

COUNTY FAIR BEST OF SHOW

2026 COMPETITION GUIDE

It's your moment to shine!
Enter today.

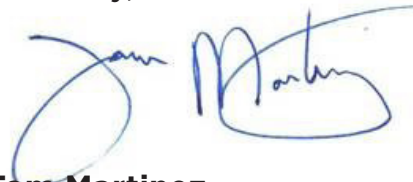
For more than 170 years the California State Fair has been a constant showcase of the talents and achievements of the people of California. Entering into the California State Fair's 2026 Competitive Exhibits Program allows you the opportunity to showcase your abilities, and revel in your accomplishments!

The California State Fair's friendly competitions are designed to acknowledge the best of the Golden State. Our Competitive Programs inspire talented Californians, as well as highlight the latest advances in technology, agriculture, and industry.

More than 750,000 visitors are expected at the State Fair this summer. Your work is an integral part of the State's celebration, and we look forward to seeing your talents on display during the annual State Fair from July 17 to August 2.

We encourage you to enter today and begin making lasting memories for yourself, and for the hundreds of thousands of State Fair patrons!

Sincerely,



Tom Martinez

Chief Executive Officer

GOVERNOR

Gavin Newsom

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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

February 2026

2026 California Fair Season

Fairs showcase the best of California, highlighting our spirit and creativity, and celebrating our agricultural heritage through competition and community. Through exhibitions and other fair offerings, Californians gain a deeper appreciation for the effort, skill, and care that sustain our food systems and support rural communities.

Although we celebrate the annual fair season, with events that bring Californians together in honor of agriculture, fairgrounds throughout the year serve as gathering places that strengthen our communities in both celebration and times of hardship. They bring people together to share, to learn, and to help one another when it matters most.

Fairgrounds and fairs are the landscape of so many happy memories for generations of Californians. This season, we show our gratitude for the countless people who put in the time and energy needed to keep these traditions alive and meaningful year after year. We all look forward to a safe, successful, and memorable 2026 fair season.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gavin Newsom", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gavin Newsom

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January 26, 2026

On behalf of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, I am delighted to welcome you and to thank you for your involvement as we look ahead to the 2026 fair season. Each year, our fairs bring people together from every corner of our state to celebrate agriculture, community, and the dedication of those who make it all possible.

The heart of every fair lies in its people: families, volunteers, youth leaders, and countless others who share their talents and passions. Your participation as exhibitors strengthens these connections, turning each fair into a place where learning, collaboration, and pride in California agriculture come to life.

We are especially grateful for the young people who engage through 4-H, FFA, Grange, and other youth programs. Their enthusiasm and commitment represent the future of agriculture, inspiring the next generation to value hard work, stewardship, and innovation. The skills they develop through these programs, such as leadership, responsibility, and community service, extend far beyond the fairgrounds and enrich the entire state. These experiences are supported by the very spaces that make them possible, which continue to serve their communities long after the fair season ends.

Our fairgrounds are more than event spaces; they are year-round centers of community life. They host educational workshops, local markets, and cultural celebrations that bring people together and strengthen our shared sense of belonging. During emergencies, they also serve as critical response and recovery sites, underscoring their role as essential community infrastructure. These roles highlight the enduring partnership between our fairgrounds and the exhibitors, volunteers, and communities that keep them thriving.

We recognize and deeply appreciate the effort, care, and time you invest in preparing for the fair. Your commitment ensures that these traditions continue to thrive and that agriculture remains at the heart of California's identity.

Thank you for your continued involvement and support. We look forward to another successful fair season and to celebrating the incredible spirit of California's agricultural community together.

Yours truly,

Karen Ross
Secretary



IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO KNOW

Contact: Sandi Hurtgen Montiero
Expo Events Account Manager
Phone: (916) 263-3149 & E-mail: entryoffice@calexpo.com

The California State Fair July 17 - August 2, 2026

The California State Fair has always been the awe-inspiring showcase of the state's finest, and ever since the first fair in 1854, California has upheld this tradition. People come from all over to witness the competition and innovation that our exhibitors produce. We continue to add new and exciting competitions to our competitive programs to showcase California's very best!

Why enter the Competition?

The County Fair Best of Show competition provides the opportunity to not only compete, but meet with like minded exhibitors. You will see the best of the best representing their county, citrus and district fairs competing to be the very best! This competition allows you to learn while having a great time.

COMPETITION OVERVIEW



This competition provides the opportunity to not only compete, but to meet with like-minded exhibitors. See the best of the best representing their county, citrus and district fairs competing to be the very best!

Who Can Enter & Entry Fees

Entry in the California State Fair County Fair Best of Show competition is open to California residents only. **Entry fees are NOT refundable.**

\$12.00 - Large & Small Animal Master Showmanship and Junior Sheep Lead

How to Enter

1. Go to **CalExpoStateFair.com/competitions** and click on the **Best of Show** icon under the competitions page and follow the instructions. Use a Visa or Mastercard to pay entry fees. Upon completion of entry, **mail or email as a PDF, your Detailed Receipt with all required signatures** to the Livestock Office. Entries are not accepted until Detailed Receipt is received with all required signatures.
 - a. When registering, please consider how you input your information. It is a direct source for the publishing of names and titles for Award Recognition & Publications. Please pay special attention and use proper spelling, capitalization, full names of cities/counties, no abbreviations and correct contact and mailing outlets.
2. **Best of Show entries** must be submitted online prior to **11:59 PM on July 1**. Detailed Receipts are due **July 3** in our office.

Detailed Receipts may be mailed, hand-delivered or scanned and emailed as a PDF document to **entryoffice@calexpo.com**.

