This constitution was approved on a majority vote by the Manistee County 4-H Livestock Council
on April 6, 2000
Most Recent Revisions or Amendments to the By-Laws: November 2026.
Note: "Policy Pages" are reviewed annually and updated as needed.

BY-LAWS

MANISTEE COUNTY 4-H LIVESTOCK COUNCIL

ARTICLE I NAME

This organization shall be called the "MANISTEE COUNTY 4-H LIVESTOCK COUNCIL".

ARTICLE II PURPOSE

Section 1:

To establish and maintain the standards necessary to run a successful educational program for Manistee County 4-H ***and surrounding areas (Benzie & Lake County)*** youth involved in livestock projects (beef cattle, dairy cattle, goats, poultry, rabbits, sheep, and swine). *(Amended Nov. 2026)*

Section 2:

To represent the common interests of all Manistee County 4-H livestock clubs (defined as any registered 4-H club containing members enrolled in 4-H livestock projects) and make recommendations to the MSU County Extension office regarding changes or procedures that will help make a more effective program.

Section 3:

To develop, plan, and seek community support for public 4-H livestock events such as educational clinics, showmanship competition, the annual 4-H auction during fair week, and other exhibitive or competitive programs.

Section 4:

To conduct the daily business affairs of the council which include the raising and spending of funds, maintaining and growing the 4-H livestock program, and securing equipment needed to further program interests alongside 4-H Program Staff. *(Amended Nov. 2021)*

Section 5:

To ensure that all Manistee County 4-H livestock interests are open to all. *(Amended Nov. 2021)*

ARTICLE III MEMBERSHIP

Section 1:

Adult Membership: A maximum of twelve (12) adults who are registered 4-H club leaders or have ties to the local Manistee and Benzie County 4-H programs (parent of 4-H member, individual who volunteers at 4-H functions or assists at 4-H club meetings, etc.). Term length is three years, and a maximum of two consecutive terms may be served. After an absence of one year, a former member is eligible for membership, Benzie adults shall not comprise a majority of council membership.

Section 2:

Youth Membership: All Manistee, Benzie, and Lake County 4-H youth currently enrolled in a livestock project are encouraged to attend and participate at any council meeting. A maximum of two (2) youths from Manistee County and two (2) youths from Benzie County over the age of 13 may seek council membership. Terms shall be for one year and may be repeated. If the current Manistee 4-H Ambassador chooses to sit on the Livestock Council, that would take precedence over any other nominees. *(Amended 1/4/12)*

Section 3:

Individuals who desire to be included on the ballot during annual council and committee elections must be a current registered Gold Volunteer, in good standing, with the Manistee or Benzie 4-H program for a minimum of 9 months. *(Amended Nov. 2021)*

Exceptions may be possible for those individuals who had previously been registered volunteers that terminated their status in good standing. It will be at the discretion of Extension staff as to whether the Volunteer Selection Process on that individual can be completed in time for them to be included on the ballot. *(Amended by Advisory Council on March 14, 2006)*

Section 4:

Nominations: It is the responsibility of the council president to determine the manner in which new names for council memberships will be presented. It may be made a responsibility of all council members, or a special nominating committee may be appointed to handle this task.

All candidates must complete a “Prospective Candidate for Livestock Council” form – available at the Extension office – prior to the election in order to be included on the official ballot. Names received after the official ballot is made may be included as “write-in” candidates. All nominations must be presented and voted on no later than the October council meeting of that year. All Manistee County 4-H and Benzie County 4-H registered Gold Volunteers in good standing and Livestock Council members present can vote in the Livestock Council elections. Livestock Council members only can vote by proxy. To be elected, candidates must receive a “majority vote” of the eligible voters present (and any proxy votes included). *(Amended Nov. 2021)*

Section 5:

Actual Term: Member terms will run from November to November. (The actual 4-H program year is September 1 through August 31).

Section 6:

Vacancies: A member's term on the council shall be considered vacant when three (3) consecutive meetings are missed due to unexcused absence. The vacancy shall be filled by council recommendation and the time served will be considered a term if two years or more.

Section 7:

The Extension 4-H agent and/or program assistant shall serve in an ex-officio capacity.

