

2026 Poultry Project General Information & Expectations

Superintendents

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Poultry Project Master Checklist and Event Calendar

Date	Task	Done
Friday, January 23 *	Order Production Trio	
Friday, February 27	Possession of Production Trio Birds: Start Project Book	
Saturday, February 28	Production Trio registration due to Superintendents	
Friday, February 27 *	Order Geese	
Monday, March 16 *	Order Turkeys	
Friday, April 10	Possession of Geese: Start Project Book	
Friday, April 17	Possession of Turkeys: Start Project Book	
Friday, April 10 *	Order ducks	
Friday, May 1	Possession of Breed stock : Start Project Book	
Friday, May 1	Poultry project registration due to Superintendents	
Friday, May 1 *	Order Broilers/Roasters/Fryers	
Friday, May 22	Possession of ducks: Start Project Book	
Friday, May 29	Possession of Roasters: Start Project Book	
June xx (tbd)	Entry Forms due to Fair Office – See Fair Book (via FairEntry)	
Friday, June 12	Possession of Broilers: Start Project Book	
Friday, June 26	Possession of Fryers: Start Project Book	
Saturday, July 18	Mandatory Pullorum Testing	
Sunday, July 26	Barn Set Up / pre-fair / noon	
Friday, August 7	Poultry Project Check-in	
Monday, August 10	Wash birds for Judging (completed by 7pm)[pull feed by 8pm]	
Tuesday, August 11	Poultry Quality Judging 9am Showmanship, immediately following Quality	
Friday, August 14	Birds to be washed for auction (completed by 5pm)	
Friday, August 14	Small Animal Sweepstakes	
Saturday, August 15	Small Animal Auction	
Sunday, August 16	Poultry Check Out 9am – 11am	
Monday, August 17	Processed poultry picked-up at Extension Office 6-7pm	

*If ordering birds from Tractor Supply East

Sarah

517.788.6884

Continuing This Year: Meat Chicken category determined by weight at check-in, Freedom Rangers

Meat Chicken Projects will be assigned Fryer, Roaster or Broiler category by weight at check-in. Fryers will be 3-5 pounds, Broilers will be 5-7 pounds and Roasters will be over 7 pounds, determined by the average weight of the three birds.

Exhibitors will be able to use Freedom Ranger chickens for meat projects this year. Below are two growth charts, showing Cornish Cross and Freedom Ranger growth and feed consumption rates. Exhibitors will need to adjust the timing of their purchase so that their chickens will be at appropriate weight in time for fair.

Exhibitors will only be allowed to show **one meat chicken project**, but may show another Market Project (Production Trio, Goose, Turkey or Ducks)

Typical Broiler Body Weights and Feed Requirements				
	MALE		FEMALE	
Age (Days)	Body Weight (lb)	Cum. Intake (lbs)	Body Weight (lb)	Cum. Intake (lbs)
7	0.397	0.335	0.398	0.34
14	1.014	1.109	0.988	1.084
21	1.991	2.482	1.872	2.343
28	3.281	4.535	2.974	4.149
35	4.776	7.24	4.196	6.452
42	6.358	10.485	5.452	9.166
49	7.926	14.129	6.681	12.193
56	9.409	18.029	7.832	15.426
63	10.758	22.053	8.854	18.724

Source Aviagen

Freedom Ranger Performance Objectives				
Age days	Live Weight	Cumulative Feed Consumption*	Feed Conversion*	Carcass Yield Yield %
14	0.7	0.91	1.3	
21	1.33	1.9418	1.46	
28	2.06	3.3578	1.63	
35	2.85	5.016	1.76	
42	3.66	6.8808	1.88	66.20%
49	4.47	8.94	2	67.50%
56	5.24	11.266	2.15	68.70%
63	5.97	13.9101	2.33	69.70%
70	6.65	16.8245	2.53	70.50%
77	7.31	19.8832	2.72	71.10%
84	7.93	23.1556	2.92	71.50%
91	8.52	26.412	3.1	71.80%
98	9.08	29.7824	3.28	72.00%

* Weights provided are given in lbs
Performance objectives should be viewed as goals that can be achieved with good management and environmental control.
In no way does this data constitute a warranty or guarantee of the same performance, as conditions of nutrition, management, health, flock density or physical and biological environments (weather and related) vary from producer to producer.

