

2026 MEAT AND DAIRY GOAT PROJECT

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Species Contact

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Important Dates		Important Info	
Registration	June 25 th , 2026	Minimum Weight @ Fair	60 lbs.
Birth Date	December 1, 2025 – March 1, 2026		
Possession	May 1	Record Book Required for Market Youth ONLY	Saturday of Fair Week
Tagging	Weigh-In Day at Fair	Thank You Note Required for Market Youth ONLY	Saturday of Fair Week

Participating 4-H youth must abide by all general rules and regulations listed in the Manistee County 4-H Livestock Council's Policies & Procedures books. This includes, but is not limited to, the 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 Goat project, youth must be 4-H age eight (8) or older by January 1 of the calendar year AND complete the one year of Showmanship Only to be eligible for market..
Cloverbud years DO count towards this requirement.
- ❖ All 4-H Goat Participants (Market, Show Only and Cloverbuds) MUST complete project registration with the Manistee 4-H Livestock Council by June 25 each year.
- ❖ There are a variety of goat projects to register for: market, show, pack obstacle, draft, breed, and fun classes.
- ❖ To participate in the 4-H Livestock shows and auction at the fair, youth must follow all registration requirements set forth by the Manistee 4-H Livestock Council.
- ❖ To participate in the 4-H Livestock Auction at the fair, youth must register and compete in the appropriate showmanship AND market classes.

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 goat showmanship classes, and they will go last.
- ❖ Cloverbuds may bring their own goat to the fair OR they may choose to show someone else's goat
- ❖ Cloverbuds are not allowed to market their goats or enter breed classes.
- ❖ A parent, leader, or other adult must always be present when the Cloverbud is working with their goat, including in the show ring.

Cloverbuds are encouraged to complete and turn in the Cloverbud 4-H Record Book for their project for knowledge and experience.

Animal Requirements

1. Official ID Requirements:

- a. **Market Goats:** MUST be physically tagged with an official USDA scrapie identification tag in their ear. The scrapie tag or registration papers are typically provided by the breeder/seller.
 - b. **Non-Market or Breed/Show Only Goats (Registered):** Registered goats must be tattooed per the association's guidelines and have the official registration papers (pedigree) from an accredited association to match. The corresponding scrapie tag (if not physically tagged in the goats ear) AND a COPY of the official registration papers (pedigree) must accompany the goat when unloading at the fair.
 - c. **Non-Market or Breed/Show Only Goats (Non-Registered):** All non-registered goats must have the USDA scrapie tag physically tagged in their ear or tattooed with the ENTIRE scrapie tag ID number.
 - d. **Microchips:** Manistee County 4-H Livestock Council does not have the capabilities at this time to recognize microchipping as a form of valid animal ID.
- ❖ Animals with tattoos that cannot be read or animals without valid paperwork will not be allowed on the fairgrounds. No tattooing will be allowed on the day of check-in.
 - ❖ It is the owner's responsibility to get their goat tagged or tattooed PRIOR to fair.

2. Horned Goats

- ❖ All goats being exhibited as **"market class"** goats must be dehorned **without exception**.
- ❖ All goats being exhibited as **"Showing Only"** must be dehorned according to breed standards.

3. Other Animal Requirements

- ❖ Must be a wether (castrated male) or doe (female). Wethers must be castrated by no later than two (2) months of age.
- ❖ Separate market classes have been established for meat and dairy goats.
- ❖ Only one (1) goat per member, per year may be sold.
- ❖ Dairy goats may be purebreds or crosses of dairy breeds only.
- ❖ Must be a minimum of 60 pounds at weigh in on Monday of Fair Week.
 - Underweight goats can still be shown in showmanship class but will not be eligible for market class or the livestock auction.
- ❖ Exhibitors may use a different goat for Showmanship.
- ❖ Goats can be shown with a prong, link, or leather collar. Rope leads and nylon collars are not recommended. The collar should be of similar color to your goat (ex: no neon/bright colors) and must be properly fitted for best performance.

4. General Health

- ❖ All goats must be deloused, dewormed, mite free, and current on their CD&T vaccination, including annual booster.
- ❖ Hooves should be trimmed as needed and checked regularly for signs of disease and infection.

- ❖ Any goat having known exposure to infectious, contagious, or toxicological diseases cannot be brought to fair.
- ❖ Any goat displaying symptoms of illness, injury, displaying open wounds, etc. and are unable to participate in registered events will be immediately quarantined and examined by the fair veterinarian. The veterinarian will determine whether the goat can stay on the fairgrounds.

