

**2026 SWINE PROJECT**  
**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**Species Contact:**

**Vacant**

<b>Important Dates</b>		<b>Important Info</b>	
Registration	June 25, 2026	Minimum Weight @ Fair	220 lbs.
Birth Date	On or After January 15, 2026	Maximum Weight @ Fair	325 lbs.
Possession	May 1	Record Book Required for Market Youth ONLY	Saturday of Fair Week
Tagging	Weigh-In Day of 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 Swine 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 Swine Participants (Market, Show Only and Cloverbuds) MUST complete project registration with the Manistee 4-H Livestock Council by June 25 each year.
- ❖ Two (2) hogs may be tagged each year, but only one (1) may be sold per member per year. Must be barrow (castrated male) or gilt (female).
- ❖ Hog intended for Market MUST be identified before either hog is weighed at Check-In.
- ❖ 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 1<sup>st</sup> of the current year)
- ❖ Cloverbuds have their own showmanship class. It will be held on the same day as the other swine showmanship classes, and they will go last.
- ❖ Cloverbuds may bring their own pig to the fair OR they may choose to show someone else's pig
- ❖ Cloverbuds are not allowed to market their pigs or enter breed classes.
- ❖ A parent, leader, or other adult must always be present when the Cloverbud is working with their pig, 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**

- ❖ All swine MUST have an USDA 840 ID tag electronic tag in their ear before they leave the farm on which they were born.
- ❖ Swine must be born on or after January 15th so that it is about seven (7) months of age by fair time.
- ❖ Swine should be in possession or under the care of the 4-H member on or before May 1st.
- ❖ Swine can be a barrow or gilt.

*Health alerts, disease prevention measures, quarantines, and special tagging/testing involving swine may arise on short notice. All swine exhibitors are expected to comply with all swine health and sanitation announcements from the Fair Board and/or Extension Office as they occur.*

## **Health Recommendations:**

- Swine are recommended to have the following vaccinations against the following diseases following vaccine manufacturer's label:
  - a) Circovirus
  - b) Erysipelas
  - c) Influenza
  - d) Mycoplasma Hyopneumoniae
- Most swine are partially vaccinated by the breeder, **be sure to have the breeder fill out their portion of the Swine Health Record.**
- If the breeder does not vaccinate, or partially vaccinates, the 4-H member will have to purchase their own vaccinations.
  - a) Request your veterinarian to vaccinate your swine project for all needed vaccines.
  - b) If you choose to vaccinate the swine yourself, be sure to follow all instructions on the manufacturer's label
  - c) Circovirus, Erysipelas, and Mycoplasma have single dose options.
  - d) Influenza requires an initial vaccination followed by a booster vaccination 21 days later.
- Check the dose timing prior to slaughter (i.e. the withdrawal date) for vaccinations, most are 21 days prior to slaughter. Complete your vaccination series by June 15th to ensure adequate withdrawal time before slaughter.
- The 4-H member must complete the Swine Health Record for all vaccinations provided to the swine.
- Deworming:**
  - a) Follow all directions on label
  - b) Be sure to pay close attention to the date of worming and the withdrawal time
  - c) Note the date given and brand on the Swine Health Record

## **Weight Requirements:**

- ❖ To qualify a swine for Market, it must weight minimum of 220 lbs. and maximum of 325 lbs. on Check-In Day of Fair Week.

- ❖ Members who have swine that weigh less than 220 or more than 325 pounds at final weigh-in will still participate in 4-H Showmanship.
- ❖ Hogs that are **less than** 220 pounds and over 150 pounds, may be dropped into the Roaster Swine Market Class and still participate in Auction. This is **NOT** a buckle winning market class.
- ❖ Hogs that **exceed** 325 pounds may still participate in Auction but will be marketed at 325 pounds and be ineligible for Grand or Reserve Grand Champion.
- ❖ Cloverbud swine projects are not required to make weight and are encouraged to share a pig with a sibling or another 4-H member for Showmanship due to current space.
- ❖ Cloverbud swine projects may be placed on a processing truck at the end of Fair Week at no cost to the family. Families will need to complete the Additional Animals for Processing Sheet and turn it in to 4-H Staff by Friday morning of Fair Week.