Deliver or Mail to:

Administration Building
California State Fair Entry Office
1600 Exposition Blvd.
Sacramento, CA 95815

3. Take a moment to look through this Competition Guide to see which competition your entry is eligible to compete in. Note that sessions expire after 20 minutes of inactivity, so “save to cart” if you plan on leaving the computer for more than 20 minutes. Everyone must register as a new exhibitor when logging in for the first time in any given year. If you entered last year, you would still enter as a first-time exhibitor.
4. Submission of entry implies acceptance of all rules and conditions as stated in this competition guide. Contact the California State Fair Entry Office with any questions concerning entry policies or procedures.
5. If you have any questions, please contact the **Livestock Entry Office**:
Phone: (916) 263-3149 & E-mail: entryoffice@calexpo.com
6. This Competition Guide is posted in advance and is subject to any action that may cause revision or curtailment of classes, divisions, sections, awards, premiums, or regulations as listed.

Credential Admission Pass Policy

Each Livestock, Small Animal, and Sheep Lead Class exhibitor not already receiving credentials will receive 2 credential admission passes and one parking pass. No Exceptions. Lost or stolen passes will not be replaced.

BEST OF SHOW SCHEDULE

(schedule subject to change)

The California State Fair would like to accommodate all exhibitors; however, due to the nature of the County Fair Best of Show program and the close proximity of entry deadlines to the opening of the State Fair, entry deadlines must be adhered to. If you have any questions, please call our Entry Office at (916) 263-3149 prior to traveling a great distance.

Wednesday, July 1

All Large Animal Master Showmanship, Small Animal Master Showmanship, and Sheep Lead entry forms and fees must be submitted online.

Friday, July 3

Detailed Receipt is due for all Large Animal Master Showmanship, Small Animal Master Showmanship, and Sheep Lead entries.

Friday, July 17

4:30 PM Entrants in the Junior Sheep Lead Class Competition must check-in at the Livestock Office no later than 4:30

5:00 PM Judge Junior Sheep Lead Class Competition (L2)

Sunday, July 19

9:00 AM Entrants in the Large Animal Master Showmanship Competition must check-in at the Livestock Office no later than 12 Noon

12 Noon Judge Large Animal Master Showmanship Competition (L1)

Friday, July 24

4:00 PM Entrants in the County Fair Best of Show Small Animal Master Showmanship Competition must check-in at the L1 Show Ring before 4:00 pm on this date.

5:00 PM Judge County Fair Best of Show Small Animal Master Showmanship Competition (Livestock Barn L1)

RULES & REQUIREMENTS

1. This competition is open to the “Best of Show” winners from throughout the California Fair industry. Only exhibitors winning a Best of Show at their county, district, citrus fair or other approved events are eligible to compete. Exhibitors competing in Sheep Lead do not need to qualify in order to participate. (See Entry Requirements for each competition.) For clarification, only those fairs under the auspices of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, Division of Fairs and Expositions will be recognized for entry.
2. It is not necessary to be entered in any other California State Fair Competition to be eligible for entry into the County Fair Best of Show Competitions.
3. Unless specifically stated otherwise in this Competition Guide, exhibitors must be the bona fide owner of any entry they exhibit in the California State Fair. The Fair management may demand such proof of ownership as it deems necessary in each case.
4. Detailed Receipts must be endorsed with an authorized signature from the local County, District or Citrus Fair Manager. Sheep Lead entries do not need the fair manager’s signature. (See specific competitions for any other required signatures.) The Detailed Receipt must obtain all required signatures and return the signed form to our office by the required deadline, **July 3, 2026**. Entries are not accepted until the Detailed Receipt is received by our office.
5. All signatures and information necessary to determine that an entry is eligible must be on the entry form. It shall be the responsibility of the exhibitor to correct all deficiencies in connection with entries or exhibiting which are required of them by the rules printed in this Competition Guide. All deficiencies must be corrected by the entry delivery date. Awards will not be made for entries on which deficiencies have not been corrected. No entry will be judged if fees and or forms are outstanding on that entry.
6. Sheep lead is open to all junior exhibitors. If exhibitor did not win at their county fair, the fair manager’s signature is not required.
7. Any and all decisions of the judges shall be final. The judge’s decision on awards cannot be protested. Protests will be considered only if there has been a violation of California State Fair rules. No exhibitor shall be allowed, under any circumstances, to interfere with the judge or judges, during their adjudication, or with the Fair’s staff and management.

LARGE & SMALL ANIMAL MASTER SHOWMANSHIP

Entry Requirements

ENTRY FEE: \$12.00 per class, Entry fees are nonrefundable.

This competition will not replace the regular State Fair 4-H Master Showmanship or FFA Round Robin Showmanship.

Show Dates

Large Animal: Sunday, July 19

Small Animal: Friday, July 24

Livestock Representative

Sandi Hurtgen Montiero

(916) 263-3149

entryoffice@calexpo.com

Master Showmanship Awards

The following Awards of Excellence will be awarded in each designated County Fair Best of Show Master Showmanship Class. Awards will be selected based on the American System of Judging.

First Award State Fair Rosette & Large Golden Bear Trophy

Second Award State Fair Rosette

Third Award State Fair Rosette

Fourth Award State Fair Rosette

Fifth Award State Fair Rosette

Master Showmanship Divisions & Classes

DIVISION 69 - LARGE ANIMAL MASTER SHOWMANSHIP

Only exhibitors winning senior level Master Showmanship or senior level Round Robin Showmanship in livestock competitions (beef, sheep, swine, horse, dairy cattle or all goats (dairy and meat) excluding pygmy goats) at their county, district or citrus fair, between **June 27, 2025 and July 1, 2026** are eligible to compete. Fairs occurring after July 1, 2026 shall be eligible for entry in the 2027 California State Fair Master Showmanship Competition.

1. 4-H Master Showmanship - Class shall include beef, sheep, swine, market goats and dairy goats.
2. FFA Master Showmanship - Class shall include beef, sheep, swine, market goats and dairy goats.

DIVISION 72 - SMALL ANIMAL MASTER SHOWMANSHIP

Only exhibitors winning senior level Master Showmanship or Round Robin Showmanship in Small Animal Competitions (poultry, rabbit, cavy, pygmy goat and dog) at their county, district or citrus fair, between June 27, 2025 and July 1, 2026, are eligible to compete. Fairs occurring after July 1, 2026, shall be eligible for entry in the 2027 California State Fair Master Showmanship Competition.