5. Pack & Draft Project Requirements:

- ❖ Also known as “utility” or “working” animals.
- ❖ Judged based upon the experience of the animal and the 4-H'er.
- ❖ Can be any breed; Fullblood, Purebred, or Crossbred.
- ❖ Utility animals may be a wether or doe (either dry or in milk) of at least 4 months of age.
- ❖ Goats under 1 year old should carry no more than 10% of their body weight; Goats over the age of two and fully conditioned can carry up to 30% of their body weight.
- ❖ Pack goats should be exercised often and handled multiple times a week; Regular hikes are recommended.
- ❖ Pack goats must have good temperament and be controlled by the 4-H'er.
- ❖ The 4-H'er is responsible for acquiring the correct equipment:
 - ✓ A proper pack; Sized based upon the height and weight of the goat.
 - ✓ Soft-sided dog packs are recommended for beginners
 - ✓ Cross buck saddles with saddle bags are recommended for experienced pack goats, but soft-sided dog packs may still be used. Pack goats may be on a lead on not by the collar; the objective is to get your goat to follow you through the obstacle course willingly so a loose lead is ideal (not pulling from the collar). NO decorative leads or neckties please.
- ❖ The 4-H'er will need to know how to properly load a pack.
 - ✓ Weight should be evenly distributed and be appropriate for the size and experience of the animal.
- ❖ “Draft” refers to driving a goat hitched to a cart. Advanced participants are encouraged to have their animal hitched with a cart.
 - Beginners may opt to use a harness only and walk behind the goat demonstrating commands.
 - Goats should be able to respond to verbal reigning commands: whoa, walk on, gee (right) or haw (left). Goats should have experience being harnessed and/or hitched to the cart.
 - The 4-H'er will need a draft harness and cart.
- ❖ Leather collars are recommended, please no nylon or colorful collars.

Fair Week Requirements:

1. General Requirements:

- Weigh-in takes place on Monday of Fair Week
- Youth must be present or must have made prior arrangements with the species chair for someone else to weigh their animal.

- Protective boots or leather shoes are strongly recommended when working with your lamb.
- Youth are responsible for keeping their pens clean all week.
- A Lamb Health Record must be filled out, signed, and presented to the 4-H Livestock Council to unload at the fair.
- If space allows, feed, feed bags, or supplies may be left in the barn in a Club supply stall. If space DOES NOT allow, everything must be stored at the campsite.

2. Animal Care Requirements:

- Youth are responsible for providing enough grain and hay to care for their goat throughout the entire week.
- Youth are responsible for feeding, watering, cleaning, and caring for their animal the entire week.
- Water shall always remain full and fresh.
- **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 immediately by a group consisting of at least one (1) 4-H Staff person and at least three (3) Livestock Council Members, with the possible inclusion of a Fair Board member, depending on the circumstances, and may lead to disqualification and removal from all 4-H and Open Livestock Shows held at the Fair.**

3. Show Day Policies:

- All members intending to sell an animal must also show that animal. Exhibitors may use a different goat for Showmanship.
- To participate in any 4-H Market Class, a member must have first completed a year of 4-H “Showmanship Only” – that is, showing any species without selling it. Once that initial requirement is fulfilled, the member may market in any other year in their 4-H career. Any year of participation in official Cloverbud Showmanship events also counts towards this requirement.
- All show apparel must be clean, properly fitted and free of design and advertisements. Clothing with Club names or personal names cannot be worn while showing.
- **Show Attire:** Members participating in goats **must** wear a white, button-down, long-sleeved shirt white or black pants. Footwear needs to be boots or good solid shoes. Goats must be shown with a collar (any kind).

4. Fair End Responsibilities:

- Completely clean and scrape down pens.
- Bars and pen dividers need to be scrubbed and wiped down.

After Fair Requirements:

- ❖ All market Goat participants must turn in a completed 4-H record **book by the Saturday of Fair Week**. Electronic copies of a record book **will not** be accepted.
- ❖ A Thank You and 8x10 Auction photo must be given to your buyer. **Physical or photographic evidence of a Thank You Note having been sent to your buyer** must be provided to the Livestock Council by the Saturday of Fair Week.
- ❖ Notes that are physically submitted must be properly and correctly addressed to the appropriate buyer and bear sufficient postage. ENVELOPES MUST REMAIN UNSEALED and turned into the secure box on the Fairgrounds.
- ❖ Failure to submit a record book and/or thank you note will result in the member's participation status for the following Fair year to be suspended. If a record book and/or thank you note is not received by the November Livestock Council Meeting, the 4-H member will forfeit their participation in 4-H Livestock Show & Market for the following Fair year.

