

Date: February 5, 2026

To: All 4-H Swine Members, Leaders and Parents

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

Re: 2026 Swine Project Information and Updates

This is a quick update on the events that will take place for the 2026 fair season within the swine 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:

- **Purebred Market Hog Class:**
 - Limited to the following breeds: Berkshire, Chester, Duroc, Hampshire, Hereford, Landrace, Poland China, Spot, Tamworth, Yorkshire
 - Owner registration papers **MUST** be presented at June tagging.
 - The absence of papers will require the hog(s) to be shown in the crossbred division.
 - Each breed must have five (5) head participation to have an individual breed class, otherwise they will be shown in "All Other Breeds" class by weight.
 - Breed classes will compete by weight only. Barrows and gilts will not be shown separately.
 - There will be a Grand and Reserve Grand Champion Purebred Market Hog, and they will compete against the Grand and Reserve Crossbred Barrows and Gilts for an Overall Market Hog championship.
- **Take-home hogs** may be loaded out Saturday, September 26, from 11:00 p.m. to midnight. ALL hogs must be checked out with the Superintendent before being loaded.
 - 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.

Reminders:

**MSU EXTENSION
St. Joseph County**

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- **Countywide Tagging:** All swine will be tagged with a county tag at the countywide tagging events on **Wednesday, June 3, or Thursday, June 4**, 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the fairgrounds in barn 53. An 840 ID tag will be required for swine to exhibit at the St. Joseph County Grange Fair. It is the responsibility of the exhibitor to ensure their hog has official ID and the fair will no longer be providing 840 tags.
- **Live carcass weigh-in** will be Saturday, September 12, 2026, from 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.
 - Carcass hogs must weigh between 230 lbs. and 320 lbs.
- **Hog 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.

- Hogs weighing **less than 230 lbs. or more than 320 lbs.** are ineligible for exhibition at the fair and will be sent home at weigh-in.
- The St. Joseph County Grange Fair is a non-terminal fair. If a member chooses to take their swine animal home and it is NOT the Grand/Reserve Grand Barrow, Gilt, or Purebred, or Overall Market Hog, they may do so with the completion of the Animal Removal Authorization Form. This must be given to the Swine Superintendent, Kevin Yeager, by 8:00 p.m. on **Monday, September 21, 2026.**
 - Anything submitted after this deadline will not be removed from the sale bill.
- Each swine pen will use only shavings to bed with. Straw, bark, and sawdust are not permitted. Use of anything other than dry shavings could result in yellow/red tagging.
- From Saturday, September 18, through Sunday, September 27, **ALL leaders and members** are responsible for cleaning up after their hogs in and around the wash racks. Each 4-H Club will be responsible for one or more wash rack pen(s) for the entire week of fair.
 - Upon inspection, if the wash rack pen assigned to a club is NOT kept clean, the entire club will be held responsible, and a yellow tag may be given to each swine member of that club.
- Anyone is allowed to prepare animals for presentation for show. However, it is expected that the youth exhibitor **will actively participate** in the grooming of their project animal.
 - **Clipping Pigs:** All Pigs that are clipped must have at least 3/8 inch hair.
 - **Painting pigs is NOT allowed.**
- **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
Countywide tagging and registration	Wednesday, June 3 5:00 - 7:30 p.m. Or Thursday, June 4 5:00 - 7:30 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At Fairgrounds, Barn #53 Four market animals can be registered per member (any combination of gilts and barrows). Only two animals may be shown at the fair. If selected, one additional animal can be shown in the Carcass Contest Animals can be cross-registered within the immediate family.
Carcass Contest Hog Entries Due	Sign-up at tagging dates in June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forms will be available at tagging
Fair Registration Due	August 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed online in FairEntry
Live Carcass Weigh-in	Saturday, September 12 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At Farigrounds
Hanging Carcass Evaluation	Week of September 14 Date and Time TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At Bontrager's Custom Meat Processing
Fair Check-in and Weigh-In	Friday, September 18 3:30 - 7:30 p.m. or Saturday, September 19 8:00 - 11:00 a.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 230 - 320 lbs weight requirement for animals. All hogs will be weighed at the time of unloading. No re-weighing. Any swine not within the weight range will be sent home at weigh-in.
Evaluation	Sunday, September 20 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All members are required to complete the evaluation to be eligible to show their animals at the fair.
4-H Market Swine Show	Monday, September 21 9:30 a.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member meeting before the show at 9:00 a.m. Showmanship (oldest to youngest), Market Gilts, Market Barrows, Cloverbuds, Grand Drive Gilts, Grand Drive Barrows
4-H Market Livestock Sale	Thursday, September 24 10:30 a.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sale order: Lambs, Beef Cattle, Dairy Market Seers, Gallon of Milk, Dairy Feeder Steers, Hogs
Early Load Out	Saturday, September 26 11:00 p.m. - midnight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take-home animals may be loaded <u>after</u> checking out with the Superintendent
Animal Loading and Barn Clean-out	Sunday, September 27 5:30 a.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members must help clean and put away the pens once pigs are shipped out.