1. 4-H Master Showmanship - entrants shall compete together. Exhibitors must have won first place in the Senior Master Small Animal Showmanship competition at the local fair (Class shall include rabbits, pygmy goats, poultry, covies, and dogs)
2. FFA Master Showmanship - entrants shall compete together. Exhibitors must have won first place in the Senior Master Small Animal Showmanship competition at the local fair (Class shall include rabbits, pygmy goats, poultry, covies, and dogs)

Note: Independent Juniors and Grange must pick Class 1 or 2 although exhibitors under 13 years must enter Class 1.

Only exhibitors qualifying in composite livestock or Small Animal Showmanship competition such as Master Showmanship or Round Robin Showmanship shall compete. Second place winners, alternates or Reserve Champion Showmanship winners are not eligible.

Exhibitors winning novice, junior or intermediate Master Showmanship or Round Robin Showmanship at their county, district or citrus fair are not eligible to compete in the County Fair Best of Show Showmanship Competition.

An exhibitor can represent only one fair. If an exhibitor qualifies to represent more than one fair the exhibitor must choose which fair to represent. Exhibitors may only qualify for one class. Entrants who have won both 4-H and FFA Master Showmanship and/or Open Junior Master Showmanship competitions at the local fair, are eligible to enter under only one class in this competition.

Grange and Independent Junior exhibitors must have competed and won in a competition with a minimum of three (3) exhibitors competing and representing a minimum of three (3) species (i.e., beef, sheep, swine; horse, beef, meat goat, dairy goat; etc.). This rule applies to large and small animals.

It is not necessary to be entered in any other State Fair competition to be eligible for this competition.

All exhibitors competing in this event must be accompanied by a parent, guardian, adult, 4-H leader or FFA advisor while on the fairgrounds.

All 4-H exhibitors must wear the official State Fair 4-H uniform at the time of judging. All FFA exhibitors must wear the official State Fair FFA uniform at the time of judging. All Grange exhibitors must wear the official Grange uniform at the time of judging. Independent Juniors Exhibitors must wear whites.

The State Fair shall provide all animals for these competitions. The State Fair shall provide all show equipment such as: halters, show sticks, canes, etc., for these competitions.

Entrant Check-in Procedure

Large Animal

Large Animal Master Showmanship participants must check in at the Livestock Office by **9 AM, Sunday, July 19, 2026**. Judging of the Large Animal Master Showmanship Competition will be held in the Livestock Pavilion, L1, on Sunday, **July 19, 2026 at 12 Noon**.

Small Animal

Exhibitors must check-in at the L1 Show Ring by 4:00 p.m., July 24, 2026, Judging of the Small Animal Master Showmanship competition will be held in the Livestock Pavilion, L1, on July 24, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.

American System of Judging

Each entry in a Class is judged in comparison to the other entries in the Class. Entries are placed first, second, third, etc., according to relative merit. There will be no more than one first, second, third, etc., per class.



JUNIOR SHEEP LEAD CLASS

Entry Requirements

ENTRY FEE: \$12.00 per class, Entry fees are nonrefundable.

Deadline Entry: July 1, 2026 & Detailed Receipts: July 3, 2026

Any 4-H, FFA, Grange and Independent exhibitor is eligible to compete in the Junior Sheep Lead Competition.

All exhibitors shall compete together (boys, girls, 4-H, FFA, Grange and Independent).

This competition will be held in place of the County Fair Best of Show Junior Sheep Lead Class.

Livestock Representative

Sandi Hurtgen Montiero
(916) 263-3149

Awards

AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

The following Awards of Excellence will be awarded in each designated Junior Sheep Lead Class. Awards will be selected based on the American System of Judging.

First Award of Excellence Special Award & State Fair Rosette

Second Award..... State Fair Rosette

Third Award..... State Fair Rosette

No monetary premiums are awarded in this program by the California State Fair.

Commentary

Entrants must provide their commentary sheet based on the qualifying event, if applicable. The commentary must be typed double-spaced on one side of an 8 ½" x 11" sheet of paper and written in "Third Person." The commentary must be included with the Detailed Receipt due on July 3, 2026. A copy of the commentary must also be available upon arrival if requested by Fair Management.

Age Requirements

Exhibitor age requirements for this competition are the same as for those of 4-H, FFA and Grange membership.

Juniors and Seniors will compete together in one class.

All exhibitors competing in this event must be accompanied by a parent, guardian, 4-H leader, FFA advisor or Grange leader while on the fairgrounds.

It is not necessary to be entered in any other State Fair competition to be eligible for this competition.

Sheep Requirements

Each entrant shall be responsible for providing their own sheep (any age ewe or wether, no rams), or arrange to borrow one from a 2026 California State Fair Junior Sheep exhibitor. It shall be the sole responsibility of said entrant to make any and all arrangements pertaining to borrowing an animal from a junior exhibitor entered and competed in the 2026 California State Fair Junior Sheep Show. Each participant must designate at the time of entry, whether they will be bringing their own animal or borrowing one from another exhibitor.

If the entrant chooses to provide their own animal, a veterinarian provided by the Fair shall check all animals upon arrival and before unloading for proper health certificates, signs of communicable disease, external parasites, any unsightly disease condition and any wounds, open or closed, that may be contagious. Any animal found to be in an unsafe or unsightly condition will be quarantined in a designated area and then dismissed from the grounds as soon as possible. The State Fair veterinarian's decision shall be final. Please refer to "Animal Health Rules" and "Animal Care Rules" in the Junior Livestock Guide.

Entrant Responsibilities

Sheep must be conditioned, fitted and trained to show at halter. All grooming preparation for the show must be done by the entrant.

Equipment

All other necessary equipment must be supplied by the entrant.

Garment Requirements

All necessary garments must be supplied by the entrant. Entries will be judged on the mode of dress selected, which must be appropriate, attractive and lend elegance to the class. Entrants must furnish their own outfit, which must be made of either 100% wool or a minimum of 70% wool and no more than 30% synthetic fiber.

