



DEKALB COUNTY 4-H FLASHES

2026 WINTER LIVESTOCK EDITION



Livestock Possession Deadlines

The following dates are the 4-H possession deadlines for livestock projects:

January 1

Beef & Dairy Cows,
Goats-Milking Does & Meat
Does

February 1

Market Beef Steers & Heifers

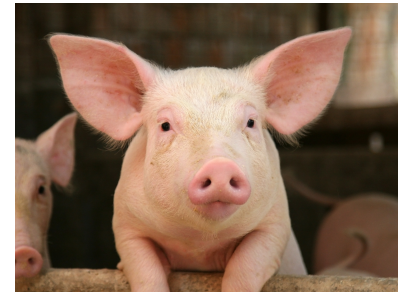
May 1

Horses and Ponies, Bucket
Calves, Beef or Dairy Calf,
Market and Breeding Sheep,
Dairy Heifers, Goats all other

June 1

Breeding Beef Heifers, Swine
-Gilts and Barrows, Poultry,
Rabbits

4-H'ers must be enrolled in the appropriate project no later than April 15 and have their animals in their own possession by the deadlines listed above.



**4-H Livestock Fair
July 31 - Aug 2, 2026
Sandwich Fairgrounds**

Beef Weigh-Ins

Individuals wishing to participate in the Illinois State Fair with a steer exhibit (Premiere program or otherwise) or in the DeKalb County 4-H Beef Efficiency program should mark their calendars for Sunday February 8 from 11:00-1:00PM for their cattle to be weighed and tattooed. Tattooing and weigh-in procedures will be conducted at Larson's Farm, which is located at 17520 Keslinger Rd., Maple Park. We will be working in the processing barn at this location.

This will be the only day available for steers to be weighed and tattooed for either the State Fair or the county Beef Efficiency program...so please plan to attend.

Important information for 4-H'ers taking an animal project

For members enrolled in dairy cattle, beef cattle, swine, sheep, and goat projects:

The YQCA is a livestock quality assurance program. All 4-H exhibitors of these animals will be required to certify in the YQCA program each year. Certification/Registration is done online at: yqcaprogram.org. or in-person on Tuesday, March 24 from 6:00 - 7:30 PM at the Farm Bureau building (Youth must still register online to attend). The YQCA program is for youth ages 8-21. The online version is broken into age divisions as follows: juniors 8-11, intermediate 12-14, senior 15-18, and young adults 19-21. This certification is needed each year with test out options of 1-3 years. The estimated cost online is \$12, and the cost in-person is \$3.

For members enrolled in horsed, rabbits, poultry, dogs, and cats:

The Quality Assurance and Ethics training is required for youth in horses, rabbits, poultry, dogs and cats. You only need to take it once in your lifetime. Those who don't complete the training will be removed from the animal science project and will not be eligible to exhibit at county fairs. The training is on Zsuite under the "Clover Academy" link on the left side. For detailed directions go to: <https://go.illinois.edu/QAECdirections>

Beef Efficiency

Once again, this year, the Cattlemen's Association will allow 4-H members to use their own steers in the Beef Efficiency Contest. By using your own steer, you can show it in both the efficiency class and the regular beef class at the 4-H Fair. Steers will be weighed in on February 8 with the state fair weigh-in. The contest is based on rate of gain, record book, ultrasound and the live class placings. Premiums are paid in each of these areas and, the overall winner receives a monetary award of \$200. Contact the Extension office to enroll in the program.

Bucket Calf

The Bucket Calf Class is a great opportunity to raise a small calf. The Bucket Calf Class is open to members 8 to 13 years and includes raising a small calf, keeping records and showing it at the Fair. Calves need to be born between Feb. 1 and April 1, 2026. NOW is the time to enroll in the Bucket Calf Program by contacting the Extension office. Record books will be distributed in February.

