

4-H CLOVERBUDS

St. Joseph County Cloverbud Program: Animal Demonstration Program



The Cloverbud program in St. Joseph County is for youth 5-7 years old as of January 1, 2026. Cloverbuds will have the opportunity to do still exhibits and to show a cat, dairy feeder steer, dog, goat, horse, rabbit, pig, and/or sheep at the St. Joseph County Grange Fair. Please refer to the St. Joseph County 4-H, FFA, & Other Youth Fair Book for a full listing of Cloverbud classes. These projects will be “exhibited in **non-competitive**, age-appropriate activities that are designed for this age group.”

Cloverbuds are **required to attend a minimum of 2 workouts** with their mentor and the animal they are bringing to the fair. Species leaders will sign off on the Cloverbud Mentor Form, and the form will be due with final fair sign-ups by August 15.

Cloverbuds have the option to use a 4-H mentor’s cat, dog, rabbit, or horse, or they may bring their own. If they choose to bring their own, the animal **will not be housed** at the St. Joseph County Grange Fair. It must be brought to the fairgrounds in an appropriate cage/trailer and then returned home following the specific show. **Exception:** If a Cloverbud brings their own horse to be shown, a [Cloverbud Stalling Request Form](#) may be submitted by August 1 for review by the Cloverbud Committee.

As per the [Michigan 4-H Cloverbud Learning Guidelines](#), all 4-H volunteers must work within the guidelines of the “Cloverbud Show-Type Experiences” section to ensure all youth’s safety.

5-year-old Cloverbuds, per the state program policy, “must be directly accompanied one-on-one by a parent, guardian, or adult volunteer who is on foot holding the animal’s halter or lead to maximize safety.” 5-year-old Cloverbuds are **only eligible to show a cat, dog, horse, or rabbit** with an adult over the age of 18.

6- or 7-year-old Cloverbuds may exhibit any of the above-listed animals. In the dairy feeder, goat, sheep, and swine projects, the Cloverbud **must** use an animal that is already being exhibited at the fair by an older 4-H member (mentor). **Exception:** Open class goats may be used, but a 4-H mentor must be present. The Cloverbud must be accompanied by the 4-H mentor in the show ring, and the mentor should serve in a supporting role.

Since safety is of the utmost priority, MSU Extension staff or 4-H volunteers within the species who do not feel that an activity is safe for the youth involved have the right, and are encouraged, **to remove the youth from an unsafe situation.**

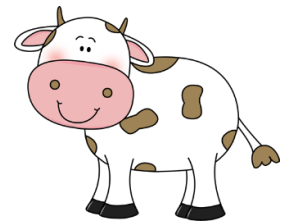
CATS:

- A Cloverbud may exhibit one (1) cat in Cloverbud Cat Showmanship at the St. Joseph County Grange Fair.
- The Cloverbud cat show will be held on Thursday, September 17, 2026. This will be an educational, NON-COMPETITIVE showmanship show with exhibitors receiving a Cloverbud participant ribbon.
- The Cloverbud may participate using their own cat or a 4-H member's cat that has been approved by the Cat Cloverbud Coordinator, **Shelly Starr**.
- All general guidelines regarding the dress code of exhibitor, vaccinations, condition, and behavior of animals will be followed as printed in the St. Joseph County 4-H, FFA, & Other Youth Fair Book.
- All Cloverbuds must be directly assisted one-on-one by a current 4-H member who is 12-19 years old, parent, guardian, or adult volunteer.
- The Cloverbud will have a one-on-one opportunity to meet with a Judge to discuss their project and answer age-appropriate questions about the project as determined by the Judge, Superintendent, or MSU Extension 4-H Program Coordinator.