Outfits do not have to be made by the entrant.

Garments worn in this competition are not eligible for any clothing class at the California State Fair. If qualified at the county, district or citrus fair, the exhibitor must wear the same outfit.

Entrant Check-in Procedure

All Junior Sheep Lead participants must check-in at the Livestock Office by 4:30 pm on Friday, July 17, 2026. Judging of the Sheep Lead Competition will be held in the Livestock Pavilions, L2, on Friday, July 17, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.

Those exhibitors choosing to provide their own animal and are not entered in the regular State Fair beef, sheep, swine and market goat classes must arrive by Friday, July 17, 2026 by 8:00 a.m.

For those exhibitors that are not already entered in regular State Fair Livestock Competitions, please contact the Livestock Office by July 3, to confirm the arrival of animal and stalling request.

Lead Class Criteria

Junior Lead Class will be judged according to the following criteria:

General Appearance

- Coordination of ensemble (use of wool)
- Suitability of style
- Presentation of garment
- Coordination of outfit with sheep
- Eye appeal

Showmanship

- Ability to lead
- Handling of sheep
- Appearance of animal

Personal Presentation

- Poise Gracefulness

Class Offered

DIVISION 78 - JUNIOR SHEEP LEAD CLASS

Class

1. Junior & Senior Exhibitors

Sponsor Award

California Wool Growers Association

Susan Taylor
PO Box 68
Catheys Valley, CA 95306

The California Wool Growers Association will provide a Lambskin Rug to the Best of Show Sheep Lead Winner.

2026 GENERAL RULES

California Exposition & State Fair

General Rules are subject to any action that may cause revision or curtailment at any time before each competition or judging. Upon submission of online entry and signature on detailed receipt if applicable, the exhibitor acknowledges that they have read and understood these rules and all others of the competition in which they enter. Furthermore, exhibitors are responsible for viewing, reading and understanding all revisions or curtailments on the State Fair's website before the competition. Exhibitors may request an additional copy of the most current rules by contacting the entry office: email: entryoffice@calexpo.com.

Exhibitors Entry Responsibilities

STILL EXHIBITS

1. All submissions and information necessary to determine that the exhibit is eligible must be submitted online, uploaded if necessary, and entry fees paid by Visa or MasterCard by the entry deadline.

It shall be the responsibility of the exhibitors to correct all deficiencies in connection with entries or exhibiting which are required of them by the rules printed in the Competition Guide.

Entries will not be judged if deficiencies have not been cleared or fees paid.

LIVESTOCK & AG MECHANICS

2. All signatures and information necessary to determine that the exhibit is eligible must be submitted online for Junior Livestock, Open Livestock, Ag Mechanics, Best of Show and Small Animals.

All Livestock, Small Animal, Best of Show and Ag Mechanics exhibitors will be required to submit a Detailed Receipt with all required signatures within one week of the entry deadline.

It shall be the responsibility of the exhibitor to correct all deficiencies in connection with entries or exhibiting which are required of them by the rules printed in the Competition Guide.

A deficiency penalty of \$20 per entry must be paid for any deficiency or fees which have not been paid by July 1 for Livestock and Small Animals, this includes not returning the detailed receipt by the due date.

Entries will not be judged if the detailed receipt is not received.

This rule shall apply to all equine shows with a requirement for their fees, forms, and signatures being submitted by the entry deadline date within each equine section of any competition guide.

ENTRY LIMIT

3. The State Fair management shall reserve the right to limit entries displayed and/or exhibited to facilities available and may limit the number of entries made by an exhibitor.

Entries may also be limited or not displayed based on size, content, subject material, or for any reason determined not in the best interest of the California State Fair.

Any return of entries under this rule will be done at the sole discretion of the State Fair management.

OWNERSHIP OF ENTRY

4. Unless specific provisions are otherwise made in the Competition Guide (printed or on the web), exhibitors must be the bona-fide owner of their entries.

The management may demand such proof of ownership as it deems necessary in each case.

EXHIBITOR LIABILITY

5. Each exhibitor will be solely responsible for any consequential or other loss, injury or damage done to, or occasioned by, or arising from, any animal or article exhibited by him/her.

Exhibitor agrees to indemnify, and hold harmless, the State of California, California Exposition & State Fair and all officers, agents, and employees thereof from all claims, demands, damages, costs, expenses, or liability costs suits or actions of every name, kind and description, brought forth from or on account of, injuries to death of any person including but not limited to workers, and the public, or damage to property resulting from the performance of the exhibitor or entries.

Neither party shall request apportionment of liability by a jury.

NO GUARANTEE

6. The State Fair cannot guarantee that all exhibition requirements of an entry can be provided (i.e., electricity, a showcase, a pedestal, special lighting, special location, total space requirements, water source, computer services, or any other special requirements).

DIVISION/CLASS CANCELLATION

7. The State Fair management reserves the right to return entries and cancel any division or class in which, in its judgment, the entries are insufficient to secure adequate competition.

ENTRY ERRORS

8. State Fair management is not responsible for finding errors in entries.
9. Exhibitors are responsible for any and all errors which were submitted online.
10. No exhibitor shall be entitled to an award which has been disallowed as the result of his own error.
11. The State Fair management shall withhold the payment of awards for exhibits that are ineligible and may recover awards that have been paid for ineligible entries that are disclosed during post audits of State Fair records. However, exhibitors with a cause are entitled to question the validity of any disallowance. Such exhibitors should inform the State Fair management immediately, in writing, giving their name, address, complete description of the entry and the reason for requesting reconsideration. Requests will not be considered later than ninety (90) days after receiving notice of disallowance.

SUBSTITUTION

12. Substitutions may be made in still exhibits only in the same division of the original entry of the original exhibitor, and may be made only if completed by the entry delivery date.
13. Substitutions for livestock must be in the same division of the original entry by the original exhibitor.
14. Substitutions must be made at the time of check-in to avoid penalty.
15. Fees may apply for substitutions in excess of two per division.
16. The State Fair or the judge may disqualify or transfer to the correct division or class any entry which is not a true representative of the division or class in which it is entered.

