

2026 POULTRY PROJECT
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Species Contact

Vacant

Important Dates and Info				
Registration Due	June 25, 2026		Show Bird Possession	N/A
Species	Possession Date	Recommended Age @ Fair	Minimum Weight @ Fair (per bird)	Maximum Weight @ Fair (per bird)
Chickens – Broilers/Fryers (3)	By July 1	49 days (7 weeks)	3.5 lbs.	6.0 lbs.
Chickens – Roaster Class (3)	By June 21	12 weeks	6.01 lbs.	No Max
Ducks (2)	May 18	12 – 24 weeks	6 lbs.	No Max
Turkeys – Hens (2)	By April 16	Hatched Feb. 17 or later	15 lbs.	No Max
Turkeys – Toms (2)	By April 16	Hatched Feb. 17 or later	20 lbs.	No Max
Geese (2)	By May 1	15 – 24 weeks	12 lbs.	No Max
Record Book Required for Market Youth ONLY	Saturday of Fair Week		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 Poultry 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 Poultry 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 poultry projects to register for: chickens, ducks, turkeys, geese.
- ❖ 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 poultry showmanship classes, and they will go last.
- ❖ Cloverbuds may bring their own poultry to the fair OR they may choose to show someone else's poultry
- ❖ Cloverbuds are not allowed to market their poultry or enter breed classes.
- ❖ A parent, leader, or other adult must always be present when the Cloverbud is working with their poultry, 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 birds (except pigeons and waterfowl) should come from a Pullorum-free hatchery or breeder. All poultry (except ducks & geese) will be pullorum tested on weigh-in day, free of charge. No Exceptions.
- ❖ All birds will also be issued a Leg Band ID at weigh-in.
- ❖ Members are encouraged to consult the poultry American Standard Breed of Perfection or the American Bantam Standard Breed of Perfection to compare their Breed or Show bird against the standard.
- ❖ Due to DNR regulations and permit requirements the following birds are NOT allowed:
 - Hungarian Partridge
 - Ruffed Grouse
 - Sharp Tailed Grouse
 - Wild Turkey
 - Wild Ducks (all North American species, except Mallards)
 - Geese (Canada subspecies and Blue-Snow Geese)
 - Pheasants (Ringneck, Sichuan and look-a-likes from the Genus Phasianus)
 - Quail (Bobwhite)
- ❖ See table above for weight requirements. Be sure to note minimum AND maximum weights.
- ❖ **Chickens – Broilers/Fryers & Roaster Class:**
 - ✓ **Market Pen of 3**
 - ✓ **MUST** be the same sex
- ❖ **Ducks & Geese:**
 - ✓ **Market Pen of 2**
 - ✓ **Can be** mixed sex
- ❖ **Turkeys – Hens & Toms:**
 - ✓ **Market Pen of 2**
 - ✓ **MUST** be the same sex

Fair Week Requirements:

1. General Requirements:

- Weigh-in takes place on the 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 in the poultry/small animal barn.
- Youth are responsible for keeping their pens clean all week.
- A Poultry Health Record must be filled out, signed, and presented to the 4-H Livestock Council to unload at the fair.
- Before entering the small animal barn, all poultry must be inspected and dusted for mites. Poultry showing any signs of diseases, parasites, or defects/injuries may be sent home.
- 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 feed to care for their poultry 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.
- All exhibitors of Turkeys and Market Chickens must take measures to prevent animal waterers from spilling and/or filling with pen bedding.
 - ✓ Waterers for **market chickens** must be placed on an elevated platform so that the water basin is at least 3 inches above the pen bedding level. The elevated platform must be level and larger than the base of the waterer to ensure stability.
 - ✓ Waterers for **turkeys** must be secured to the side of the pen or hung from above so that they cannot be knocked over. The water basin must be at least 6 inches above the pen bedding level.
- **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 show bird for Showmanship. **Note:** Chicken, Ducks, Turkeys, etc. each have their own Showmanship Division. You must participate in the Showmanship Class that corresponds with your Market project.

- 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 poultry **must** wear a white, button-down, long-sleeved shirt (long sleeves give the finished look to an outfit). Black pants or black jeans should also be worn. Some members choose a simple black tie to complete the look. Boots or shoes are appropriate footwear.
- Many judges also pay attention to the member’s personal grooming. It is strongly advised that members refrain from “loud” make-up. All members should make that the hair is neat and tied back if necessary. If hair obstructs the back tag, it must be put up.

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 Poultry 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 Shows & Market for the following Fair year.

Important Information & Tips for a Successful Poultry Project

- Cost: could range from \$40 to \$100+
- Housing and equipment for startup project, depending on need, could run \$50 to \$200+
- Nutrition/Feed: Consult your feed supplier for the proper feed for your project.
- Market projects must be fed poultry feed, NO scratch mix, no corn only diet or table scraps
 - ✓ This includes during the fair o NO medicated feed 30 days prior to fair
- Identification:
 - ✓ All poultry must have a leg band
 - ✓ Bands are mandatory

- ✓ All poultry will be banded upon entry to the Manistee County Fair during check-in
- ✓ All entries must be banded before they are put in their cages
- Items needed for fair:
 - ✓ Water and feed dishes for each cage to be used

Resources

- 4-H Poultry Fitting and Showmanship Member's Guide: Michigan State University Extension, Publication #4-H 1520
- 4-H Poultry Fitting and Showmanship Leader's Guide: Michigan State University Extension, Publication #4-H 1521
- American Standard of Perfection, published by the American Poultry Assn. 2001 or more current edition
- Storey's Guide to Raising Ducks – Breeds, Care, Health by Dave Holdebread ISBN: 1- 58017-258-X
- Storey's Guide to Raising Poultry – Breeds, Care, Health by Paula Simons and Carol Ekarius: ISBN: 1-58017-262-8
- Storey's Guide to Raising Turkeys – Breeds, Care, Health by Leonard Mercia ISBN: 1- 58017-261-X
- Your Chickens: A Kid's Guide to Raising and Showing Chickens by Gail Damerow ISBN: 0-88266-823-4
- MSU County Extension Offices
- Books for small flock owners – check the library or purchase at local feed suppliers or bookstores
- Poultry Learning Lab Kit – Ohio State University; owned by Grand Traverse County MSU Extension, can be borrowed with proper notice