Section 8:

Regarding council membership, attempts should be made to encourage a balanced gender/racial mix, reflective of the current county population and program Club membership. *(Amended Nov. 2026)*

Section 9:

All volunteers in the Manistee County 4-H program must complete the Volunteer Selection Process (VSP). This must be done prior to one's agreement to serve as a candidate for council elections. In the event that an individual is not able to satisfactorily complete the VSP, it will be necessary to end their council membership, in which case a council vote for a replacement would have to occur. If it becomes necessary for the Extension office – with the support of the State 4-H office – to discontinue/suspend an individual's volunteer status with the county program, then 4-H council membership will also be discontinued/suspended. *(Amended by Advisory Council December 2003)*

ARTICLE IV OFFICERS

Section 1:

The officers of the council shall consist of President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer, which shall be elected annually at the November meeting.

Section 2:

All adult members of the council shall be eligible for election to any office. The office of treasurer may be held by any registered Gold Volunteer in good standing. Per MSU Extensions best practices recommendations, all officers must have reached the age of 21 before being nominated and serving. *(Amended Nov. 2026)*

Section 3:

At the October council meeting, the president will ask each council member to return in November with a nomination for each of the four (4) offices. (The person nominated shall have given consent beforehand to serve in that capacity if elected.) *(Amended Nov. 2026)*

Section 4:

All officer terms shall run from the time elected until the following November council

meeting. Officers may serve a total of two (2) consecutive terms, and after a period of one (1) year off, may be elected to that position again.

Section 5:

No council/committee member may hold two offices on the same council/committee simultaneously; unless there exists such a critical shortage of council/committee members that there are not enough people to take up positions. (In the event of a member shortage, no president/chairperson or vice-president/vice chair may hold another office). Then, in the event that membership numbers are restored, that council/committee should replace one of the dual officer positions as soon as it is possible.
(Amended by Advisory Council February 2016)

ARTICLE V DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS

Section 1:

President: Shall preside at meetings of the livestock council and conduct the business at hand according to parliamentary procedure. He/she will work with the Extension staff by keeping them informed of current council matters and giving input as to what should be included in meeting agendas. It is the duty of the president to ensure the availability of the meeting site and obtain the key if needed (he/she may delegate this responsibility to the vice-president, or another council member.) The president will also serve as chairperson for council-sponsored occasions such as the 4-H auction, auction buyers' banquet, and other educational/competitive events.

Section 2:

Vice-President: Shall work with and assist the president and may be asked to perform the duties of the president in the event of the absence of that person or his/her inability to carry out the duties of that office. The vice-president may also be asked to head committees and to assist the secretary with council correspondence.

Section 3:

Secretary: Shall keep accurate account of all proceedings of the council at regular and special meetings. The secretary should also keep records of all council business (by-laws, minutes, committee reports, and membership and attendance records) and is responsible for council correspondence. It is the duty of the secretary to provide the Extension office with a copy of the previous meeting's minutes before the next scheduled meeting. All typed correspondence sent by the council must be approved by majority vote before correspondence is sent. *(Amended Feb. 2002)*

Section 4:

Treasurer: Shall keep an accurate record of all funds received and disbursed and shall provide the council with a report of the monthly activity at each council meeting and at other times if requested. The treasurer is the steward of the funds and has no assumed authority to spend council money (see Section VII - Financial). The treasurer is also responsible for the safekeeping of all financial records which must be in reasonable order for the annual financial review by December 31 of the current calendar year. In

the name of the council, he/she will make bank deposits of funds received, and may receive assistance with this task from another council member.

ARTICLE VI VOTING

Section 1:

No quorum is required, instead a majority vote of council members present is required to vote on any transactions, motions, or issues. *(Amended November 2024)*

Section 2:

All adult and teen council members may vote. When the vote is public, the president may vote in the event that a tie vote exists (if he/she chooses to do so) but should cast the vote after the rest of the council members have done so and the results have been tallied and announced. If it is decided that the vote will be done by secret ballot, then the president may vote at the same time that the rest of the council votes.

Section 3:

At any time prior to a vote, if there is a perceived "conflict of interest" between a council/committee member and the issue at hand, a discussion should be initiated. The member in conflict can expedite the process by voluntarily asking to be excused from a vote, or, another council/committee member can address the group on the perceived conflict and ask the council/committee to vote on whether the member in conflict may vote on the issue. *(Amended by Advisory Council February 2016)*

ARTICLE VII FINANCIAL

Section 1.

The Manistee County 4-H Livestock Council is recognized as an organization affiliated with the Manistee County 4-H program. It is authorized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to use the official 4-H name and emblem and is not considered a private foundation. The council's activities are reviewed by Michigan State University Extension, to ensure that they comply with specific 4-H guidelines. This council is exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code.