PREVIOUSLY ENTERED ENTRY

17. Any non-animal (still exhibit) entry that has been exhibited at a previous California State Fair is not eligible for entry in the 2026 California State Fair.

VERIFICATION

18. Online submissions will receive a confirmation once entries are submitted.

RESPONSIBILITY

19. The State Fair shall not be responsible for exhibits remaining on the fairgrounds after designated release times.
20. All Still Exhibits or display elements remaining on the fairgrounds after designated release time will be treated as abandoned property and will be disposed of on or before September 1 of the same year.

REMOVAL OF ENTRIES

21. An exhibitor may not remove his or her entry from the California State Fair once it has been accepted.
22. **Judged or Accepted:** Entries must be on exhibit at the official opening of the State Fair or at any other time specified in the Competition Guide and shall not be removed from the fairgrounds prior to the release date printed in the guide, except (at the discretion of the State Fair management) in cases of positive evidence of sickness, accident and/or death, or other circumstances that are in the best interests of the State Fair.

DISHONORED CHECKS

23. A penalty of \$25.00 per dishonored check must be paid if a check for payment of entry fees or other applicable fees is refused by the bank. Only cash, certified check or money orders are acceptable for the penalty payment.

ENTRY FEES

24. Entry Fees are NON-REFUNDABLE.

LATE ENTRIES

25. Late Entries may be accepted at the sole discretion of the California State Fair under the following conditions:
 - a. Late Entries will **NOT be accepted** for **California Crafts, Fine Art, Student Showcase, Photography, Canning & Baking, and County Fair Best of Show Master Showmanship**.
 - b. If the department accepts late entries, the completed entry form(s) and other completed required forms, signatures and full payment for all required fees must arrive at the California State Fair Entry Office (by Certified Mail, Hand Delivery or Electronically) no later than five

calendar days after the official entry deadline requirement of the competition.

For example, if the Official Entry Deadline is June 17, the last day and time a late entry may be eligible would be June 22 at 4:00 pm. If late entries arrive after 4:00 pm on that fifth day, they will NOT be considered.

- c. Open **Livestock Late Entries** will be accepted until July 8, 2026, with **an additional \$100 per entry**. Payment must be received no later than 5 pm on July 8, 2026.
- d. Extended Entry Deadline for Open Boer Goats, NDGA Nigerian Dwarf Goats and Open Pygmy Goat Shows will be July 8.
- e. All late entries must be accompanied with the entry fee as listed within the program in addition to a **late fee of \$20 per entry for all Junior Livestock and Open Livestock** entries and a **late fee of \$10 per entry for non-livestock competitions and small animals** (Small Animals and dogs). Acceptable forms of payment are Visa, Master Card, check or money order.
- f. Exhibitors who are already entered as exhibitors may add additional entries as long as the animal is already entered by paying a \$100 late fee plus the original entry fee.
- g. No entries will be accepted beyond the capacity of the facility.
- h. All other entry requirements as well as any rules, regulations and schedules shall apply.
- i. No entry is a guarantee of acceptance and it is the exhibitor's responsibility to confirm that the State Fair has accepted any and all entries.
- j. The California State Fair expressly reserves the right to reject any and all entry forms for any reason whatsoever.

DESIGN

- 26. The California State Fair assumes total design control over the presentation of the exhibits.
- 27. Entries designed for hanging and not so equipped will be hung in a manner deemed appropriate by the State Fair.
- 28. No exhibit changes will be made once the entries have been displayed.
- 29. Once an entry has been received by the State Fair, no further handling of entry by exhibitor shall be permitted.

30. Relocation and final placement shall be accomplished by State Fair personnel.
31. Entries requiring assembly/disassembly must include detailed instructions and sketches for assembly/disassembly.
32. Instructions should indicate lifting points, unsecured parts and any other information required for such handling. Where necessary bank pins will be utilized to attach exhibits for display.

JUNIORS ENTERING SENIOR DEPARTMENT

33. All divisions and classes within Junior Departments are intended for Juniors exclusively. Entry into the Junior Department is regulated by age and youth organization requirements as outlined in this competition guide. In no case may a person, group or organization outside of these age requirements (younger or older) be allowed to enter and compete in the Junior department.
34. However, Juniors may elect to enter, exhibit and compete (animal or non-animal) in the Senior Department when the rules of that department, division or class allow for such. Such entries shall be restricted to:
 - a. A class for the exhibit that is not provided in the Junior Department.
 - b. Junior Livestock Exhibitors that officially enter and show in the Junior Livestock Show are eligible to compete in the Open Show as long as the same exhibit/animal is entered and shown in the Junior Show and the same exhibit/animal is entered and meets all Open Division entry deadlines and guidelines.
 - c. Open classes or divisions that allow for the participation of Juniors due to the open competition being a specialty, feature, regional or national show sanctioned by the State Fair and/or recognized organization. In this case, the Junior exhibitor must also enter and compete (with the same exhibit) in the current year's Junior department, division, class offered for the exhibit. This provision must be printed specifically within the rules of the feature show within this guide.
35. Anyone under the age of 18 who meets the California State Fair age requirements and is planning to exhibit in a Senior department must have their parent or legal guardian sign their detailed receipt.
36. If the exhibitor is required to be on the fairgrounds, the Junior must be supervised by their parent or legal guardian while at the State Fair.
37. Exhibit animals owned in partnership between Seniors and Juniors shall not affect Junior's eligibility when the Senior partner is the exhibitor.

STATE FAIR EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION

38. No employee of the State Fair will be permitted to enter an exhibit for competition. No person shall be an exhibitor or sign an entry form as an agent in any Division or Department in which the exhibitor is a department head, judge, or paid employee.

Disqualification

ENTRY DISQUALIFICATIONS/TRANSFERS

39. A complete exhibit eligible in more than one Division and/or Class shall be entered and judged only in the Division and/or Class for which it best qualifies.
40. The State Fair or the judge may disqualify or transfer to the correct Class (at his/her discretion) any exhibit which is not a true representative of the Division or Class in which it is entered.

