

DATE: August 3, 2026

TO: All 4-H Swine Project Members Who Registered in the 4-H Carcass Hog Contest and
all 4-H Swine Project Leaders

FROM: Kayla Mitchell - 4-H Youth Development Program Coordinator

RE: 2026 4-H Carcass Hog Contest

Contest entrants include:

2026 Carcass Participants

1. Freddie Stears
2. Carter Oswald
3. Rebekah Klein
4. Katelyn Trattles
5. Jade Sechler
6. Cooper Stears
7. Taylor Trattles
8. Kurtis Sechler
9. Luke Byler
10. Lila Preston

Alternates of eligibility order

11. Luke Klein
12. Matthew Byler
13. Branch Henderson
14. Suzanne Klein
15. Leland Wolfe



MSU EXTENSION
St. Joseph County

612 E. Main St
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www.canr.msu.edu/st_joseph

Attention Participants: It is your responsibility to call the St. Joseph County MSU Extension office right away if you decide to drop out of the program for any reason.

The following is important information you need to know regarding participation in the **2026 4-H Carcass Hog Contest:**

1. The purpose of the program is to provide members with an opportunity to learn about the relationship between live animal evaluation and carcass composition and quality.
2. Entry in the contest will be limited to ten (10) entries. If more than 10 participants submit their entry forms, selection of the 10 participants will be based on a combined factor of exhibitor's age plus number of years in the swine project.
3. Eligible animals include any of the 4-H project hogs registered in a given member's name. **Note:** Any and all potential carcass animals were required to be ear-tagged and registered in the St. Joseph County MSU Extension office by **June 4, 2026.**

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4. The 4-H Carcass Hog Contest will take place according to the following schedule:
 - **Live Hog Weigh-in/Drop off:** Saturday, September 12, 2026, from **10:00 - 11:00 a.m.** at the fairgrounds in Centreville. All animals entered in the Carcass Beef Contest **MUST** be delivered to the fairgrounds by **11:00 a.m.** for weigh-in.
 - **Carcass Steer Evaluation Workshop:** Tuesday, September 15, 2026, at **6:00 p.m.** at Bontrager's Custom Meat Processing, 53541 Correll Rd., Leonidas, MI 49066. Please remember to bring a winter-weight coat and gloves along to wear in the meat cooler where the workshop will be held, as the cooler is maintained at 34°F!
5. **Attention!** All 4-H members participating in the Carcass Hog Contest are required to attend the Carcass Hog Evaluation Workshop in order to receive a premium and any associated awards. College students will be exempt from the Carcass Hog Evaluation if approved by the 4-H Program Coordinator by August 15. Any member who fails to meet this requirement will have his/her animal disqualified from the carcass contest. Any member who fails to meet this requirement will have his/her animal disqualified from the contest.
6. Market hogs entered in the carcass class **MUST** weigh a minimum of 230 lbs. and no more than 320 lbs. at weigh-in at the fairgrounds in Centreville on Saturday, September 12, 2026 in order to be eligible to compete in the Carcass Contest. Market hogs weighing less than 230 lbs. or more than 320 lbs. are not representative of desirable market hogs being sought by today's livestock markets, and will not be eligible to compete in the Carcass Contest.
7. **Delivery of Hogs:** All hogs to be entered in the contest **MUST** be clean and delivered to the fairgrounds.
8. Each member making an entry in this contest is responsible for arranging for a "private treaty" sale of his/her hog before it is delivered to the fairgrounds on Saturday, September 6, for weigh-in. **Exception:** The **Champion** and **Reserve Champion** hog carcasses **MUST** be sold in the 4-H Large Animal Sale on Thursday, September 24, 2026. Therefore, when you make arrangements for a "private treaty" sale of your carcass animal, it must be with the buyer's understanding that the animal will be sold in the Large Animal Sale if it wins Champion or Reserve Champion honors.
9. It is also the member's responsibility to inform the buyer of the carcass that he/she is responsible for the slaughter and processing costs (which will be directly payable by the buyer to Bontrager's Custom Meat Processing).

The "**Processing (Cut) Sheet**" which can be found at https://www.canr.msu.edu/st_joseph/4-h/4_h_fair#carcass must be filled out completely and signed by the buyer. Give the buyer one (1) completed copy to keep, and turn a second copy in on Saturday, September 6, 2026, prior to unloading your steer for weigh-in.

"Thank You's" For Contest Support:

- Each member who places an entry in the Carcass Class is required to write a "thank you" letter to **Bontrager's Custom Meat Processing** (see address below) to thank this business for the vital role it plays in making the 4-H Carcass Beef Contest possible.
 - * "Thank you" note must include complete donor address, your return address and must be affixed with a \$0.78 postage stamp.
 - * Attractive 4-H "thank you" note stationery (including a stamped envelope) will be available for sale at \$2.00 each at the 4-H Fair office starting on Sunday, September 14.
- **Deadline for Submitting "Thank You" Note:** Completed "thank you" note **MUST** be turned in to the 4-H Fair Office by 10:00 p.m. on **Saturday, September 26**.
- **Penalty For Not Submitting "Thank You" Note:** Your fair premium check will be held at the St. Joseph County MSU Extension office until your "thank you" note has been submitted in a properly prepared, stamped envelope.

The mailing address for **Bontrager's Custom Meat Processing** is as follows: Bontrager's Custom Meat Processing
c/o Willie Bontrager
53541 Corell Rd.
Leonidas, MI 49066

Please do not hesitate to call the MSU Extension at 269-467-5511 if you have any questions regarding the information contained in this letter.

cc: Bontrager's Custom Meat Processing