

Date: February 5, 2026

To: 4-H Goat Project Members and Leaders

From: Kayla Mitchell, Program Coordinator – 4-H Youth Development

Re: 2026 Goat Project Information and Updates

This is a quick update on the events that will take place for the 2026 fair season within the goat department. Should you have questions, please feel free to contact the MSU Extension Office at 269-467-5511. Please note that the information contained in this letter is subject to change.

NEW for 2025:

- **Breeding stock goats and market goats designated for take-home** may be loaded out Saturday, September 26, from 11:00 p.m. to midnight.
 - All goats MUST be loaded out by **8:00 a.m.** Sunday, September 27
 - The St. Joseph County Grange Fair will NOT require loadout to be done by 11:00 a.m. on Sunday, September 27. There will not be fireworks or rides operating that day.
 - **ALL YOUTH** are still expected to be at barn clean up at 5:30 a.m. on Sunday to tear down gates and clean specie barns. Fines will be enforced!
- Goat pens must be cleaned a **minimum of 2 days** during fair week.
 - Suggested days Tuesday & Thursday

Reminders:

- Dairy goats and meat goats will show in **separate rings** with separate judges. Both rings will run the same show order: 4-H exhibitor meeting (all together), Showmanship (oldest to youngest), Cloverbuds, Market Classes, Breeding Classes, County Bred & Born, Pet Class.
 - Anyone is allowed to prepare animals for presentation for show. However, it is expected that 4-H, FFA, and other youth members **will actively participate** in the grooming of their project animal.
 - All breeding stock animals must be registered at the MSU Extension office by August 15 via FairEntry.
- **Market Goats**
 - Dairy Market Goat project animals are limited to the following breeds: Alpine, Guernsey, LaMancha, Nubian, Nigerian Dwarf, Oberhasli, Saanen, and Toggenberg.
 - Meat Goats are any goat that is not included above. Example: Boer, Angora, Fainting, etc. or crossbred with a dairy breed.
- **Market Goat County Bred & Born** class goats must be both bred and born in St. Joseph County. County Bred & Born forms must be filled out at countywide registration in June. Exhibitors may only show one animal in this class.
- Market and carcass **goats MUST HAVE milk teeth** present at time of fair weigh-in. Animals without milk teeth are ineligible for market/carcass exhibition at the fair and will be sent home at weigh-in. We recommend market/carcass goats be born by December 1, 2025 or after.
 - **Exception:** Does may be exhibited as breeding stock if the member chooses.
- **Live carcass weigh-in** will be Saturday, September 12, 2026, from 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.
 - Goats must weigh a minimum of 60 lbs. Underweight goats will be sent home at weigh-in.



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- **Goat Carcass hanging evaluation** contest will be the week of September 14, 2026, at Bontrager's Custom Meat Processing in Leonidas, actual date and time to be determined.
 - Exhibitors are required to attend the hanging evaluation unless prior approval is granted by the 4-H Program Coordinator. No-shows will result in disqualification.
- Every market goat must weigh a **minimum of 60 lbs.** at time of weigh-in on **Saturday, September 19, 2026.** Underweight animals are ineligible for exhibition at the fair and will be sent home at weigh-in.
 - **Exception:** Does may be exhibited as breeding stock if the member chooses.
- Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) requires all goats that are moved off the farm for sale or exhibition to be **ear tagged** with a USDA Scrapies ID tag. Earless goats must have a collared tag. **Anyone purchasing goats should make sure the seller has tagged them prior to sale.** If you raise goats from your own herd you should contact the MDARD at 1-800-292-3939 to get a premises identification number. Once you have the premises number call the USDA at 1-866-873-2824 to get your tags.
- **All 4-H livestock members/clubs** will be held responsible for setting up their project pen/stall and decorations before fair, as well as cleaning and tearing down their project pen/stall at the end of fair. Individuals or clubs may be assessed a \$50.00 fine for failure to do so.

Important dates, deadlines and events

Event or Deadline	Date(s)	Comments
Possession Deadline	June 1	
Initial weigh-in, tagging, and registration	Tuesday, June 2, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. or Thursday, June 4, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weigh-in will be at the east end of the Goat Barn at the Fairgrounds. • Animals must have their USDA scrapies ID tag in the ear or on a collar if the animal does not have ears. • Only the scrapies ID tag and the 4-H neck ID tag are allowed on the animal. • Each member may tag up to 3 goats, but may only show 2 market goats at fair. Family tagging is allowed.
Carcass Contest Form Due	June 4	Due at time of weigh-in
County Bred & Born Form Due	June 26	MSU Extension Office
Fair Registration Due	August 15	Completed online via FairEntry
Breeding Stock Registration Due	August 15	Completed online via FairEntry
Live Carcass Weigh-in	September 12 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.	At Fairgrounds
Carcass Evaluation	Week of September 14 Date and Time TBD	Bontrager Custom Meat Processing
Fair check-in & weigh-in	Saturday, September 19 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Market goats must weigh a minimum of 60 lbs. and have milk teeth present at time of weigh-in or they will be ineligible for exhibition and will be sent home.
Evaluation	Sunday, September 20 9:00 a.m - 12:00 p.m.	Required for all exhibitors
4-H Market & Breeding Stock Show	Monday, September 21 Following the Open Class Show	Livestock show arena (*See fairbook for Rules and Show Order)
4-H Small Animal Sale	Thursday, September 24 10:00 a.m.	Order of sale: rabbits, goats, chickens, turkeys
Early Release	Saturday, September 20 11:00 p.m. - midnight	Take home animals ONLY
Animal Load-out & Barn Clean-up	Sunday, September 21 5:30 a.m.	All members must clean and help put away the pens All goats must be gone by 8:00 a.m.