It is not, however, the responsibility of the State Fair or judges to transfer an entry to the correct Division and/or Class.

DISQUALIFICATIONS

41. The State Fair management shall reserve the right to vacate, declare ineligible for competition, and/or order the removal of any entry which is not in the best interest of the State Fair, is unsightly, unhealthy, injured, lame, unsound, endangers public safety, violates the State Fair's Animal Welfare Policies, or has been entered in violation of these rules and regulations.
42. In the event, an entry or an exhibitor is disqualified for any rule or policy violation (including but not limited to practices or procedures that are unethical, those in violation of the State Fair's Residue Avoidance Program, DNA Testing Program and those not adhering to the State Fair's schedule for the program), any or all of the following actions may take place:
 - a. The entry or exhibitor that is disqualified will be declared ineligible and will not receive awards, premium money and/or any sale proceeds. Further, the exhibitor shall be responsible for payment of any fees, fines due or costs incurred by the State as a result of disqualification.
 - b. The owner/exhibitor and members of his/her immediate family will not be eligible to compete in subsequent California State Fair Programs. The extent and degree of future eligibility shall be determined by State Fair Management.

- c. State Fair Management reserves the right (but does not guarantee) to move entries up in placing after judging has taken place when an award void is created by a disqualification.
- This process of moving up judged entries shall only take place, however, when it is clear what the judge's placing would have been had the disqualified entry not been in competition.
 - For example, when a Champion is disqualified, the Reserve shall move up and be named the Champion; however, no other changes shall take place below the Reserve Champion. The same shall apply in the case of a class, section or division winner when a 2nd place has been clearly indicated by the judge.
 - If it is not possible to clearly determine a new placing, no change shall take place.
 - When a placing change does take place the entry moving up will receive all the awards, appropriate titles and all premiums of the disqualified entry but will not receive any of the original placing awards or premiums won in the second category. In other words, 2nd place will now receive 1st money and "no" entry will receive 2nd money.

COOPERATION

43. Exhibitors, their immediate family, leaders, advisors and agents thereof, not cooperating with security personnel or any other State Fair officials in all matters of policy, including but not limited to parking, stall/pen/space assignments and appearance, judging and/or animal care will have their entries canceled and will be ordered to remove their exhibit from the grounds immediately and forfeit all awards, premium monies, and sale proceeds. Failure to adhere to this rule will result in being banned from the State Fair.

PUBLIC DISTURBANCES

44. Exhibitors causing public disturbances, those who are uncooperative and/or unsportsmanlike, those not following good animal welfare practices as determined by management, or those found in violation of rules or in practices unethical or inimical with the State Fair program and/or policies/procedures shall be penalized by forfeiture of premiums awarded, any and all awards, payments of fines and/or damages to State Property, privileges, and/or disqualification at this or subsequent State Fairs as may be deemed appropriate by the State Fair Management and/or the Board of Directors.

Further, if the exhibitor and/or exhibitor's adult supervisor, parent or family member's actions are deemed to be illegal, inhumane or unethical to livestock; the proper authorities will be notified for further investigation by those agencies for possible prosecution and/or civil penalties.

PROBATION

45. Any exhibitor found in violation of any rule may be placed on probation for one year or longer if State Fair management deems appropriate.

Judging

JUDGING

46. The judge(s) shall award first, second or third place, etc., according to merit and if without merit the judge shall make no award under any circumstances. This rule applies whether there are one or more entries in the class.

JUDGE/EXHIBITOR INFORMATION

47. No person shall act as a judge in any Division in which he/she or a member of his/her immediate family is an exhibitor, is in charge of an exhibit or division, in charge of a group of exhibitors, or is a member of a group of exhibitors.

JUDGE/FRATERNIZATION/CRITICISM

48. Judges should avoid unnecessary fraternization with exhibitors. No person shall be allowed, under any circumstances, to interfere with the judge, or judges, during their adjudications, or with the State Fair's staff, or to offer any criticism of any exhibit of another.

Violators of this rule shall be excluded immediately from the judging area and competition and be subject to such additional penalties, including cancellations of awards, as the State Fair management shall consider appropriate.

49. No exhibitor shall receive more than two cash awards in any one class. This rule shall have no bearing on consideration in the placing of entries by judges. Ribbons shall be presented in the order of placing by the judges.

The management shall, however, pay third money to the fourth winner, etc., when the third winner is prohibited from receiving third cash award under the provisions of this rule. (Any entry or exhibit in which one or more members of the family described above has a financial interest shall be included in the limitation of not more than two cash awards per class.)

50. Management reserves the right to combine or to divide classes in a manner it deems necessary in order to assure adequate competition.

In the event of a show change, as a result of this rule, or where classes are established after the close of entries, premiums and awards will be distributed, divided or eliminated in a manner as deemed necessary by State Fair Management.

JUDGE'S DECISION

51. The judge's decision is final.
52. The judge's decision cannot be protested.

CHIEF JUDGE POLICY

53. A Chief Judge will be assigned by the State Fair, for still exhibits only, to mediate in the event there is a conflict during the judging process. All decisions of the Chief Judge shall be final and may not be protested.

PROTESTS

54. **For still exhibits and horse only** - Any protest must be submitted in writing and given to the State Fair's staff member responsible for the Competitive Program in question within 24 hours of the time of the cause of the protest.

Protests must be based on a violation of rules, and you must reference the rule in your protest. The judge's decisions on awards cannot be protested.

No protest shall be considered by the management unless accompanied by a deposit of \$300.00 (Cash, money order or certified check).

The deposit shall be forfeited if the protest is not upheld.

Protests shall be adjudicated by State Fair management.

State Fair management will consult with a member of the California State Fair Board of Directors who shall be designated by the Chairman of the Board.

The decision of State Fair Management shall be final and unappealable. See special livestock rules for protests in the Livestock Program.

