



RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
4-H Youth Development
New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station



“Red, White & Blue
Ribbons...Celebrating 250
Years the 4-H Way!”



2026 CAPE MAY COUNTY 4-H FAIR
4-H Member Guidelines
July 16th, 17th and 18th

<u>TABLE OF CONTENTS</u>	<u>PAGE(S)</u>
4-H Project Guide (General Guidelines).....	1
Procedures for Entering 4-H Projects.....	3
Divisions and Awards	4
Behavior Agreement & Code of Conduct	Back Cover

ANNOUNCING THE 2026 4-H FAIR THEME . . .

“Red, White & Blue Ribbons...Celebrating 250 Years the 4-H Way!”

Membership in the 4-H Youth Development Program provides youth with many opportunities for personal growth:

- Gaining expertise in one or more project areas
- Making lifelong friendships
- Learning leadership skills by being a good officer in your club
- Practicing how to give effective and confident speeches
- Showcasing your projects at the 4-H Fair
- Discovering the importance of keeping accurate and useful records
- Helping others by organizing and participating in community service projects
- Participating in countywide, regional, state and even national activities and competitions

PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

Some special contests and awards are presented during the Fair’s Opening Ceremonies on Thursday, July 16th after the parade. Remaining awards for outstanding project entries and other honors will be presented at the annual County Awards Picnic on **Sunday, September 13th**. All awards are sponsored and/or provided by local donors. In this way, community groups and individuals are provided the opportunity to participate in recognizing the accomplishments of our youth. You will find a list of available awards under **“Divisions & Awards”** starting on page four.

4-H PROJECT GUIDE

Please read all 4-H Fair information, rules and instructions carefully before entering projects and activities.

- All exhibits are to be made, raised, grown, or cared for by youth during the current 4-H year under the direction or approval of an adult leader.
- Entries may be submitted as individual or group.
- Projects made in special 4-H Partnership activities and events (for example, the Nature Center of Cape May and Ocean Academy) are also eligible for entry as individual or group entries.
- Additional exhibits or demonstrations may be included at the discretion of the 4-H staff.
- Projects made as a part of a workshop, school program, or special activity are eligible for entry as individual or group entries.

2. **Awards:** The Judging Committee reserves the right to determine whether or not an award will be presented in any division. **Best in Show and Best in Show Runner Up recipients receive an award and a ribbon. Projects must receive an excellent “Danish” score to be considered for Best in Show or Best in Show Runner Up.** Best in Show awards, Grand and/or Reserve Champions, etc. may be subject to the number of entries in the division, as well as the number of entries judged to be excellent. Best in Show Runner Up, Junior and/or Senior Awards may be added to any division, if deemed appropriate by the Judging Committee. The committee reserves the right to move a project entry to another division if deemed necessary.

3. Exhibitors may enter as many divisions as they want as long as all rules and regulations are followed, deadlines for entries are met and entries receive approval of the 4-H agent/leader. Refer to the guidelines in this booklet under each project area. Be sure to read all divisions. You will find that there are many divisions that a 4-H member may enter regardless of their project area. Don't forget you can enter interesting hobbies, photography, artwork, etc. and show the public just how talented our members are. All eligible individual and group project entries will be accepted, but cross-entering is not permitted. **The same 4-H project may not be entered for judging or exhibit more than once.**

4. All individual entries by youth in grades K – 3 as of September of the last school year are considered to be 4-H Cloverbud entries for exhibition and **not eligible** for judging. They will not be judged but will receive special recognition for participation / exhibition. 4-H Cloverbud **club** projects **are** eligible for entry and judging. Please limit Cloverbud entries to 5 per child.

5. For a regular 4-H member to receive an individual award in any event which requires judging, the youth must have been registered in grades 4-13 (1 year out of high school) as of September of the current school year. Juniors are grades 4-8; seniors are grades 9-13.

*Additionally, all 4-H members in grades 4-13 wishing to participate in competitive events at the Cape May County 4-H Fair must be **Members in Good Standing** by:

- Being officially registered in the Cape May County 4-H Program by January 1, 2026.
- Having attended 70% of their 4-H club meetings.
- Having completed a 4-H Public Presentation.
- A note regarding **Project Record Books:** Cape May County 4-H will once again collect project record books after the fair. The deadline is **August 14**. However, market animal project members must show up-to-date record books when they enter their animal.

* *SPIN clubs and other special groups exempt.*

6. 4-H Club or group exhibits are encouraged. Ask for the group exhibit tag when you check in.

