

2026 Kansas 4-H Livestock Skillathon Contest

ELIGIBILITY

1. **Team Entries** – Each County Extension Unit may enter ONE TEAM of three (3) or four (4) enrolled 4-H members. Each District Extension Unit may enter teams of three (3) or four (4) enrolled 4-H members equal to the number of counties comprising the extension district (Kansas 4-H Policy 12.5.2). The three contestants with the highest scores will make up the team total for each category and overall scores. The contestant with the lowest score is still eligible for individual awards.
2. **Entry Deadline - The deadline to enter is August 1, which is the deadline for all contests included in the Kansas 4-H Livestock Sweepstakes weekend.** Youth must be entered through their extension unit. Refer to the Livestock Sweepstakes Guidelines and rules for entry details and instructions.
3. **Entry Fee** – The registration fee for the Kansas 4-H state livestock skillathon contest is \$15/contestant. Extension Units will be invoiced for youth registered under their county or extension district.
4. **Contest Date & Location** – The Kansas 4-H State Livestock Skillathon will be hosted on Saturday, August 22 in Bilbrey Family Event Center, the Stanley Stout Center, or a combination of Umberger and Call Halls. The specific location will be released to those who coaches and extension agents who enter teams in the contest.
5. **Individual Contestants** – No alternates will be listed on a team. Up to five (5) youth from each county, who are not already listed as a member of a skillathon team, are allowed to compete as individuals. *Therefore, a county may enter up to nine (9) total youth (team of 4, plus 5 individuals) in the state 4-H livestock skillathon contest.*
6. **Member Eligibility** – Members must be 9, but not yet 19, before January 1 of the current year. Contestants in National 4-H Competitive Events cannot have reached their 19th birthday as of January 1 of the current year. **If a team has one or more members who are under 14 years of age, that team will be *ineligible* to qualify for national competition.** *The contest is designed with the competitive intensity of a state-level event to give youth the opportunity to display their advanced skills in critical thinking, decision making, reasoning ability, communication skills, and livestock knowledge. Participants should understand the basic concepts of this event for it to be a positive experience that fosters experiential learning.*
7. **National Contest Participants** – Individuals who have competed as an official team member or as an alternate at the designated National 4-H Livestock Skillathon Contest (NAILE) in Louisville, KY are ***not eligible*** to compete as a ***team member***. They may participate as an individual contestant but will not be eligible for awards. Their score will, however, be counted towards individual sweepstakes awards. If an individual served as an alternate at the National 4-H Contest but did not actually participate in the contest, they retain their eligibility for the state contest.
8. **Post-Secondary Course Work** – In keeping with National 4-H rules, contestants who have participated in **any** post-secondary (university, college, junior college or technical school) course work or training for post-secondary competition in the subject area of this contest, including animal science courses, livestock quiz bowl contests, or academic quadrathlon-type contests, are not eligible to compete.
9. **Accommodations** – We request that extension staff share information regarding equal opportunity and disability accommodation request information at least 4 weeks prior to the contest with 4-H parents. To

request a disability accommodation, complete the [Disabilities Accommodation Request Form](#). Those requesting accommodations for a local extension program, should work with the extension agent to complete this form. *Please let Lexie know if a coach, volunteer, or 4-H participant has any special (dietary, reading, medical etc.) needs at least two weeks prior to the event. This information needs to be included in the system at the time of registration. (adhayes@ksu.edu)

10. **Team Score** – total team scores will be determined by combining the highest three (3) team member individual scores with the total team activity score accumulated from the team classes.
11. **Attire** – participants are encouraged to dress in cool, comfortable, and casual clothing. Youth will be evaluating classes in a variety of campus spaces during the afternoon and evening hours, so it may be hot and humid. Most spaces will be climate controlled. Contestants are encouraged to dress accordingly.

METHOD OF CONDUCT

1. All contestants and coaches competing in the Livestock Skillathon Contest will report to the specified location by 3:30pm on Saturday, August 22. The Skillathon will begin on Saturday, August 22 by 4:00pm. All youth and coaches will meet with contest organizers at the designated location for orientation prior to the contest. Specific contest locations will be provided in the Welcome Email distributed to coaches the week of Livestock Sweepstakes, as well as through the Remind messaging system.
2. After a brief orientation, youth will be divided into two groups. One group will begin on the team activities and take the individual written exam, while the other group will be further divided into smaller groups to complete the individual stations. Groups will be staggered throughout the individual rounds to complete the contest as efficiently as possible. After each group has completed their initial rounds, they will switch. The group who started on the team activities and individual written exam will finish with the individual stations, while youth who began on individual stations will take their individual exam and complete the team activities. Specific details regarding format and procedure will be announced to coaches and team members during orientation on Saturday afternoon.

