

Jr Fair Rabbit Exhibitors and Parents Important Fair Information

Greetings,

We are excited for the 2026 Darke County Junior Fair Rabbit Show! As you prepare to exhibit junior fair rabbits at the Darke County Fair, the Darke County Rabbit Committee wanted to take this opportunity to remind you of some important rabbit project details.

Please obtain a Fair Book and be familiar with the rules for the Junior and Open Rabbit shows.

“I don’t/didn’t know” is not an excuse for not following the rules. If you have a question ask your advisor, a member of the rabbit committee, a Rabbit Department Jr. Fairboard member, or Craig Bowman (the Sr. Fairboard representative over the Rabbit Department).

To help our Rabbit Department at the Fair run smoothly we ask that if you signed up to exhibit rabbits at the fair, and do not plan to bring any rabbits to the fair, please contact Atlanta Moore at openentries@darkecountyfair.com, Betsy Petijean at juniorfair@darkecountyfair.com, or Morgan Aultman at 937-467-3095.

BEFORE THE FAIR

- Skillathon - The Rabbit Skillathon is a mandatory activity to be eligible to show and/or sell. All members with rabbit projects must participate in the Rabbit Skillathon. The Rabbit Skillathon is scheduled for July 21st from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m in the Swine Barn. Both activities will take place on the Darke County Fairgrounds. To receive a study guide packet please visit the NEW Darke County Jr Fair website at dcjrfair.com. The information about the skillathon is posted under the rabbit tab. Just a reminder, record books must be brought to the skillathon and will be scored. Prize money and banners will be awarded to the top 5 scorers in each age division of the skillathon. If you do not participate in the skillathon you have the option of writing an essay that is due August 1st to the Senior Fairboard Secretary's Office. The topic for Juniors (ages 8-11) is “Grooming and Preparing Your rabbit” and needs to be 250 words and or Intermediates(ages 12-14) and Seniors(ages 15 -18) “ Explain the purpose of the ingredients and nutrients on your feed tag and needs to be 500 words long in addition please provide a copy of your feed tag. Please note that if you write the essay you are not eligible for outstanding exhibitor.
- Mandatory Rabbit Tattooing for Market Rabbits - All market rabbits must be in the exhibitor’s possession by Saturday July 25th. All market rabbits must obtain a specific possession verification tattoo for the fair on Saturday July 25th, from 9:00 - 1:00 in the Rabbit Barn on the Darke County Fairgrounds. No tattooing will take place anytime before or after this time and date or at any other location. If you cannot bring your own rabbits at this time, find someone else who will bring them in for you to have them done. If your rabbit is excessively dirty or show signs of severe illness (as determined by the rabbit committee members present at tattooing) it may be denied a tattoo. Junior Fair market rabbit projects can be an ARBA recognized breed or a commercial type crossbred. Each member enrolled to exhibit rabbits may tattoo up to 10 fryers and 4 roasters.
- Rabbit Scholarship - The rabbit barn will be offering two scholarships to 2026 high school graduates for \$500.00. You must be a 2026 Junior Fair rabbit exhibitor. The applications are due August 1st and can be accessed at the NEW Darke County Jr Fair website at www.dcjrfair.com. The scholarship is posted under the rabbit tab.

- Entries: All entries for the Jr Fair are only on-line and will be due July 20th. -- No rabbit may be shown in more than 1 class. (With the exception of showmanship and the homegrown fryer class.)
- Sale Information-Online sales will happen again this year, the only rabbit projects that will be selling at the Celebration of Achievement on Thursday, August 27, 2026 in a live auction are Champion and Reserve Champion Pen of Three and Champion and Reserve Champion Single Meat Rabbit. After the Celebration of Achievements, the ONLINE SALE will begin. The website is www.bwfinaldrive.com. The online sale will be open on Thursday, August 27, and close on Thursday, September 3rd at 5:00 p.m. All bids will be paper invoiced and mailed once the sale closes.
- Individual Sale Information: Just a reminder that if you are exhibiting a market rabbit project such as Single fryers or Meat Pen of Three you have the opportunity to sell your animals online through the fair auction. You must enter your information and declare which species you will be selling on BW Final Drive by June 6th if you are selling rabbits. Remember, you are only allowed to sell one project (exemption is with champions-please see fair rules). If you exhibit the overall Grand/ Reserve Grand Champion Single Fryer or Meat Pen of Three, you will be required to sell it at the Celebration of Achievement on Thursday, August 27th. Please see the sample letter at the end of this packet for reference to writing your sale letter.