Freedom Ranger Hatchery Inc. 187 N Windy mansion Rd. Reinholds, PA 17549 717.336.8878 www.freedomrangerhatchery.com

Continuing This Year: Pre-Fair Pullorum Testing

Mandatory NPIP (Pullorum) Testing will be performed at the Jackson County Fairgrounds Poultry barn on **Saturday, July 18, 2026, from 8am – 11am**. There will be no charge for the testing.

NO TESTING WILL BE PERFORMED AT CHECK-IN

Exhibitors choosing not to have their birds tested on the scheduled testing date will be responsible for having their birds tested by a Certified Tester, including any associated costs, prior to the Poultry Project check-in. A copy of the AI-013 Avian Test Record or NPIP VS 9-3 must be presented at check-in.

Non-exempt birds that have not been tested prior to check-in **will not be allowed on the fairgrounds.**

General Project Information

Poultry projects are divided into two categories – Breeder projects and Market projects. Exhibitors are limited to 4 entries (two per class). The third and fourth entries are based on space available and will be determined by lottery if necessary.

Breeder projects are mature breeding stock of at least 20 weeks of age. All breeder poultry must be hatched by March 1 of the fair year. Breeder poultry can be standard or bantam but must be pure-bred birds (no mixed breed/crossbred/hybrid) and an approved APA variety. Birds will be judged against the American Poultry Association (APA)/American Bantam Association (ABA) Standard of Perfection for the breed.

<https://amerpoultryassn.com/accepted-breeds-varieties/> <https://www.bantamclub.com/recognized-breed-and-variety>

Possession date for Breeder projects is May 1 of the fair year.

Note: Breeder poultry does not have to be hatched during the fair year. It can be mature poultry hatched in prior years but must be in possession by May 1 of current fair year.

Breeder poultry are to be shown as a Single Rooster, Single Hen, Pair (one male and one female), or Trio (one male and two females). Breeder Ducks are shown as a Pair (one male and one female) or Trio (one male and two females). Breeder Turkey and Geese are shown as a Pair (one male and one female) only. Each bird may only be entered into one category. Birds will only be judged in the category in which they are entered.

Breeder projects must have a half-sheet information page with a brief history of the breed and why the exhibitor chose the breed displayed on the pen. Listing must be neat, readable and in a durable format that will last the entire fair week (i.e. laminated, mounted on cardstock, etc.).

Breeder projects may be sold at the auction or can be taken home by the exhibitor. There are no sales allowed outside of the auction.

Market projects are projects of pre-determined length with specific breed requirements. Projects include Production Trios, Market Chickens (Roasters, Broilers and Fryers), Turkeys, Geese and Ducks. All market projects must be sold at the auction.

Production Trios consist of three hens of the same breed, age and point of lay purchased on the date determined by the Poultry Superintendents. Acceptable Production Trio breeds are ISA Brown, White Leghorn, Brown Leghorn and Barred Plymouth Rock. Other egg production breeds may be allowed with prior approval from the superintendents. This project will look at the growth rate of the chicks to maturity at 20 weeks and egg production from 20 weeks to 24 weeks of age. You will be able to evaluate the size of egg, color and quality. *Starting July 1st, all eggs will be collected and brought to check-in for evaluation. Using a pencil, write the date of collection on each egg.* Eggs are to be clean and free of debris. Participant's name is to be noted on outside of cartons.

Market Turkeys are either Broad-Breasted White or Broad-Breasted Bronze variety and shown as a single bird, either hen or tom. The minimum project weight is 16 lbs.

Market Geese are either Emden or Toulouse and are shown as a single bird. The minimum project weight is 6lbs.

Market Ducks are White Pekin variety and shown as a pen of three, ideally of the same sex and weight. The minimum project weight is 4 lbs.