7. In 4-H we use the **Danish System of Judging**. We do not compare one person's work to another's. We judge against a standard of excellence. A judge looks to see whether requirements are met. One advantage of this system is that everyone whose work meets the standards can receive a ribbon. What is more, if all entries are top notch, then all can receive blue ribbons. The purpose of using the Danish Judging System is to give every 4-H'er the recognition they deserve for the work they do. It also helps young people recognize the need to improve their skills. **Best in Show awards may only be presented to projects receiving an excellent (91-100) rating.**

8. **PROJECT ANIMAL ENTRIES:** Check the “4-H Fair Horse Show Guidelines” and “4-H Fair Livestock Program Guidelines” for specific guidelines for project animal entry, animal health and care, rules, deadlines, and clean up. Check with your 4-H leader if you have questions.

PROCEDURES FOR ENTERING 4-H PROJECTS

GENERAL

Projects for Exhibit in the Lockwood 4-H Youth Center

These entries are judged prior to the Fair and must be submitted on:

Monday, July 13 • 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. • Lockwood 4-H Youth Center

- All entries must have an **exhibit tag and a score sheet** attached to the 4-H project, stall or cage (filled out completely and correctly). These items will be available at the registration tables during check-in.
- Cross entering is **not** permitted. You must choose one division per project.
- All projects must be entered by the deadlines and not be removed until after 8 p.m. Saturday night.
- **All project items must be picked up by Sunday afternoon, July 19 at 3:00 p.m.** Project items may be disposed of if not removed by Sunday afternoon following the close of Fair.

New for 2026

- **Clothing & Textiles – Division 5** (Replaces Clothing & Textiles pre-fair judging)
Open to anyone who has completed a sewing project. Submit items with completed exhibit tags and score sheets.

PRE – FAIR JUDGINGS

Taste of 4-H Foods Judging – Division 9

Monday, July 9 • 6:00 p.m. • RCE Office Building

Open to 4-H youth members and adult volunteers. Submit entries by 6:00 p.m., and complete exhibit tags and score sheets. Recipe cards are required; table settings are encouraged.

OPEN DIVISION

NEW! 4-H Fair Open Division – Home Preserves, Handwork/Sewing, Art and Photography Divisions are now available to the public; check-in is July 13 from 5-6 pm.

Spread the word to your non4-H friends, family and neighbors!

Cape May County 4-H is committed to positive youth development.

The 4-H Fair is a volunteer-driven event. Please respect the gift of time our volunteers offer to make this annual showcase possible.

Participants are expected to abide by the rules and guidelines of the 4-H Fair and the **4-H Code of Conduct** (see back page).

Should infractions of these rules occur, disciplinary action, including the loss of awards, may result. No awards will be removed from youth without the approval of 4-H staff.

DIVISIONS & AWARDS

SPECIAL CONTESTS AND AWARDS

THE RUTH STEENLAND MEMORIAL 4-H LEADER AWARD

This very special adult leader award has been named for Ruth Steenland, who dedicated decades of her life to the 4-H Youth Development Program in Cape May County. Now it's time for you to thank a 4-H volunteer for all of his or her work by nominating them for this award. 4-H club members can get together and write one nomination for their 4-H leader or submit them individually. Individuals or clubs can also nominate any volunteer in the 4-H program who helps to make the program successful.

Using the form enclosed in this mailing, tell us why you feel your leader deserves the award. Send the form to the 4-H Office, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, 4 Moore Road, DN703, Cape May Court House, NJ 08210-1601. Winners will be chosen for their accomplishments and what you tell us about their outstanding work. A volunteer may only receive this award once. The deadline for submitting a nomination form is **FRIDAY, JUNE 26**.

KYLE P. RIGGINS MEMORIAL COMMUNITY SERVICE YOUTH AWARD

This new youth award is dedicated to the memory of Kyle P. Riggins, a former 4-H member in Cape May County and funded by his family. Kyle believed strongly in performing community service, raising thousands of dollars during his years in 4-H for St. Jude Children's Hospital. Kyle's family would like to encourage others to continue the excellent example he set. Any 4-H youth in good standing 4th grade through one year out of high school is eligible. The recipient of this \$100 cash award must demonstrate evidence of impactful community service within the past year. This award will be presented at the fair's opening ceremonies. Submit the completed application included in this mailing by **FRIDAY, JUNE 26**.