FAIR TIME:

- Fair Arrival times – Rabbit Barn Arrival of Animals: Rabbit projects are allowed to be brought in on Thursday, August 20th starting at noon. All projects must be on the grounds by 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, August 20th.
- Mandatory Rabbit Exhibitor Meeting - The mandatory rabbit department meeting is for all rabbit exhibitors including market and breeding projects. The meeting will start promptly at 8:00 am on Saturday, August 22nd. Each exhibitor and parent/legal guardian must attend and sign in. Failure to not attend this meeting can result in the junior fair exhibitor not being able to show/ sell. This is an important meeting for parents to be in attendance as parents will need to sign paperwork. If you or your family member cannot attend the meeting, please see a Jr. Fair Board member or Poultry Committee member BEFORE the meeting.
- Shavings- Provided for your use.
- Feed/Water - Exhibitors need to provide their own feed, feed/water cups, and bowls. Water is located at the south side of the show ring or at the back of the building.
- Pen Cleaning - All of us are responsible for ensuring the rabbits are treated the best at the Great Darke County Fair and we must remember they are on display for the public to view all day, every day of the fair. ---- All pens must be cleaned, and all rabbits must be watered and fed each day. Rabbit Committee Members will be around during the day to check on the animals. Failure to make sure your rabbits are provided fresh water and food and their pens are kept clean throughout the day will result in: The 1st offense- Warning, 2nd offense - Exhibitors will lose premiums, and not be eligible to participate in the livestock auction.
- Outstanding Exhibitor (ages are of Jan. 1st of current year) -The rabbit barn will have outstanding exhibitor awards and prizes for the top 5 in the junior division ages 8 to 11, intermediate division 12 to 14, and senior division 15 and up in both market and breeding. Outstanding exhibitors will be determined from their Skillathon scores, showmanship placing, and the highest Jr Fair class placing. The top 5 outstanding exhibitors, will be announced during the barn party at 6:00 on Tuesday.

Rabbit Department Schedule

Friday, August 21st - 1:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. - Rabbit Royalty Written Test Given

Friday, August 21st - 1:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. - Weigh meat rabbits, contest entries due and check entries

Friday, August 21st - 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. - Rabbit Royalty Interviews

Saturday, August 22nd - 8:00 a.m. - Mandatory Barn Meeting

Saturday, August 22nd - 9:00 a.m. - Junior Fair Guinea Pig Project Show (carry in only)

Saturday, August 22nd - 9:00 a.m. - Junior Fair Rabbit Show

Sunday, August 23rd - 12:30 p.m. - Junior Fair Rabbit Showmanship
Sunday, August 23rd - 3:00-7:00 - Jr. Fairboard Voting in Youth Building or Jr. Fairboard Office
Monday, August 24th - 10:00 - 3:00 - Jr. Fairboard Voting in Youth Building or Jr. Fairboard Office
Monday, August 24th - 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. - Junior Fair Rabbit Judging Contest
Tuesday, August 25th - 12:00 Noon - Rabbit Safari
Tuesday, August 25th - 6:00 p.m. - Barn Party & Awards
Wednesday, August 26th - 8:30 a.m. - Showman of Showmen - Swine, Sheep, Goat - Breeding, Goat - Market, Dog and Horse
Wednesday, August 26th - 9:00 a.m. - Open Rabbit Show
Wednesday, August 26th - 5:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. - Rabbits are released
Thursday, August 27th -7:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. All animals and possessions must be removed by 11:00 am. All animals and possessions remaining in the barn after 11:00 a.m. will be removed and will not be returned to the owner.
Thursday, August 27th - 8:30 a.m. - Showman of Showmen Beef, Dairy - Breeding, Dairy - Market, Rabbits, and Poultry
Thursday, August 27th - 5:00p.m. - Celebration of Achievements - Cattle Arena

- Weigh-In- Weigh-in will start on Friday, August 21st in the rabbit barn at 1:00 pm and will end at 7:00 pm. All single fryers, meat pens of 3, and roasters are required to be weighed in. During weigh-in you must declare your single fryers, meat pens of 3, and homegrown singles, if applicable.

