



Maryland 4-H State Rabbit Judging and Skillathon Contest Rules

Objectives of the 4-H Rabbit Judging and Skillathon Contest

The Maryland 4-H State Rabbit Judging and Skillathon Contest is held each year during the Maryland State Fair held in Timonium, MD.

The primary objective of the Maryland 4-H Rabbit Judging and Skillathon Contest is to provide an opportunity for youth enrolled in 4-H to demonstrate the breadth of their knowledge and understanding of animal science and management in a competitive setting where attitudes of friendliness and fairness prevail.

The Rabbit Judging and Skillathon Contest offers 1) judging classes in which contestants place four (4) animals in order of characteristic desirability in accordance with breed or class standards, and 2) age-appropriate quizzes and identification stations that are designed to test youth knowledge of the rabbit and rabbit industry. The practical application of the contestants' knowledge and skills is emphasized.

General Rules & Regulations

The following General Rules apply to all 4-H Judging Contests (Division U) held annually at the State Fair:

1. Only 4-H Members may compete in this division. 4-H Members may only compete in one State Fair Judging Contest (Sections I-V) per year.
2. All contestants must comply with "General State Fair Rules & Regulations", "General 4-H and FFA Rules & Regulations", these "Division Rules & Regulations" and the applicable "Section Rules & Regulations". Please note that these are only general rules, please refer to the State 4-H Judging Contest Guidelines & Procedures (available from the 4-H office) for additional information.
3. Contestants will participate according to their 4-H Age (as of 1/1/26): Junior (ages 8-10); Intermediate (ages 11-13), Senior (ages 14-18) - unless noted.
4. Entries will be made by the 4-H member in 4-HOnline at <https://v2.4honline.com> by July 31st and verified by the 4-H Extension Educator. **Counties/City may enter one (1) Team (consisting of 4 members) and an unlimited number of Individuals in each age division.** All will participate in the contest.
 - a. Verification that each 4-H Member has participated in a 4-H educational program will be made by the 4-H Extension Educator.
 - b. Selection/verification of contestants will be at the discretion of the 4-H Extension Educator.
 - c. Substitutions/Alternates: Alternates are not allowed. If a Team Member is not present on day of contest, one pre-registered Individual may be substituted.



- d. Team Members must be enrolled in 4-H in the same county/Baltimore City, exceptions are those 4-H Members that belong to a project club that crosses county/city lines (i.e., a tri-county livestock club). 4-H Members enrolled in such clubs may compete jointly as a team in that project area. The 4-H Extension Educator representing the Joint Team entry must notify the State 4-H Office by July 31, 2026.
 - e. Restrictions relating to college/vocational training for these contests are listed in the department.
 - f. There is a \$5.00 fee per participant for all judging contests. An additional \$10.00 lunch fee will be collected per participant in the Dairy & Livestock Judging contests.
5. A 4-H member who has represented Maryland on a team in a National 4-H Contest is ineligible for the State 4-H Contest in the same contest area. A 4-H member may not represent Maryland 4-H at an out-of-state competition as a member of more than one team in a given year.
6. Contestants will not be allowed to take books, notes or writing paper into the contest except cards as provided by the superintendent. Cell phones and other portable electronic devices are not allowed. While the contest is in progress there shall be no communication between the contestants or between a contestant and anyone else, except as directed by the superintendent or his representative. Contestants will be under the direct supervision of the group leader at all times.
7. Scoring: Unless otherwise noted, the top three scores of designated team members will determine the team score in the respective age divisions. All ties will be broken by the Superintendent using prescribed procedures.
8. Awards: Unless otherwise noted, all contestants (both team members and individuals) are eligible for individual awards. Ribbons and premiums will be awarded to the 20 High Individuals in each age division for each contest. Premiums: 1st (\$20), 2nd–10th (\$15), 11th–20th (\$5). Awards will be presented to the Team members in each age division for each contest as well as special awards (see each individual section).
- 9. All contests (except for the Dairy Goat Judging and Skills Event) will be held on Saturday, September 5, 2026.**
10. Contestants requesting a reasonable accommodation to participate in this event must indicate the need on the contest registration form in 4-H Online by the registration deadline. A reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment to a program that will enable a person who has a disability to participate in and/or benefit from the program. A parent/guardian of the contestant requesting an accommodation will be contacted by a Contest Manager to discuss reasonable accommodation requests. Accommodation requests cannot be accepted or modified on the day of the contest.
11. Participation in this event requires the 4-H member and his/her parent/guardian to agree to the terms and conditions of the Maryland 4-H Event Liability Release and Informed Consent Agreement. The agreement will be signed electronically during the contestant's event registration in 4-H Online.