Contest Location & Contest Format – Due to the evolving significant construction impacting the KSU ASI department and facilities, the contest spaces available will be fluid leading up to Livestock Sweepstakes weekend. A variety of spaces will be used for the skillathon. Group leaders and other volunteers will be directing contestants. It is vitally important that participants listen to the instructions given by contest officials and follow their group leaders. Rooms and spaces that will be used for skillathon will be marked accordingly, prior to the contest. Parents and coaches are expected to honor the signage and integrity of the contest. This may also include event spaces like the Bilbrey Family Event Center and Stanley Stout Center, which may be vacated to setup for the skillathon. Teams may be dismissed or disqualified from skillathon if any individual, youth or adult associated with their team, is found in a designated contest space (prior to or during contest/without an official). Final contest locations will be shared with coaches via the Welcome Email distributed the week prior to Livestock Sweepstakes weekend, as well as through the remind messaging system. There will be limited team “hangout” space, so please plan accordingly in advance. We appreciate the patience and cooperation of all involved while we continue striving to provide a high-quality educational opportunity for Kansas 4-H youth.

3. Team members will complete one official answer sheet for each team class representing the combined effort of all team members. Teams will have an appropriate amount of time (5-10 minutes) to complete the group assignments of each class and turn in their answer sheet. Time allotted will depend on the number of contest participants and will be announced at the coaches meeting. During the team competition round of the contest, contestants will be allowed to confer with team members only during time allowed for that class.

4. This contest will be scored using a scantron. All individuals will use a scantron to mark and submit their answers. Contestants will be required to use a #2 pencil. Clipboards are highly encouraged. ***Placings submitted on the scantron will be the contestant's official card and it is their responsibility to make sure it is accurate. No corrections will be made during tabulation. Bubbles will be scored as marked, with no bubbles being corrected or added, even if the student indicates their decision in a text box or paper exam/questionnaire, but without bubbling. Only the answers bubbled on the scantron will be scored.** Coaches are encouraged to familiarize their youth with using a scantron prior to the contest. Example scantrons that will be used are posted on the [Livestock Sweepstakes](#) page of the KSU Youth Livestock Program website.
5. During the individual competition round of the contest, contestants will be further divided into groups and will remain with that assigned group throughout the individual rounds of classes. While completing the individual competition classes, there will be no conferring between contestants or between a contestant and anyone else except as directed by contest officials. Contestants will be allowed approximately five (5) to ten (10) minutes to complete each individual competition class.
6. Possible classes-The classes below are suggested potential classes. Please refer to reference list. However, note that actual classes may deviate from this list in an effort to keep current with a rapidly changing livestock industry. Contest organizers reserve the right to provide material and classes they feel are valid industry educational opportunities.

Individual classes:

- a) **Livestock Equipment Identification** – identify the proper name and/or use for pieces of equipment used in livestock production.
- b) **Livestock Breed Identification** – identify from photograph, pictures, or by matching a written description, a variety of livestock (beef cattle, swine, sheep and goat) breeds.
- c) **Retail Meat Cut Identification** – identify beef, lamb, and pork retail cuts from the National 4-H Meat Judging Retail ID List. Contestants will identify the retail cut specie, primal cut, and retail cut name, as well as be able to answer follow up questions regarding the retail cut and general meat science.
- d) **Hay and Wool Judging Class** – rank a class of four hay samples and/or a class of four wool samples with analysis information. Answer questions about the class and/or hay/wool samples.
- e) **Quality Assurance Exercise** – demonstrate how to read a medicine label, calculate withdrawal times, complete a treatment record, and make responsible management decisions regarding quality assurance.
- f) **Feed Stuffs Identification** – identify a variety of livestock feed ingredients, as well as answer questions regarding how each feed stuff contributes to animal nutrition, production, and management.
- g) **Written Exam** – complete a multiple-choice quiz concerning the total livestock industry. The exam could range from 25-50 questions.