After weigh-in single fryers will be broken into the following classes.

- i. Up to 3.49 lbs. Underweight, not eligible for Grand of Reserve Champions or for Outstanding Exhibitor points
- ii. 3.5 lbs - 4.5 lbs
- iii. 4.5 lbs - 5.5 lbs
- iv. 5.6 lbs and over. Overweight, not eligible for Grand of Reserve Champions or for Outstanding Exhibitor points.

Grand and Reserve Single Fryer will be chosen in a final drive competition when all 1st - 5th place winners from 3.5 lbs. - 5.5 lbs. are invited to participate or by judge's invitation.

- Forms - All Market/Commercial Animals need a Drug Use form and need to be listed on the Drug Use Forms will be ELECTRONIC, with more information to be coming from ODA. ALL Market Animals must have a Drug Use Form.

- Extra Activities/Contests During the Fair:

- Rabbit Royalty Contest- The results will be announced on SATURDAY, August 22nd before the show begins in the Rabbit Barn. Rabbit Royalty tests will be given from 1:00 - 6:00 on Friday August 21st, and interviews will be from 4:00 - 7:00. Contestants are responsible for signing up for an interview time once they have completed their Royalty test. Prince and Princess must be ages 9-13. King and Queen must be ages 14 and up as of January 1st, 2025. Contestants must own and exhibit a breeding and/or market rabbit project at the 2026 Darke County Junior Fair Rabbit Show. Royalty will be asked to pass out ribbons, trophies, etc. on show days. King & Prince hats are donated by the Darke County Rabbit Committee and the Queen and Princess tiaras are donated by the Darke County Jr. Fairboard.

- Rabbit Educational Poster Contest- These are open to all Jr Fair Rabbit Barn Exhibitors to compete in. Educational posters are due to the Jr. Fairboard members by 7:00 pm on Friday August 21st. The Educational Rabbit Contest Posters should be created on a standard sized poster board, computer graphics can be used and be the original design and creation of the Jr. Fair Rabbit exhibitor.

- Rabbit Release Times- ---- All junior fair rabbit projects will be released on Wednesday, August 26th at 5:00 pm. Reminder, you need to clean your cages and remove cups, bowls, ties, and signs. You must clean your pens out and have them checked by a rabbit committee person or barn secretary. If pens are not cleaned and checked, you will forfeit your sale premiums. ALL RABBITS MUST BE REMOVED BY THURSDAY AUGUST 27TH by 11:00 AM.

This is not a complete set of rules and guidelines. If you have any questions, please contact any of the Rabbit Committee Members, we are here to help.

We look forward to seeing and talking with all of you at the Fair! Together we can make the 2026 Great Darke County Fair Rabbit Show the Best EVER!!

Sample buyer letter.

Hello, my name is Jacob Smith and I am eleven years old and the son of Jeff and Pam Smith of North Star. I am a third year 4-H member and a member of the Clover 4-H Club. For my third year in 4-H, I am showing a market rabbit at the 2025 Darke County Fair. This year through my project I have expanded my knowledge in animal care and animal nutrition. If you would like to come watch me, I will show my rabbit on Saturday, August 22nd at 8:00 am. I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to the Celebration of Achievements on Thursday, August 27th at 5pm in the cattle show arena. At the Celebration of Achievements we will be recognizing showman of showmen representatives from each department, scholarship winners, outstanding exhibitors along with a sale of champions. My project profile will be online at bwfinaldrive.com starting Thursday, August 27th at 8 am until September 3rd, at 5 pm. You will be able to set up an account there and place bids on my animal or even contribute to the bump up funds. (Exhibitor - Consider adding your QR code from your personal profile on BW Final Drive) If you have any questions on how the sale process works, contact the sale committee at darke.livestocksale@gmail.com or my parents at (937)-123-4567. Thank you for all your support and I look forward to seeing you at the Darke County Fair.

Sincerely,

Jacob Smith
Clover 4-H