55. Under no circumstances will any entry which has been previously judged be "rejudged" due to the disqualification or removal or another entry.

Awards

SPECIAL AWARDS

56. Special Awards contributed by businesses or individuals are offered in some California State Fair Competitive Programs. These Special Awards are the obligation of the contributor/donor. The California State Fair is not responsible for redemption of these awards.

TAX LAWS

57. It is the responsibility of the exhibitor to investigate and adhere to State and Federal tax laws/regulations regarding premiums paid, and awards received.

As an out-of-state payee who earns \$1500 or more, Cal Expo must withhold 7.5% for State taxes.

You may request an exemption or a reduction of this withholding by filling out and submitting the Nonresident Withholding Waiver Request, California Form 588.

PREMIUM AWARDS

58. Awards, ribbons, tags or cards have no value as payment. Premiums are paid only from the records of the judges' sheets.
59. Premium checks will be issued as soon as auditing, drug testing, if applicable, and processing can be completed. If checks are not received by November 15, please phone or write the State Fair.
60. Checks must be **cashed within six months** of the date of issue.
61. Exhibitors have until December 31 of the same year, to claim checks returned to the State Fair. Checks will not be reissued after this date.

Age Requirements

JUNIOR EXHIBITORS MEMBERSHIP AGE AND AFFILIATION REQUIREMENTS

62. Juniors who have been 4-H, FFA or Grange project members within 60 days (120 days for horse and market beef) prior to the fair are not eligible to compete in that project as Independent exhibitors or enter project(s) under a different organization. (Please refer to 4-H/FFA/Grange/ Fairs & Expositions Youth Agreement at <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/fairsandexpositions/> for more information).

If, however, the project or entry was not produced or conducted under the supervision of the organization, the Junior must enter as an Independent Junior for that project or entry.

Example: If a 4-H member wishes to enter a Market Lamb competition and the Youth Canning & Baking competition, in a situation where they

are only enrolled in a 4-H Sheep project, the entry is as follows: Enter 4-H for the Market Lamb competition and Independent Junior for the Canning & Baking competition (even though the exhibitor is a 4-H member, the baked goods project was not produced or conducted under the supervision of the organization).

63. Non-designated “Junior” shows or divisions: If a show or division offered is not specified as 4-H or FFA, Junior exhibitors who are enrolled in a 4-H or FFA project relating to that show or division must still enter as members of their respective organizations and follow all applicable rules and regulations of the department.
64. All 4-H exhibitors must be 9 years old by December 31, 2025, and not be older than 19 years old as of December 31, 2025. Exhibitors must also meet age and membership requirements of their organizations when entering as a member of an organization. Exhibitors must also meet the ownership and all other requirements of the competition to be eligible for entry.

INDEPENDENT JUNIOR AND GRANGE AGE REQUIREMENTS

(Rules 65-68 apply to Indoor non-animal Exhibits only.)

65. Independent Junior and Grange exhibitors may enter California State Fair classes and divisions in indoor (Still Exhibit) competitions if they are 5 years old as of January 1, 2026.
66. Independent exhibitors are eligible to compete/exhibit through December 31 of the year in which they turn 18 years of age.
67. Grange exhibitors are eligible to compete/exhibit through December 31 of the year in which they turn 19 years of age. Exhibitors must meet the ownership and all other requirements of the competition to be eligible for entry.
68. Independent Still Exhibit Exhibitors: Persons, who are “not” 4-H, FFA or Grange members may enter the Junior competitions provided they meet age requirements for youth exhibitors in the competition they are entering. Exhibitors who enter Independent of an organization must not be older than 18 years old as of January 1, 2026.

FFA AGE REQUIREMENTS

69. FFA members must be enrolled in a state-approved agricultural education program at their school to participate as an FFA exhibitor and may participate as members as early as entering into the seventh grade, until

the end of the calendar year following the year of graduation from high school.

INDEPENDENT AND GRANGE ANIMAL EXHIBITORS

70. Persons who are “not” 4-H or FFA members may enter the Junior Livestock Show provided they meet age requirements for animal exhibitors at the State Fair.

These Independent and Grange exhibitors shall enter 4-H or FFA classes as follows:

- a. Independent and Grange Junior exhibitors who are 13 years of age or under (as of show day) shall compete in the appropriate 4-H divisions only.
- b. Independent and Grange Junior exhibitors who are 14 years of age (as of show day) or are incoming freshmen in high school shall be placed by State Fair Management in either 4-H or FFA divisions.
- c. Independent Junior exhibitors are eligible to enter 4-H or FFA Showmanship. Independent Juniors are not eligible for County or Chapter Groups or Outstanding Exhibitor.

MEMBER STANDING AND OWNERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

71. Juniors who are members of 4-H, FFA or Grange must be in good standing with their organization and projects entered as such must have been conducted under the supervision of the organization and must be owned by the exhibitor (unless otherwise stated).

ELIGIBILITY QUESTIONS

72. Any questions as to the eligibility of an entry shall be determined by the exhibitor’s advisor (for 4-H, FFA or Grange), instructor (for Student Showcase) or parent or guardian (for Independent Juniors). Notwithstanding the foregoing, the State Fair shall make the final determination of eligibility in all cases.

4-H AGE REQUIREMENTS

73. The levels of membership for 4-H are aged based. Each level is defined as follows:
- a. **Primary Level:** Must be 5 years old as of December 31, 2025. Primary membership ends when members qualify as junior members. Exhibitors who are under nine years of age on or before December 31, 2025, are not eligible to compete in animal competitions at the California State

Fair.

- b. **Junior, Intermediate & Senior:** Must be 9 years old by December 31, 2025. Exhibitors are eligible to compete/exhibit through December 31 of the year in which they turn 19 years of age.
- c. **Home Schooled Children:** Age criteria, as listed in 1 and 2, only will apply to home-schooled children. A grade level will not be a consideration. (Exhibitors who are under 9 years of age as of December 31, 2025, are not eligible to compete in animal competitions at the California State Fair.)