4-H MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

The 4-H Foundation, Inc. sponsors the annual 4-H Memorial Scholarship for alumni who have completed at least one semester of higher education or technical / vocational training and are enrolled for the next semester. Scholarship recipients are announced during Opening Ceremonies at the 4-H Fair. This scholarship is funded by donations from various organizations within 4-H as well as private donors. Please contact the 4-H office for donor information and applications. We must receive your application by **FRIDAY, JUNE 26**.

PET SHOW

Any child or adult, including non-4-H'er's, may enter this FUN event. Registration is at 9:00 a.m. Saturday. The show begins at 10:00 a.m. Classes (categories) are available for numerous pets, including cats, dogs, bunnies, gerbils and other unusual pets. No animals already being exhibited at the fair may be shown. Entry fee is \$1.00 per class. Come join the fun with your favorite pets. The amazing **GRAND PRIZE** is one year's supply of **free food** from our sponsor, Smeltzer & Sons! See the enclosed flyer for details.

CLUB GARDEN AWARDS

Award: Best in Show Overall 4-H Club Garden
Award: Best Theme 4-H Garden

4-H club gardens will be judged on Thursday, July 16 after 3:00 pm. Awards will be announced and presented during the fair. Each winner receives a ribbon and a \$50 award.

HORSE CARE AND MANAGEMENT AWARD

Each year at the Cavalcade of Winners a special award is given to a 4-H member who has done an outstanding job in the care and management of their equine project. If you feel that you have earned this award, please complete and submit the application that you will receive with your **4-H Fair Horse Show Guidelines**. Applications are due **FRIDAY, JUNE 26**.

STALL MANAGEMENT AWARDS

Each 4-H horse project member and their club's stalls will be evaluated on neatness, safety, and care. A monetary prize is awarded to the individual and the club with the best cared for and managed horse stalls. Check out the guidelines; your club may be a winner.

HORSE AND LIVESTOCK ROUND ROBIN GRAND CHAMPION

Showmanship grand champions of the following six species represented in the horse and livestock area of the fair: horse, hog, goat, lamb, poultry and rabbit compete in the Horse & Livestock Round Robin to determine the ultimate showmanship grand champion of the 4-H Fair.

CELEBRATING OUR CLOVERBUDS

Cloverbuds from throughout the CMC 4-H Program will be honored at the County Awards Picnic in September.

GENERAL EXHIBIT DIVISIONS

DIVISION I – FRUITS AND VEGETABLES:

Award: Best in Show Fruit and Vegetable

Each entry must consist of a single variety correctly named. All entries must be clean, trimmed and displayed neatly. Entries include all vegetables and all fruits. **Please submit 3 specimens of a single fruit or vegetable variety for judging. Any project involving growing plants is eligible.**

DIVISION 2 – FINE ARTS and CREATIVE CRAFTS

**Awards: Best in Show and Runner-up Fine Arts
Best in Show and Runner-up Creative Crafts**

Classes in this division include:

Class A - Fine Arts: Entries include paintings, sculpture, drawings, etc.

Class B - Creative Crafts: Entries include all handmade craft items, ceramics, pottery, wood, paper crafts, fabric crafts, castings, candles, nature crafts, etc. All entries must be properly mounted, framed and/or displayed. **Please include "Class A" or "Class B" on your exhibit tag.**

DIVISION 3 - PHOTOGRAPHY

**Awards: Junior Best in Show and Runner Up Photography
Senior Best in Show and Runner Up Photography**

All photographs must be taken during the current year. Exhibitors may submit more than one entry. Photos **must** be displayed appropriately; either matted and/or framed.

DIVISION 4 – CREATIVE WRITING

**Award: Junior Best in Show and Runner Up Creative Writing
Senior Best in Show and Runner Up Creative Writing**

This division includes original poetry, short stories, etc. Exhibitors may submit more than one entry.

DIVISION 5 - TEXTILES AND CLOTHING

(New for 2026: Judging will take place along with general project exhibits on July 13th)

Award: Best in Show Textiles and Clothing

Exhibitors may enter as many quality items as can be completed. Work **must** be constructed by the participant. Entries may include any item demonstrating sewing/construction skills. Entries will be judged for quality of construction.

DIVISION 6 – HOBBIES AND COLLECTIBLES

Award: Best in Show Hobbies and Collectibles

All articles must have been made or collected by the 4-H member. Entries include needlework, fishing, woodworking, and collections of items, etc.

DIVISION 7 – SCRAPBOOKS

Award: Best in Show Scrapbook

Any 4-H member or club may enter a collection of pictures or pictures with writings in scrapbook form. Entries may be on 4-H, an event, theme, or general topic.