Market Chickens (meat birds) are Cornish Cross variety or Freedom Rangers. A meat pen consists of three birds, ideally of the same sex and weight.

Projects will be categorized based on weight at check-in.

Participants should be using the Target Weights chart to manage their project. The minimum project weight is 3lbs.

Roaster/Broiler/Fryer Summary Chart with Target Weights

Project	Suggested Possession Date	Target Weight	Weight Range
Roaster	Friday, May 29	8lbs	7.0 lbs - no limit
Broiler	Friday, June 12	6lbs	5.0 lbs - 7.0 lbs
Fryer	Friday, June 26	4lbs	3.0 lbs – 5.0 lbs

Ordering Birds

Birds may be ordered through Tractor Supply East or any other source you prefer. Order dates shown are for TSC East. If you choose to order your birds from another source, you are responsible for verifying order due dates.

Possession dates remain the same no matter what the source of your birds. *A readable receipt must be submitted with your project book or Market Analysis sheet showing date of purchase. It is strongly suggested that a copy be made of thermal receipts to maintain readability.*

Possession of Birds

Breeder poultry possession date is May 1 of the fair year. *Note: This is possession date, not hatch date. Breeder poultry must be hatched by March 1 of the current fair year or can be purchased as mature poultry.*

Market project possession dates for Geese, Turkeys and Ducks that are listed on the Poultry Project Master Checklist, are based on day-old birds and should be strictly adhered to. Birds should not be obtained prior to the published possession date. *A readable receipt must be submitted with your project book or Market Analysis sheet showing date of purchase. It is strongly suggested that a copy be made of thermal receipts to maintain readability.*

Mandatory Pullorum Testing

Pullorum disease, which is caused by the bacteria *Salmonella pullorum*, is one of the most important poultry diseases. The disease is most common in young birds, but it is also a serious concern in adult birds as they could carry the disease without showing any signs. Characterized by whitish diarrhea, it is highly contagious with a very high mortality rate. There is no treatment or vaccine for the disease. Pullorum disease has been eradicated in U.S. commercial poultry, and it is critical to maintain this disease- free status by monitoring the pullorum status in commercial, backyard, and exhibition poultry. As part of the NPIP (National Poultry Improvement Plan), all birds exhibited in Michigan are required to be tested for *Salmonella pullorum* (waterfowl, pigeons and doves are exempt). This requirement applies to all chickens, turkeys, peafowl, game birds (pheasants, quail, and chukars), and ratites (ostriches, rheas, cassowaries, and emus). In Michigan, pullorum testing is not required for finches, budgerigars (parakeets, parrots, and cockatiels), pigeons, doves, and waterfowl going to exhibition. The test is a simple blood test with results in 2 minutes. Testing can be performed by Veterinarians and Michigan Certified Pullorum Testers. A list of certified testers can be found at <https://www.michigan.gov/mdard/animals/exhibitions/resources-for-exhibitions/supplemental-resources#Pullorum> under the heading Pullorum information.

As a result of discussions with the State Veterinarian, Pullorum testing will now take place prior to the poultry project check-in.

- All birds must test negative for Pullorum within 90 days ***prior to check-in*** (see exceptions listed below).
- Once tested, birds must be kept away from non-tested birds and their equipment.
- Mandatory NPIP (Pullorum) Testing will be performed at the Jackson County Fairgrounds Poultry barn on **Saturday, July 18, 2026 from 8am – 11am**. There will be no charge for the testing.
- **NO TESTING WILL BE PERFORMED AT CHECK-IN**
- Exhibitors choosing not to have their birds tested on the scheduled testing date will be responsible for having their birds tested by a Certified Tester, including any associated costs, prior to the Poultry Project check-in. A copy of the AI-013 Avian Test Record or NPIP VS 9-3 must be presented at check-in.

- Any birds that have not been tested prior to check-in **will not be allowed on the fairgrounds.**

Exceptions

Only birds meeting the criteria below will be exempt from the mandatory NPIP (Pullorum) testing.