## **Fair Week Requirements:**

### **1. General Requirements:**

- Weigh-in takes place on the Monday of Fair Week
- Hog intended for Market **MUST** be identified before either hog is weighed at Check-In.
- 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 swine.
- Youth are responsible for keeping their pens clean all week.
- A Swine 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 hog throughout the entire week.
- Youth are responsible for feeding, watering, cleaning, and caring for their animal the entire week.
- **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.
- 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 swine **must** wear a button-down, long-sleeved shirt with black or dark denim or dark blue jean pants. Boots or a good shoe should be worn. Must have a showing tool (canes, whips, etc.) and brush ready to use.

### 4. Fair End Responsibilities:

- Completely clean and scrape down pens.
- Bars and pen dividers need to be scrubbed and wiped down.
- Help breakdown and load to storage pig pens.

### After Fair Requirements:

- ❖ All market Swine 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 Swine Project

- Cost: will vary depending on the quality of the pig and the reputation of the farm. It is common to see pigs ranging from \$100 to even a few thousand dollars per pig. However, **do** not pay a high price for a pig with the idea that this alone will assure you of a winning champion.
- Selection Criteria to Consider:
  - ✓ Muscle
  - ✓ Structural Soundness
  - ✓ Design
  - ✓ Growth Potential
  - ✓ Body Composition

✓ Breeds (Genetics)

- Select pigs that will have the proper amount of **finish**, or fat cover, when they reach 250 to 290 pounds. This is the most desirable market weight.
- Select pigs that will stay within their frame size and skeletal design when they reach their proper finishing weight.
- The best way to start your 4-H market hog project is with healthy animals. Continue this practice by providing your pigs with proper care early in their growth.
- Reduce the amount of stress placed on the animal. Stress is an animal's physical or psychological reaction to circumstances that frighten, irritate, endanger, or excite it.
- Before you leave the producer, who raised your pigs, try to find out as much as possible about your animals, such as:
  - ✓ their breed and age
  - ✓ how long they've been weaned
  - ✓ whether they've been treated for internal and external **parasites**
  - ✓ what vaccinations they have had (if any)
  - ✓ the diet or feeding program they are/have been on
- You will most likely be bringing your project pig home between February and April, use extra care and caution in getting your pigs' home. Northern Michigan weather can be fickle and unpredictable. Avoid chilling your pigs, always haul them in a covered truck or trailer.
  - ✓ In **cold weather**, bedding the truck with dry straw will keep your pigs warm.
  - ✓ In **hot weather**, sawdust makes good truck bedding. Additionally, don't park your truck in direct sunlight during hot weather as the pigs may become overheated.
- The first two or three weeks are critical, so you should check your pig several times each day during this period. Checking on your pigs often allows you to notice any small changes in behavior, which could be a sign of illness.
- Healthy pigs are active and alert with a bright look in their eyes.
- Swine need a clean, dry, draft-free area under a roof to sleep. Pen floors should be kept clean and dry.
- Swine have specific space requirements that vary according to their weight.
- Feeding is commonly done in two different methods: **hand-feeding** or self-feeders.
- Supply fresh, clean water to your pigs through a nipple drinker or a water cup, however, water barrels and dishes are less expensive and work well.
- **It is recommended that you check your pigs feed for the additive called ractopamine.** Ractopamine is an additive in pig feed that is legal in the United States that is known to increase the rate of gain, improve feed efficiency, and increase carcass leanness in finished swine. Ractopamine has been banned or restricted in 160 countries around the world for its links to cancer, cardiovascular diseases, and lower overall life expectancy in humans. Ractopamine is also known to have behavioral effects in swine, such as restlessness, agitation, excessive oral-facial movements, and aggressive behavior.
- **There is currently no ban on pigs who have been fed ractopamine going through the 4-H Auction at Manistee County Fair. However, the Manistee 4-H Livestock Council strongly**

**recommends AGAINST its use in 4-H swine market projects due to the increased risks to consumer health and exhibitor safety.**

For an in-depth 4-H Swine Project guide, please download or request a print copy of Your 4-H Market Hog Project (4H1064) from the [Manistee 4-H Livestock Council Swine Livestock Project](#) tab on their website or contact the Manistee 4-H MSU Extension Office for a hard, print copy.