Section 2:

All financial transactions shall be carried out by the treasurer, with approval granted by majority vote in the form of a motion. Two signatures are required on all council checks, that of the treasurer and at least one other pre-designated council member.

Section 3:

Expenses incurred by any council member will only be reimbursed if the expenditure is approved by a majority vote in the form of a motion and is itemized and documented with receipts.

Section 4:

The Manistee County MSU Extension office may request a review of the council books and related financial records at any time.

Section 5:

Accurate records of **all monetary donations** will be kept by the council treasurer, and every effort will be made to acknowledge these gifts in writing and publicly at council sponsored events by **a current council member**. *(Amended Nov. 2026)*

Section 6:

Each year, the council shall seek and secure the services of a qualified person to review the financial transactions for that program year. This financial review shall take place in November/December and conclude in time for the books to be returned when council resumes its meetings in January or February. The person selected to do the review should be an accountant or bookkeeper by profession or training and must not be in a position that would present a conflict of interest to anyone on the council. This person shall be approved by majority vote in the form of a motion and must complete a written agreement of terms before commencing with the review.

Section 7:

It is the responsibility of the treasurer to secure the written agreement with the person selected to do the financial review and to turn over the financial records. The president may delegate another council officer to assist with this task.

ARTICLE VIII SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Section 1:

Special committees may be appointed by the president to cover specific areas such as budget and financial review, by-laws and constitution, fund raising, nominations, educational events, 4-H auction, buyer's banquet, ribbons/trophies, or for whatever need arises.

ARTICLE IX MEETINGS

Section 1:

The Livestock Council will usually meet on the third Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m. *(Amended Nov. 2026)*

Section 2:

All meetings shall be open to all persons involved in or interested in the Manistee County 4-H program.

Section 3:

A special meeting of the members of the council may be called at any time by the president or by a majority of the council members. Notice of all special meetings shall be given to each member at least five (5) days before the meeting date.

Section 4:

Council officers and members shall notify the council president or the Extension office at least one hour prior to a scheduled council meeting if unable to attend. Failure to make proper notification will be considered an unexcused absence. The council reserved the right to terminate the membership of anyone with three (3) or more consecutive absences (see Article III, Section 5). Notice of termination will be given in writing.

Section 5:

Regarding public participation at meetings, public comment at meetings is welcome, but there will be an enforcement of meeting decorum. The following statement will be published on all meeting agendas –

"Public Comment: Welcome to our guests. We ask that you be seated in the guest seating area. At this point in the meeting, the president/chairperson will allow for public comment from visitors. There is a 5-minute time limit for individuals and a 10-minute total time limit for an assembly of individuals representing a group or organization. The remainder of the meeting is for council/committee business and we ask that our guests refrain from interruption. If more time is needed, the proper protocol is to contact the president/chairperson in advance of a meeting and make any necessary arrangements to be included as a regular agenda item. At the close of the meeting, the president/chairperson will address guests and ask for any concluding comments, and we ask that the same time limitations are honored."
(Amended by Advisory Council February 2016)

ARTICLE X RULES OF ORDER

The conduct of the meetings of this council shall be governed by Roberts Rules of Order, when not in conflict with this constitution.

ARTICLE XI AMENDMENTS

These By-Laws may be amended at the Annual Meeting in November of the Manistee 4-H Livestock Council by a majority vote of the members present or allowable proxy. Proposed changes shall be submitted to the Council at the September Livestock council meeting in writing and discussed in public forum during the October meeting before being put to a vote by ballot to the eligible voting membership. *(Amended Nov. 2021)*

ARTICLE XII DISSOLUTION OF COUNCIL - DISBURSEMENT OF ASSETS

In the event that the dissolution of the Manistee County 4-H Livestock Council should occur, it is agreed and hereby ordered that all assets, property belonging to the council, and all funds remaining in any Livestock Council accounts, will be turned over to the Manistee County MSU Extension office.

ARTICLE XII DONATION POLICY

Manistee County 4-H and its councils, committees, clubs and registered volunteers may exercise the right to refuse any donation, particularly if the donation might be considered in poor taste or offensive, or if the donor represents a group or business

whose values and practices are not in keeping with the 4-H mission or standards of conduct. *(Advisory Council 1/8/08)*

ARTICLE XIII DEFINITIONS

Good Standing: A volunteer in "Good Standing" will meet the following requirements:
- Be a Registered 4-H Gold Volunteer with Michigan State University Extension.
- Obtain and maintain Gold Level Status without delays. *(Amended Nov. 2021)*