1. Pigeons, Doves and Waterfowl
2. Roaster, Broiler and Fryer Cornish Cross market projects purchased from a Commercial Hatchery or Supplier (such as TSC, Blains, Family Farm and Home, etc. {that have not been exposed to untested birds}).
3. Birds from a certified pullorum-typhoid free flock that have not been exposed to untested birds and have required documentation.

Project Books

Project books are required for all exhibitors. Be sure to use the current year's Project Books and print the book single-sided to aid in review and grading.

All project books are to be completed by the youth showing the project. All books are to be handwritten by the youth showing the project. Neatness will be factored into the grading of the books (if legibility is a concern, the exhibitor may include a supplemental sheet following the specific page with typed information).

- When entering multiple projects, only one project book per person is to be completed.
- The project book is to be completed on the project with the longest duration. The Production Trio project requires a completed project book.
- If entering both Market and Breed projects, the project book must be completed on the Breed project and a Market Project Analysis must be completed for the Market Project (exception: if doing a Production Trio and a Breed Project, exhibitor must complete the Market Production Trio Project Book).
- When entering two Market projects, a Market Project Analysis sheet must be completed and submitted for the second market project without a project book. If doing multiple Market Projects, only one may be market chicken. Exhibitor may do any combination of two market projects, as long as only one is a market chicken (fryer, broiler or roaster)
 - Example 1: If an exhibitor entered a Production Trio and Broiler project, the exhibitor would complete the project book for the Production Trio and Market Project Analysis sheets for the Broiler project.
 - Example 2: If an exhibitor entered a Market Turkey and Fryer projects, the exhibitor would complete the project book for the Turkey and Market Project Analysis sheets for the Fryer project.
 - Example 3: If an exhibitor entered a Production Trio and Breeder projects, the exhibitor would complete the project book for the Production Trio and no book for the Breeder project.

Completed project books and analysis sheets must be turned in at check-in. *Incomplete books will not be accepted, and projects will not be checked in.*

When downloading, make sure you have the most current version and the correct year of the book for your project. *Print Project Books Single Sided.* Project books can be downloaded at:

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/jackson/4-h/jackson-county-fair>

Project Registration

Projects must be registered with both the Project Superintendents and the Fair Office. Registration forms for both the fair office and the superintendents must be completed and submitted before the respective deadlines to check in and participate at fair.

Superintendent Registration

Project Registration form is due to the Superintendents by May 1 (Production Trios must be registered with Superintendents by February 28). The form must include all poultry projects that the exhibitor wishes to bring to the fair. One form must be completed for each exhibitor.

Forms must be accurate, complete, legible and signed. It is the responsibility of the exhibitor to complete, verify or otherwise confirm any information required/provided on this form. Any errors or omissions on the registration forms are the responsibility of the exhibitor and their family. Errors, omissions or illegible data may result in premium and/or auction checks not being distributed or projects not being registered accurately.

Fair Office Registration

The Fair will be continuing to use Fair Entry On-line. Fair Registration, Exhibitor Agreement and Family Pass Forms with member photo are due to the fair office in mid-June. The exhibitor is responsible for confirming the registration deadline with the Jackson County Fair office and submitting all necessary entries and forms prior to the deadline. Fair Premium checks are mailed to the address shown in Fair Entry On-line. The fair pays a premium on one project based on the quality rating from the judge (A, B, C). The fair will only pay premiums on the first project listed.

Project Expectations

The following information should not be considered inclusive. It is the exhibitor's responsibility to read and understand the Jackson County Small Animal Association By-Laws. For more details and contact the superintendents with any questions. By-Laws are available at:

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/jackson/4-h/associations-committees-councils>

Before Fair

- All deadlines listed on first page will be strictly enforced.
- Clubs are expected to participate in Pre-Fair Barn Clean-up Day. If attendance falls short of needed hands, clubs will be assigned to clean up days in the future.
- Each exhibitor must attend and participate in at least one of the following: Barn Set-Up, Volunteer at Check-In or Barn Clean up. Attendance will be taken at each event and compared to the registration list. It is the participant's responsibility to check- in with the superintendents and complete the sign-in sheet at each event.
- A fine of \$25.00 will be assessed and deducted from the participant's auction check if they have not participated in an event.