DIVISION 8 – SHOE BOX ART OR FLOAT EXHIBITS

Award: Best in Show Shoe Box Exhibit

This division is for entries contained inside a shoe box. A “float” is a shoebox flipped upside down with the exhibit on top like a float in a parade. You select the topic or theme for your shoe box exhibit. All exhibits must be contained in a box no larger than 10” x 16”. Each shoe box must have a title displayed on the exhibit card. Exhibits will be judged on originality, neatness of materials and overall appearance.

DIVISION 9 – Taste of 4-H...The NEW Fair Foods Judging (Judged July 9)

**Awards: Best in Show Junior Taste of 4-H
Best in Show Senior Taste of 4-H
Best in Show Adult Taste of 4-H Savory
Best in Show Adult Taste of 4-H Sweet**

Entries must be finished when entered. No cooking is allowed after entries are dropped off. The deadline is 6:00 p.m. All entries will be judged at the pre-fair **Taste of 4-H** contest on July 9. Only foods evaluated at that time are eligible for Best in Show.

A recipe card **must** accompany each exhibit. Table settings and décor are not required but are encouraged and will be taken into consideration during judging. When entering homemade candy, cookies, muffins, biscuits etc., include at least four samples (one for the judge and three for photo display). Breads, pies, cakes, etc. must be entered whole for judging. They will be cut for evaluation and the remainder of the entry returned. Preserved foods (i.e. canning, freezing, jams, jellies, etc. or dried foods) may also be entered into this division. Perishable foods such as salads, specialty beverages, fresh fruit pies, and whipped cream items may be entered. A photo of the entry will be exhibited at the fair.

DIVISION 10 – MARINE SCIENCE

Award: Best in Show Marine Science

Any project related to marine organisms, habitats, resources, etc. may be entered in this division. Entries may be individual or group.

DIVISION 11 – NATURAL SCIENCE

Award: Best in Show Natural Science

Any project related to natural history, environmental science and natural resources may be entered in this division. Entries may include entomology, leaf collections, bird feeders, scrapbooks, journals, posters, wildflower collections/pressings, recycle/reuse projects, water cycle, conservation projects and natural products such as honey, etc.

DIVISION 12 – ROBOTICS ENGINEERING

Award: Best in Show Robotics

Any project related to the engineering, design and construction of robots may be entered in this division.

DIVISION 13 – BRICK ENGINEERING AND DESIGN

Award: Best in Show Brick Engineering and Design

Any project related to brick engineering or design, to include Legos and other brick construction, etc. may be entered in this division. Entries may be individual or group.

DIVISION 14 – MISCELLANEOUS SCIENCE

Award: Best in Show Miscellaneous Science

Any project related to science not covered in other divisions such as solar and electricity may be entered in this division. Entries may be individual or group.

DIVISION 15 – 4-H PARTNERSHIP EXHIBIT

Award: Best in Show 4-H Partnership Award

Any group, organization or individual involved in a partnership project with the 4-H program may enter an exhibit in this area. Eligible entries include a collection of items made as a part of partnership activities or an exhibit that tells a story of some aspect of the partnership with an individual or group outside of 4-H. Exhibits may be photos, news articles, stories, or actual items made as a part of the partnership. Must mention 4-H.

DIVISION 16 – BEST IN SHOW 4-H CLUB EXHIBIT: Lockwood 4-H Youth Center

Award: Best in Show

This division is for any 4-H experiences and activities that clubs would like to showcase from the current 4-H year. Exhibits in this area must have youth involved in preparation and design and have a group exhibit tag for judging. Winning club will receive a rosette ribbon and a \$50 prize. Cloverbud clubs may enter a club exhibit for judging.

DIVISION 17 – BEST IN SHOW 4-H CLUB EXHIBIT: Horse Barns

Award: Best in Show

Exhibits must be in place by 3:00 p.m. Thursday, July 16. Judging will take place on Thursday. Exhibits in this area must have youth involvement in preparation and design and have a group exhibit tag for judging. Winning club will receive a rosette ribbon and a \$50 prize.

DIVISION 18 – BEST IN SHOW 4-H CLUB EXHIBIT: Livestock Pavilion

Award: Best in Show

Exhibits must be in place by 3:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 15. Judging will take place on Thursday. Exhibits in this area must have youth involved in preparation and design and have a group exhibit tag for judging. Winning club will receive a rosette ribbon and a \$50 prize.