Additional Contest Eligibility and Registration Information

1. Participants in 4-H activities at the Maryland State Fair must be enrolled as a 4-H member in Maryland and their enrollment recorded in 4-H Online by **July 1** of the current year. 4-H members must have passed their 8th birthday and must not have reached their 19th birthday on January 1 of the current year.
2. Only registered 4-H members may participate in the contest. Individuals participating in the statewide contest must be enrolled as a Maryland 4-H member for 2026 in 4-H Online by **July 1, 2026**. All contest participants must be registered for the event in 4-H Online by **July 31, 2026**. 4-H members not registered by the deadline will not be allowed to participate in the contest. Counties will be invoiced for entry fees based on the total number of registered participants from their programs.

Rabbit Judging and Skillathon Section Rules

1. There is a \$5.00 participant fee required for this event; there is no lunch fee as the contest will typically be finished by lunchtime.
2. **The contest will begin at 9:00am on Saturday, September 5, 2026 in the Horse Sales Pavilion.**
3. Contestants will rotate through the following stations:
 - a. Judging Classes
 - i. 4-class breeds judging
 - ii. 6-class breeds judging
 - iii. Meat class judging
 - b. Oral Reasons
 - i. Reasons preparation
 - ii. Reasons presentation
 - c. Knowledge/Skills Stations
 - i. Anatomy/Parts* (may include digestive, skeletal, reproductive and anatomy parts)
 - ii. Breed and variety identification
 - iii. Animal disqualifications
 - iv. Equipment identification
 - v. Written test*
4. Junior participants will not be asked to flip 6-class rabbits; these rabbits will be judged as sound.

*Content focus rotation: The recommended reading for the written test (for all ages) and sections on the digestive system and skeleton section (for juniors and intermediates) are broken down by year so members can focus on specific content each year. See the ***ARBA Guidebook to Raising Better Rabbits & Cavies Study Guide*** in the Appendix at the end of the Maryland State 4-H Rabbit Judging and Skillathon Contest Study Guide for the subject listing. Here is the schedule:

- a. Year A focus = 2025, 2028, 2031, 2034
- b. **Year B focus = 2026, 2029, 2032, 2035**
- c. Year C focus = 2027, 2030, 2033, 2036

Awards Program

Awards will be presented at the 4:00pm 4-H Judging Awards Program on Saturday, September 5, 2026 in the Cow Palace. Horticulture Judging, Poultry Judging, and Rabbit Judging and Skillathon Contest results will be presented during this Awards Program. The order of award presentations will rotate among the different contests each year.

Contest Resources

The information covered in this contest may be found in one or more of, but not limited to, the following references:

- *Maryland 4-H State Rabbit Judging and Skillathon Contest Study Guide (2025 Edition)* – Contact your UME County Extension Office.
- *ARBA Guidebook to Raising Better Rabbits & Cavies (2020 Edition)* – Individuals can purchase or get this book for free by joining ARBA. Questions on the written tests will only come from the reading material in this book. See <https://arba.net/product/guidebook-to-raising-better-rabbits-cavies/>
- *ARBA Standard of Perfection 2026-2030* - Published every five years, the Standard of Perfection is a valuable resource for the breeder/exhibitor. See <https://arba.net/product/standard-of-perfection/>
- *The Ohio State University Rabbit Learning Lab Kit* – Contact your UME County Extension Office. NOTE: The Maryland 4-H Inventory of Ohio 4-H Animal Science Learning Laboratory Kits contains a chart showing UME counties having Kits for various species; see the “Animal Science Resources for Volunteers” section of the Maryland 4-H Website at <https://extension.umd.edu/programs/4-h-youth-development/program-areas/animal-sciences/>

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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