Team classes (see statement above; may involve live animals when applicable and available.

May also include group oral presentation):

- a) **Quality Assurance Exercise** – Demonstrate how to read an animal health product label, calculate dosage rates and withdrawal times, complete a treatment record, be familiar with administration routes, animal identification and restraint methods, and make responsible management decisions regarding quality assurance.
- b) **Meat & Carcass Evaluation** – May include ranking one (1) class of four similar retail cuts, evaluate photos of carcasses, price carcasses using a grid, or make management decisions based on carcass data provided.

- c) ***Animal Breeding/Reproduction Scenario and Exercise*** – Team members will evaluate a breeding/marketing animal scenario and make animal selection/marketing decisions based upon performance/visual data to rank breeding animals or market them for use within the situation provided. May include questions on adjusted weaning weights or other common measures of breeding livestock performance.
 - d) ***Livestock Feeding/Feed Label Knowledge*** – Identify the proper name for livestock feeds and identify each corresponding nutrient group. Feed samples and lists of feed names and nutrient groups may be provided. Utilizing feed ingredients given, formulate a ration for a group of livestock. Answer questions and make management decisions based on feed label information.
 - e) ***Management, Performance & Marketing Knowledge*** – Evaluate performance information on a group of livestock and then use the information given to make the best marketing decisions.
 - f) ***Hay and Wool Judging Class*** – rank a class of four hay samples and/or a class of four wool samples with analysis information. Answer questions about the class and/or hay/wool samples.
 - g) ***Reproduction*** – Identify reproductive tract organs and functions and/or reproductive management equipment for livestock species. Demonstrate common reproductive management techniques such as artificial insemination or use of CIDRs.
 - h) ***Current Events & Contemporary Issues*** – evaluate, discuss, and/or display knowledge regarding current events and/or contemporary issues on the livestock industry and management or marketing decisions of producers.
7. No contestant shall wear any clothing, pins, or badges that will in any way reveal their identity or the county/district which they represent. No hats are to be worn.
 8. Conferring among contestants (talking, gestures, etc.) will result in immediate dismissal from the contest.
 9. All electronic communication devices of any kind are prohibited. This includes cell phones, smartwatches, etc. Contestants may *not* use or carry any electronic communication device through the duration of the contest. Any contestant found in possession of such a device at any time during the contest, and their team, may be immediately removed and disqualified. Smartwatches will also not be permitted; they should be left with a coach prior to the contest beginning.
 10. Contestants may use a blank steno pad or a clipboard and blank paper. Contestants may also use a small pocket calculator. No programmable calculators, electronic devices, or phones are allowed. The contestants may not bring books, notes, pamphlets, or other reference material into the contest area. Contest officials reserve the right to check all contestant's notepads or clipboards to make sure they are blank prior to the contest. Violators are subject to contest dismissal and disqualification.
 11. Contestants are not to pick up or touch any item that is being identified or evaluated in the individual competition classes.
 12. An announcement will be made when coaches/parents are invited to review contest materials in the contest area at the conclusion of the contest. Tentatively, it will be open for 1 hour following the conclusion of the skillathon contest on Saturday evening. It will also tentatively be open for viewing during the beginning of the meats contest on Sunday morning.

TIEBREAKERS

1. Ties for individual exam awards will be broken on total practicum score, followed by a set of 3 pre-determined questions.
2. Ties for individual practicum awards will be broken on exam score, followed by a specific pre-determined class of the practicum stations.
3. Ties for overall individual awards will be broken on the practicum, followed by the exam. Should an additional tiebreaker be necessary, a pre-determined class of the individual practicum stations will be used.
4. Ties for teams will be broken by the team activity score, followed by total practicum score, then total exam score.

AWARDS & NATIONAL CONTEST

The awards ceremony will be held at the conclusion of all sweepstakes contests on Sunday, August 23, at approximately 3:30pm. The contest will recognize the top five teams and top ten individuals, as well as appropriate categorical awards. The champion team will qualify for the National 4-H Livestock Skillathon Contest at NAILE in Louisville, KY, given all team members are eligible. If they cannot attend, or the winning team includes a member under 14 years old, the opportunity will be offered to the Reserve Champion team, and so forth. Eligible senior teams must meet age and all other qualifications established by the national contest.