DAIRY FEEDER STEERS:

- Cloverbuds will show in one (1) showmanship class at the St. Joseph County Fair, immediately following the 4-H Dairy Feeder Showmanship classes on Tuesday, September 22, 2026.
- Cloverbud Dairy Feeder Showmanship class is for an educational, activity-centered experience. This class will be a NON-COMPETITIVE class, and each Cloverbud will receive a Cloverbud participant ribbon.
- The Cloverbud must team up with a mentor - a current St. Joseph County 4-H exhibitor who is 12-19 years old.
- Cloverbud **MUST** have their mentor with them during the showmanship class.
- Cloverbud (or parents) are responsible for identifying the 4-H dairy feeder project member with whom the Cloverbud will team up.
- All general guidelines regarding the Dairy Feeder Showmanship class will apply to Cloverbuds as printed in the St. Joseph County 4-H, FFA, & Other Youth Fair Book, including dress code.
- Cloverbud may not participate or share in the 4-H auction.
- Any 4-H dairy feeder project animal may be used for the Cloverbud showmanship class with the permission of the 4-H exhibitor, but must be approved by the Dairy Feeder Cloverbud Coordinator, **Connie Myers**.



DOGS:

- A Cloverbud may exhibit one (1) dog at the St. Joseph County Grange Fair.
- A Cloverbud may show in two (2) classes - Obedience and Showmanship.
- The Cloverbud dog show will be held on Saturday, September 19, 2026. This will be an educational, NON-COMPETITIVE showmanship show with exhibitors receiving a Cloverbud participant ribbon.
- The Cloverbud may participate using their own dog or a 4-H member's dog that has been approved by the Dog Cloverbud Coordinator, **Katy Myers**.
- All general guidelines regarding workout requirements, dress code of exhibitor, vaccinations, condition, and behavior of animals will be followed as printed in the St. Joseph County 4-H, FFA, & Other Youth Fair Book.
- All Cloverbuds must be directly assisted one-on-one by a current 4-H member who is 12-19 years old, parent, guardian, or adult volunteer.
- The Cloverbud will have a one-on-one opportunity to meet with a Judge to discuss their project and answer age-appropriate questions about the project as determined by the Judge, Superintendent, or MSU Extension 4-H Program Coordinator.



GOATS:

- Cloverbuds will show in one (1) showmanship class at the St. Joseph County Fair, immediately following the 4-H Goat Showmanship classes on Monday, September 21, 2026.
- Cloverbud Goat Showmanship class is for an educational, activity-centered experience. This class will be a NON-COMPETITIVE class, and each Cloverbud will receive a Cloverbud participant ribbon.
- The Cloverbud must team up with a mentor - a current St. Joseph County 4-H exhibitor who is 12-19 years old.
- Cloverbud **MUST** have their mentor with them during the showmanship class.
- Cloverbud (or parents) are responsible for identifying the 4-H goat project member who the Cloverbud will team up.
- All general guidelines regarding the Goat Showmanship class will apply to Cloverbuds as printed in the St. Joseph County 4-H, FFA, & Other Youth Fair Book, including dress code.
- Cloverbud may not participate or share in the 4-H auction.
- Any 4-H or Open Class goat project animal may be used for the Cloverbud showmanship class with the permission of the exhibitor, but must be approved by the Goat Cloverbud Coordinator, **Tarina Jansen**.



HORSES:

- A Cloverbud may exhibit a maximum of three (3) horses at the St. Joseph County Grange Fair.
- A Cloverbud may show in walk or walk/trot classes only in the following divisions: **Showmanship, Equitation, Gymkhana, Driving, In-Hand, or Costume class**.
- Cloverbud horse classes are for educational, activity-centered experiences. All Cloverbud classes will be NON-COMPETITIVE classes, and each Cloverbud will receive a Cloverbud participant ribbon.
- If a Cloverbud brings their own horse to be shown, that horse will NOT be housed on grounds, unless a [Cloverbud Stalling Request Form](#) has been submitted by August 1 and approved by the Cloverbud Committee.
- All project animals and Cloverbud members must be approved by either the Cloverbud specialty leader or their club leader. This approval must be turned in to the Cloverbud specialty leader, **Katlyn McCollough**, by August 1. For driving, Cloverbud must be approved by the driving specialty leader, **Bobbi Jo Newland**, and turned in by August 1.
- Cloverbud horse project exhibitors are REQUIRED to wear ASTM-or SEI- approved helmets for all horse experiences as per the Michigan State University Youth Program 4-H Cloverbud program policy.
- All Cloverbud horse project participants must be directly assisted one-on-one by a current 4-H member who is 12-19 years old, parent, guardian, or adult volunteer who is on the ground as opposed to being mounted on another horse holding the animal's halter or lead to maximize safety.
- For driving, a parent, guardian, or adult volunteer must be seated in the cart with the Cloverbud member.
- All project animals must have appropriate papers and follow the same check-in procedure as other 4-H project animals, as stated in the St. Joseph County 4-H, FFA, & Other Youth Fair Book (i.e., negative Coggins test).