DIVISION 19 – HERPETOLOGY

**Awards: Best in Show and Runner Up Senior
Best in Show and Runner Up Junior**

All herpetology exhibits will be displayed in the Lockwood 4-H Youth Center and judged during the fair. All herpetology projects must be registered by May 1.

DIVISION 20 – SPECIAL FEATURE

Award: Best in Show Special Feature

Any other exhibits and displays may be entered to give all members an opportunity to exhibit work accomplished in a new, novel, or unique way not covered by any other divisions. Special Feature exhibits must have the approval of 4-H staff for entry.

DIVISION 21 – 4-H ADULT VOLUNTEER OR PARENTS

Awards: Best in Show Fabric Arts Best in Show Fine Arts
Best in Show Photography Best in Show Other

Any Cape May County 4-H adult volunteer or parent may enter this division. Please limit your entries to a maximum of five. Can be home preserves, crafts, artwork, etc.

DIVISION 22 – GENERAL EDUCATIONAL EXHIBITS

Award: Best in Show

Exhibit may be an individual or group entry. Teaches factual information and educates the general public on a topic.

DIVISION 23 – HORSE AND PONY

Grand Champion Model Horse	Reserve Champion Model Horse
Grand Champion Versatility	Reserve Champion Versatility
Best in Show English Rider	Best in Show Beginner English Rider
Best in Show Western Rider	Best in Show Beginner Western Rider
Grand Champion Western Grooming & Showmanship	Reserve Champion Western Grooming & Showmanship
Grand Champion English Grooming & Showmanship	Reserve Champion English Grooming & Showmanship
Outstanding Youth Sportsmanship in the Horse Area	Outstanding Horse Show Parent

All 4-H fair horse show classes are listed in the *“4-H Fair Horse Show Guidelines.”* All rules are contained in those guidelines and in the *“Cape May County 4-H Equine Program Horse Show Rule Book.”* Refer to the *“2026 NJ 4-H Championship Horse Show Rule Book”* for further guidelines.

DIVISION 24 – LIVESTOCK*

Grand & Reserve Champion Hog	Grand & Reserve Champion Hog Showmanship
Grand & Reserve Champion Lamb	Grand & Reserve Champion Lamb Showmanship
Grand & Reserve Champion Goat	Grand & Reserve Champion Goat Showmanship
Grand & Reserve Champion Rabbit	Grand & Reserve Champion Rabbit Showmanship
Grand & Reserve Champion Cavy	Grand & Reserve Champion Cavy Showmanship
Grand & Reserve Champion Poultry	Grand & Reserve Champion Poultry Showmanship
Grand Champion Waterfowl	Grand Champion Cow
Best Fur	Best Egg

*Awards depend on number of project entries.

Please check the *“4-H Livestock Program Guidelines”* for information before entering this division. **The following rules apply to ALL livestock entries:** All livestock exhibits must be raised and cared for by the 4-H member and must be registered with the 4-H Office by stated deadlines to be eligible for exhibit at fair.

New Jersey 4-H Code of Conduct

The primary purpose of the New Jersey 4-H Code of Conduct is to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants at 4-H sponsored events and activities. It applies to all participants, with participants defined as 4-H members, their parents/guardians, and volunteers.

As a participant in the 4-H program, I will:

- **Conduct myself in a courteous manner and treat members, parents, 4-H volunteers, Extension staff, judges and others with respect. Appropriate language and behavior are expected at all times.**
- **Respect and adhere to the rules and guidelines of the 4-H program including all those specific to a 4-H event or activity.**
- **Uphold an individual's right to dignity by supporting an environment of inclusion which welcomes involvement of participants from all backgrounds.**
- **Accept supervision and support from county and state 4-H staff while participating in the 4-H program.** This includes acceptance of supervision and support from appointed 4-H volunteers coordinating 4-H events and activities.
- **Obey local, state and federal laws.** Participants who fail to adhere to the New Jersey 4-H Code of Conduct are subject to a range of disciplinary actions. Such actions will be taken in compliance with the New Jersey 4-H Discipline Policy and Procedure. When appropriate, immediate corrective action will be taken at the 4-H event to ensure the safety and welfare of all participants. I understand if I fail to adhere to the above Code of Conduct, I will be subject to disciplinary action and potentially prohibited from attending and participating in the New Jersey 4-H Youth Development program.

Policy Adopted: January 2013



The Cape May County 4-H Youth Development Program
is a joint partnership of the Cape May County Board of County Commissioners
and Rutgers Cooperative Extension.