INDEPENDENT JUNIOR AND GRANGE AGE REQUIREMENTS

(This rule applies to Animal Exhibitors)

- 74. Independent Junior and Grange animal exhibitors must be 9 years old as of January 1, 2026, and are eligible to compete through December 31 of the year in which they turn 19 years of age. Independent Juniors and Grange exhibitors shall enter 4-H or FFA animal classes.

NO DUAL AFFILIATION IN COMPETITION

- 75. Under no circumstances may an exhibitor show the same species or project in more than one Division of the Junior Department.

ADULT SUPERVISION REQUIREMENT

- 76. All Junior exhibitors, required to be on the State Fairgrounds, must be accompanied and supervised by an adult while on the State Fairgrounds. Instructors, advisors, leaders and other adults in charge of Junior exhibitors shall be responsible for their conduct at all times.

FFA SUPERVISION REQUIREMENTS

- 77. All FFA exhibitors entered as such must be supervised by their agricultural instructor.

Any deviation from this rule must be taken up with the State Agriculture Education unit representative in charge.

The CATA Curricular Activities Code shall govern the conduct and eligibility of FFA exhibitors and their projects.

UNIFORMS

- 78. Uniform requirements for Independent youth shall be the same as required for 4-H and FFA members excluding insignia.

The official show uniform for animal exhibitors at the California State Fair

will be white pants, trousers or dress and a white blouse or shirt.

79. No exhibit owned by a chapter or club, or conducted, as a joint project by two or more individuals is eligible in the Junior Department unless the division/class specifically states.

FREE SPEECH ACTIVITIES GUIDELINE

80. The California Exposition & State Fair (Cal Expo) hereby finds that these guidelines are intended to set forth in writing Cal Expo's long-standing policy governing the conduct of Cal Expo employees and exhibitors, as well as members of the public, under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution and Article I of the California Constitution, on Cal Expo's grounds.

These guidelines are not intended to enlarge upon nor create any rights guaranteed by existing law nor waive any defense or rights available to Cal Expo, nor do they represent any admission that the facilities of Cal Expo are open as a public forum.

It is the policy of Cal Expo to allow within the parameters set forth herein, reasonable access to its grounds and designated free speech expression zones for demonstrations for free speech activity as allowed by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution and Article I to the California Constitution.

For further information regarding Free Speech Activities at the California Exposition & State Fair please write to:

Chief of Police, California Exposition & State Fair
1600 Exposition Blvd, Sacramento, CA 95815

81. Should contractors, associations, clubs or individuals desire to arrange for beverages and food service, all such arrangements must be coordinated through Oak View Group Hospitality, the State's Master Food & Beverage Contractor. **No exceptions.**

Contractor shall be responsible for expenses related to these services if any. Alcoholic beverage service areas/facilities will only be allowed in designated locations. Only persons 21 years or older will be allowed to consume alcoholic beverages. Further, no alcoholic beverages may be brought onto the grounds. These products may only be acquired at OVG permitted locations on the grounds. Individuals that endanger themselves or others will be reported to authorities.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply to this guide

American System of Judging: Each entry in a class is judged in comparison to the other entries in the class. Entries are placed first, second, third, etc. according to relative merit. There will be no more than one first, second, third, etc. per class.

Danish System of Judging: Each entry in a class is judged on its own merit. Entries are placed first, second, third, etc., depending on points received based on the score card. There may be more than one first, second, third, etc. per class.

Senior Departments: California Fine Art, California Crafts, Canning & Baking, Photography, Commercial Wine, Commercial Craft Brew, Home Brew, California Cheese, California Olive Oil, Open Livestock by species and Open Small Animals by species.

Junior Departments: Youth Canning & Baking, Student Showcase, Ag Mechanics, Junior Livestock by species and Junior Small Animals by species.

Senior/Open Exhibitor: An exhibitor who is no longer eligible to be a Junior Exhibitor or enter a Junior Department.

Junior Exhibitor: An exhibitor who is a member of 4-H, FFA, Grange, or an Independent Youth Exhibitor who meets the requirements of Independent Junior divisions offered. See the specific show and General Rules for exceptions to this definition.

Entry Office: The California State Fair Entry Office is located at 1600 Exposition Blvd., Sacramento. Contact may be made by phone, mail, email or personal contact. Questions regarding competitions may also be directed to the Entry Office. (916) 263-3149 - entryoffice@calexpo.com.

Still Exhibits: All competitive exhibits which are typically indoor and not involving animals, such as art, quilts, foods, crafts, sewing, metalwork, jewelry, graphics, drafting, sciences, etc.

Livestock & Small Animals: All competitive exhibits which animals are the entry; such as beef, sheep, swine, dairy cattle, goats, llamas, cavies, rabbits, poultry, dogs, etc.

Online Entry: Commitment to enter and abide by rules.

Detailed Receipt: An official form used in submitting an entry/exhibit in the California State Fair. The Detailed Receipt is only required for Open and Junior Livestock, Small Animals, Best of Show and Ag Mechanic exhibitors.

Entry Fees: A fee charged to enter a competition. All entry fees must be paid online when entries are submitted.

Entry/Exhibit: Terms used to define the item entered in the competition or contest.

Entrant/Exhibitor: Terms used to define the person entering the competition.

Premium: A cash award is given to winners of the competition.

Department: Competition you wish to enter, i.e., California Crafts, Fine Art, Student Showcase, etc. which is comprised of similar shows.

Shows: Generalized sections of the competition.

Division: Categories within a show.

Class: Specific categories within a division.

Competition Guide: a printed or electronic (web) book, prospectus, or flyer which contains information for entry into the California State Fair competitions. Competition Guides can be a printed document or as an electronic document found on the California Exposition & State Fair website CalExpoStateFair.com.

Bona-fide Ownership of Exhibit - ownership is the state or fact of exclusive rights and control over property considered an entry or exhibit. This definition includes livestock, small animals, and horses although not limited to that type of property. Objects/products created or produced are also included as well as intellectual property. Proof of such ownership may be required by management.