RABBITS:

- Cloverbuds will show one (1) rabbit in a showmanship class at the St. Joseph County Fair, immediately prior to the 4-H Rabbit Showmanship classes on Sunday, September 21, 2026.
- Cloverbud Rabbit Showmanship class is for an educational, activity-centered experience. This class will be a NON-COMPETITIVE class, and each Cloverbud will receive a Cloverbud participant ribbon.
- The Cloverbud may participate using their own rabbit or a 4-H member's rabbit, with the approval of the 4-H member, but must be approved by the Rabbit Superintendent, **Nancy Mangus**.
- If a Cloverbud brings their own rabbit to be shown, that rabbit will **not** be housed on grounds, but shall be checked in at a designated time on the day of the rabbit show at the designated location.
- All Cloverbuds must be directly assisted one-on-one by a current 4-H member who is 12-19 years old, parent, guardian, or adult volunteer. A 4-H Rabbit Volunteer will be present at the table for each age group.
- All general guidelines regarding the Rabbit Showmanship class will apply to Cloverbuds as printed in the St. Joseph County 4-H, FFA, & Other Youth Fair Book, including dress code.
- Cloverbud may not participate or share in the 4-H auction.
- The Cloverbud will have a one-on-one opportunity to meet with a Judge to discuss their project and answer age-appropriate questions about the project as determined by the Judge, Superintendent, or MSU Extension 4-H Program Coordinator.



SHEEP:

- Cloverbuds will show in one (1) showmanship class at the St. Joseph County Fair, immediately following the 4-H Seep Showmanship classes on Tuesday, September 22, 2026.
- Cloverbud Sheep Showmanship class is for an educational, activity-centered experience. This class will be a NON-COMPETITIVE class, and each Cloverbud will receive a Cloverbud participant ribbon.
- The Cloverbud must team up with a mentor - a current St. Joseph County 4-H exhibitor who is 12-19 years old.
- Cloverbud **MUST** have their mentor with them during the showmanship class, and all lambs must be shown with a halter.
- Cloverbud (or parents) are responsible for identifying the 4-H sheep project member with whom the Cloverbud will team up.
- All general guidelines regarding the Sheep Showmanship class will apply to Cloverbuds as printed in the St. Joseph County 4-H, FFA, & Other Youth Fair Book, including dress code.
- Cloverbud may not participate or share in the 4-H auction.
- Any 4-H sheep project animal may be used for the Cloverbud showmanship class with the permission of the 4-H exhibitor, but must be approved by the Sheep Cloverbud Coordinator, **Fawn Hostetler**.



SWINE:

- Cloverbuds will show in one (1) showmanship class at the St. Joseph County Fair, immediately following the 4-H Swine Showmanship classes on Monday, September 21, 2026.
- Cloverbud Swine Showmanship class is for an educational, activity-centered experience. This class will be a NON-COMPETITIVE class, and each Cloverbud will receive a Cloverbud participant ribbon.
- The Cloverbud must team up with a mentor - a current St. Joseph County 4-H exhibitor who is 12-19 years old.
- Cloverbud **MUST** have their mentor with them during the showmanship class.
- Cloverbud (or parents) are responsible for identifying the 4-H swine project member with whom the Cloverbud will team up.
- All general guidelines regarding the Swine Showmanship class will apply to Cloverbuds as printed in the St. Joseph County 4-H, FFA, & Other Youth Fair Book, including dress code.
- Cloverbud may not participate or share in the 4-H auction.
- Any 4-H swine project animal may be used for the Cloverbud showmanship class with the permission of the 4-H exhibitor, but must be approved by the Swine Cloverbud Coordinator, **Virginia Trattles**.

