, and the average daily gain (when available, species dependent) placing for each animal. In case of a tie, the animal with the highest carcass placing will be the winner.

22. **An exhibiting family must submit the names of at least 2 prospective buyers that were not buyers at the previous year's sale, and obtain their signatures on form provided by the Quality Meats Committee. Signature forms must be submitted at check-in at the fair.**

If the forms are not completed the exhibitor will not be able to sell their animal in the auction.

Each exhibitor will be provided with a list of names of all exhibitors in the project. These listings can be distributed to potential buyers. No coercion is to be used. A congenial relationship should be developed.

23. All exhibitors selling an animal should use appropriate means to express appreciation to the buyer regardless of price received. The committee strongly recommends a thank you letter or an ad in the newspaper. All exhibitors should immediately add the buyers' name to their exhibitor's stall card.

24. The scale and all equipment owned by this program group can only be used for the Polk County Quality Meats Program.

25. Contingency animals may be designated between any group of exhibitors as long as one individual exhibitor does not exceed the maximum of 2 designated animals. Contingency animals must be designated at initial weigh-in. Each contingency animal must be assigned to an individual exhibitor by the end of the weigh-in on entry day of the county fair.

26. All male animals must be castrated prior to initial weigh-in. After species beginning weigh-in, male animals found to be sexually intact will result in disqualification from all further competition in current fair/competition year and loss of auction premium above fair market value published in auction catalog.

27. **Any animal that does not meet the guidelines of the Quality Meats Program may be disqualified.**

28. All Quality Meats Program participants must be an exhibit registered with the Polk County Fair.

BEEF (Steer or Heifer)

1. Beef are weighed the first Saturday in December at the fairgrounds in St. Croix Falls from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.
2. All market animals must have an 840 tag prior to weigh-in. With **RFID readable for 2027**.
3. If an exhibitor's animal(s) is(are) not to be at weigh-in, the exhibitor must:
 - a. Notify the Species Chair and the overall Quality Meats Program Chair
 - b. Submit a photograph of the animal(s).
 - c. Submit a weight slip signed and dated by the individual weighing in the animal(s) at the event, and which identifies the event where the animal is being weighed. The date on the weight slip must be the same date as the Polk County weigh-in.
 - d. The animal(s) must have some permanent form of identification (tattoo, herd tag, etc.)

This does not apply if the exhibitor cannot be present but the animal will still be weighed in at the Polk County weigh-in day.

4. **Animals should be reasonably halter-broken at the December weigh-in.**
5. **All animals must be dehorned (including scurrs) and castrated by the December weigh-in.**
6. Only animals born after January 1, 2025 are eligible. Animals may be mouthed at weigh-in time at the fair to determine age.
7. **Exhibitors will be allowed to weigh and tag two animals in December. If tag is lost, contact the Beef Committee IMMEDIATELY for tag replacement.**
8. All animals will be weighed in at the county fair at the designated time.
9. Beef animals must grade choice or prime to be eligible to be sold.
10. Beef animals must weigh 900 pounds and over to be sold.
11. All market beef animals will be ranked by a judge for total performance points.

HOGS (barrow or gilt) [subject to change depending on state decisions]

1. *Barrows and gilts are to be identified separately. There will be no spring weigh-in for hogs. Exhibitors will be self-identifying their hogs this year.*
2. *The process for identifying your hogs to participate in the Quality Meats Program are as follows:*
 - a. *Exhibitors will pick up their paperwork and tags at a designated paperwork pickup day and location. If an exhibitor cannot attend this pickup, then paperwork and tags may be picked up at the Extension Office or by contacting Swine Committee Chair or Vice Chair.*
 - b. *Exhibitors are responsible for tagging their own hogs.*
 - c. *Exhibitors will be identifying their hogs by DNA test at a cost to the exhibitor of \$7 per animal. DNA tests will be distributed at paperwork pickup. DNA samples must be submitted by May 18th.*
3. ***TERMINAL show for the 2026 Swine Show at the Polk County Fair.***
4. Hogs must grade No. 1 or No. 2 to be eligible to be sold.
5. Hogs must weigh a minimum of **225** pounds at the fair weigh-in to be eligible to be sold.
6. All hogs will be weighed in at the county fair.

LAMBS (wether or ewe)

1. Lambs can be a wether or ewe and must be born after January 1, 2026 all wethers must be castrated before spring weigh-in.
2. Lambs are to be weighed and identified by an official scrapies tag the **4th Saturday of April** at the Polk County Fair Park. No more than two lambs are to be assigned per exhibitor. The scrapies tag must be placed before weigh-in. If a tag needs to be replaced, contact the Sheep Committee immediately. April weigh-in will be from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.
3. If an exhibitor's lamb(s) is(are) not to be at weigh-in, the exhibitor must:
 - a. Notify the Species Chair and the overall Quality Meats Program Chair.
 - b. Submit a photograph of the animal(s).
 - c. Submit a weight slip signed and dated by the individual weighing in the animal(s) at the event, and which identifies the event where the animal is being weighed. The date on the weight slip must be the same date as the Polk County weigh-in.
 - d. The animal(s) must have a scrapies tag visible in the photo.

This does not apply if the exhibitor cannot be present but the animal will still be weighed in at the Polk County weigh-in day

4. Maximum weight for lambs at the April weigh-in is 90 pounds.
5. Lambs must weigh 110 pounds to be eligible to be sold.
6. Lambs must grade choice or prime to be eligible to be sold.
7. Judge will rank all lambs for total performance points.
8. All lambs will be weighed in at the county fair, slick shorn, less than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of wool before fair weigh-in.

GOATS (wether or doe)

1. Goats can be a wether or doe and must be born after January 1, 2026; all wethers must be castrated before spring weigh-in.
2. Goats are to be weighed and identified by an official scrapies tag the **4th Saturday of April** at the Polk County Fair Park. No more than two goats are to be assigned per exhibitor. The scrapies tag must be placed before weigh-in. If a tag needs to be replaced, contact the Goat Committee immediately. April weigh-in will be from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.
3. If an exhibitor's goat(s) is(are) not to be at weigh-in, the exhibitor must:
 - a. Notify the Species Chair and the overall Quality Meats Program Chair
 - b. Submit a photograph of the animal(s).
 - c. Submit a weight slip signed and dated by the individual weighing in the animal(s) at the event, and which identifies the event where the animal is being weighed. The date on the weight slip must be the same date as the Polk County weigh-in.
 - d. The animal(s) must have a scrapies tag visible in the photo.
 - e. This does not apply if the exhibitor cannot be present but the animal will still be weighed in at the Polk County weigh-in day.

4. These market goats must have short hair of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch or less before fair weigh-in.
5. Goats must weigh 70 pounds to be eligible to be sold.
6. Goats must grade choice or prime to be eligible to be sold.
7. Judge will rank all goats.