Important Information & Tips for a Successful Meat Goat Market Project

Cost:

- Expect to pay on average between \$200-\$500 for a market project depending on quality, confirmation, wether/doe, etc. of the animal.
- Finding a breeder:
 - ✓ Contact a breeder as early as possible to reserve a kid. Some breeders will sell out quickly.
 - ✓ Be sure to tell the breeder you are looking for a 4-H project. They may be able to help with cost and/or selection.
 - ✓ It is HIGHLY recommended that you look to buy from a farm that performs regular testing and health checks on their herd.
 - ✓ If looking for a goat to breed, be sure to ask the breeder if they test for Johne's, CAE, and CL.
 - ✓ Johne's, CAE, and CL testing is recommended, but is NOT required for terminal animals.
 - ✓ Confirm that the breeder will castrate (wether) and tag (and/or tattoo) the kid with an official USDA Scrapie tag or registration tattoos BEFORE picking up.
 - ✓ If you'd like your project to be disbudded, you will need to let your breeder know at the time you look to reserve your project. Most kids are disbudded when they are between 5-14 days old.
 - ✓ When you go to pick up your project from the breeder it is best to take a health check-in form with you so you may ask them the necessary questions needed to complete the health form you will need for fair (ex: birth date, birth weight, castration date, disbud date, date of CD&T shot, etc.)
 - ✓ Several breeders will make sure to have this information ready for you if you let them know at the time you reserve your project that you will need this information.
- Selecting a market project:

- ✓ Look for a “full-service breeder”. A breeder that will provide you with support and guidance throughout the project. Don’t be afraid to ASK QUESTIONS.
- ✓ The ideal weight range for your project will vary based on the structure of your goat. For example: If you have a larger framed, longer legged goat your ideal weight range will likely be 100+ pounds. If you have a smaller framed, shorter legged goat your ideal weight range will likely be 85 – 100 pounds. Don’t focus so much on the weight of your animal and focus more on making sure your animal is finished for their frame size. ASK YOUR BREEDER FOR THEIR OPINION. They know their stock and can provide guidance.
- ✓ It is recommended that you select a goat born between the months of December through February. With proper feed, management, and genetics they should easily make the 60# minimum requirement.
- ✓ It is recommended that you select a goat that had a healthy birth weight and a good average daily gain. These numbers will depend on several factors so ask your breeder.
- Select a kid with a good conformation:
 - ✓ ASK YOUR BREEDER FOR GUIDANCE. A good breeder will gladly tell you their likes and dislikes of their goats. Or refer to the American Boer Goat Association (ABGA) for examples.

Important Information & Tips for a Successful Dairy Goat Market or Breed (Non-Market) Project

- Cost:
 - ✓ Expect to pay \$200 - \$500+ for a quality doeling
- Finding a breeder:
 - ✓ Contact a breeder early to reserve a kid.
 - ✓ Most breeders will work with the 4-H’er to select an appropriate kid for show purposes.

If selecting a **dairy** project:

- ✓ Ask the breeder for genetic lines so you can look for “Milk *” (milk stars).
- ✓ Try to obtain photos of the dams udder and sires’ mother’s udder.
- ✓ Purchase from a tested herd. Ask for test results for Johne’s, CAE, & CL.
- ✓ Confirm that the breeder will:
 - Disbud
 - Provide scrapie tag (and registration papers, if applicable)
- ✓ Provide required info (date of CD&T vaccination, castration, birth, weight, etc.)
- ✓ Refer to breed standards of conformation according to American Dairy Goat Association (ADGA), Miniature Dairy Goat Association (MDGA), or American Goat Society (AGS)

If selecting a **meat breed/breeding** project:

- ✓ Ask the breeder for genetic lines so you can look for “Enoblements”.
- ✓ Try to obtain photos of the dam and sire.
- ✓ Purchase from a tested herd. Ask for test results for Johne’s, CAE, & CL.
- ✓ Confirm that the breeder will:
 - Provide scrapie tag (and registration papers, if applicable)

- Provide required info (date of CD&T vaccination, castration, birth, weight, etc.)
 - Refer to breed standards and conformation examples according to American Boer Goat Association (ABGA).
- Nutrition:
 - Use a feed containing Ammonium Chloride and a calcium to phosphorus ration of 2:1. This will help to prevent Urinary Calculi in wethers consuming a high protein diet.
 - The correct amount of grain and quality hay is essential for optimal growth.
 - The amount of feed is dependent upon several factors. Consult your feed nutritionist, your breeder, or the species chair for help figuring out your feed ratio.
 - Free choice minerals should also be offered.
 - Clean water daily.
- Exercise:
 - Daily exercise is important for proper muscle development.
 - Ensures good health and helps prepare for shows.
 - NOTE: Buyers can tell who has worked with their goat and who has not!
- Clipping for Show:
 - Clipping should be done at home 7-10 days before the fair.
 - **Market goats** should be clean shaven. A #10 blade is the shortest length recommended. Other blade sizes and blade guards can be used. Ask your breeder or specie chair for guidance.
 - Dairy breed goats should have a full body clip with a fine clipper blade (#10 blade).
 - ✓ If the doe is in milk, use an extra fine blade (#30) on the udder.
 - ✓ Be sure to clip the entire body including the head, belly, legs, and shape tail area into a broom pattern.
 - ✓ Angora goats should not be clipped for show.
 - ✓ Pygmy goats should not be clipped for show; Hair around the hooves and in the ears should be trimmed.
 - Meat breed goats should NOT have a full body clip.
 - ✓ They get clipped in certain areas of the body with different blade lengths. Ask your breeder or specie chair for guidance.