At Fair

- Check-in will begin on Friday, August 7, 2026, at 6pm.
- Check-in for volunteers assisting with check-in will be at 5pm.
- Participant fee of \$5 per exhibitor is to be paid at check-in.
- Birds must be healthy, clean and free of parasites. Market birds are to be bathed and must be completely dry prior to check-in.

Daily Pen Care / Animal Husbandry

Exhibitors are responsible for the care of their animals on the Saturday before fair so should plan accordingly!

Your project is a Fair Exhibit. The public will form its opinion of livestock, 4H and you based on the visual perception of the health of your animals and cleanliness of your pen. The Jackson County Fair provides your daily gate pass, parking pass and other benefits in return for your exhibit during fair week. Therefore, the following rules and regulations must be strictly adhered to:

- All pens must be cleaned before 10 am (8am on Tuesday {Show Day})
- All birds must have water at all times.
- Birds must have food during fair hours. Food may be removed overnight and replaced in the morning during pen cleaning. Birds seen as aggressively hungry will be considered not fed. Remember, if you feed your birds at 9am you may need to feed them again by noon and possibly again later in the day. It is good practice to stop by the barn several times a day to check the food and water status of your birds,
- Birds are to be kept clean during the week. Spot cleaning of birds should be performed as needed.
- All Market Projects and any breed stock to be auctioned are to be bathed on Friday. All birds should be dry and returned to pens no later than 5pm. Wash tubs will be provided. Towels, etc. are the responsibility of the exhibitor.

Pen Violations

- Violations will follow the process outlined in the Clean Pen Rules section of the Small Animal Constitution, By-Laws, Rules and Regulations (Rev. January 2024)
- When a violation is identified by a Superintendent or Junior Superintendent, the date, time and type of violation will be listed on a cage tag. Exhibitors will have 30 minutes from the noted time to correct warning before a pen violation will be issued.
- Red Tag pen violations will result in the exhibit not being sold at auction.

Barn Duty

- Barn Duty is required for project participation.
- Barn Duty expectations will be posted in the Poultry Barn.
- Time slots will be in two-hour intervals. One time slot is required for each poultry project you bring to fair. Barn duty attendance will be tracked.
- Sign-up for time slots will be part of the Check-in process. Exhibitors are expected to know their availability at check-in and sign up accordingly.
- Any changes to the barn duty schedule require prior approval from the Superintendent or Junior Superintendent.
- Exhibitors are required to remain in the Poultry barn for the entire duration of their time slot.
- Fines will be assessed to anyone not fulfilling barn duty responsibilities as listed in the Small Animal Association By-Laws.

Auction

- Animals must be presented at auction by the exhibitor.
- A signed auction contract must be completed and turned in at the time of check-in or exhibit will not be sold at auction.
- All exhibitors selling an animal at the Small Animal Auction must participate during Small Animal Auction luncheon by signing in, serving for the listed required time (not to exceed 15 minutes) and signing out at the end of service to receive full auction price for exhibit sold.

Check-out

- Check-out for all birds will be Sunday, August 16 from 9am to 11am. There will be no early check-outs allowed.
- All birds must be signed for by owner of birds on record with superintendents. Any exceptions must be arranged in person with the owner of record, the person picking up and a superintendent before close of auction.
- Any birds not picked up by 11am on Sunday become the property of the poultry superintendents.

Post Fair Barn Clean-up

- Barn clean-up is Sunday August 16 at 8am and will run until complete.
- Each member must attend and participate in at least one of the following: Barn Set-Up, Volunteer at Check-In or Barn Clean up.
- Attendance will be taken at each event and compared to the registration list. It is the participant's responsibility to check-in with the superintendents and complete the sign-in sheet at each event.
- A fine of \$25.00 will be assessed and deducted from the participant's auction check if they have not participated in an event.

Showmanship

Participation in showmanship is strongly encouraged but not required. The 4-H Poultry Fitting & Showmanship Member's Guide (free to download) is available at:

https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/4_h_poultry_fitting_showmanship_members_guide_4h1520