

2026 AREA ANIMAL SCIENCE DAYS

INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION PACKET



UW-MADISON EXTENSION

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PHILOSOPHY AND PURPOSE OF AREA ANIMAL SCIENCE DAYS

Objectives

- A. To increase availability of educational opportunities in the 4-H Animal Science Projects
- B. To increase decision making skills through judging and evaluating experiences.
- C. To increase the knowledge of animals through breeding and market evaluation, along with management information.

NOTE: We highly encourage and expect 4-H volunteers and/or staff will arrange for judging meetings and workouts before Area Animal Science Days. Area Animal Science Days is a scored judging contest opportunity. We urge counties to involve as many young people as possible in this activity, both before and during Area Animal Science Days.

General Procedures

1. Area Animal Science Days is a scored judging contest opportunity. Area Animal Science Days was started with the intention of giving as many young people as possible an opportunity to participate in livestock and dairy evaluation. Area Animal Science Days evolved to broaden the scope of members enrolled in additional 4-H Animal Science Projects.
2. These days focus on the reflection of what was learned from the judging/evaluation and other contest experiences, and how that can be applied now and for the future.
3. These contests are open to currently enrolled Wisconsin 4-H members.
4. Offerings may vary at each area site depending on the host county facilities and resources.
5. Awards
 - a. Awards are presented to individuals and teams in Junior and Senior divisions age divisions.
 - b. Team and individual awards are presented in the Dairy, Livestock, Horse Judging Contests. Ribbons are presented in the poster and photography contest.
 - c. Team and individual awards are presented in the project activities as deemed appropriate.

Contestant Eligibility and Rules - All Contests

1. All contestants must be registered by: **June 1, 2026**. Registration Link: https://uwmadison.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8dKLhmkehAxDc3k
2. Team coaches need to be currently enrolled WI 4-H Volunteers
3. If there is a question regarding the eligibility for the contest, contact the Wisconsin 4-H office.
4. To be eligible for the contests, each county must enter their teams, or an individual must enter themselves by the entry deadline. This helps with planning for the contests and making sure there are ample supplies, lunch, etc.
5. Each contestant must be an enrolled 4-H member during the current year.
6. Youth must represent the county in which they are enrolled. Youth can only represent one county at the contest.
7. Counties can bring an unlimited number of Junior and Senior participants.
8. **Reminder for dairy judging teams:** Each county participating in the judging contest must send at least two leads people. Please see specifications under the showmanship contest for more information on who can participate as a leadsman. This needs to be listed on the registration form for it to be complete and accepted. If this is going to be an issue for your team, please contact Jill Jorgensen at jill.jorgensen@wisc.edu prior to June 1st.
9. **Age Divisions (for all contests except photo and poster – see listing for those divisions):**
 - a. Junior – Age 8-13 as of January 1, 2026. Youth must be in or completed 3rd grade, 8-year-old Cloverbuds cannot participate.
 - b. Senior – Age 14-18 as of January 1, 2026.
 - c. Grade 13 members: WI 4-H members that are in the 13th grade and have reached their 19th birthday prior to January 1, 2026 are eligible to compete at the AASD contests and state contest as individuals but not as a member of a team. Those grade 13 members that have not reached their 19th birthday, prior to January 1, 2026, should talk with their coaches about the best decision to compete as a team or as an individual because it could disqualify a team from competing at a national contest opportunity.

Please note, grade 13 members (regardless of age), are not eligible to participate in national contests that occur after September 30th of the year. There are currently only three national judging contests that occur before September 30th, Harrisburg for dairy, World Dairy Expo for dairy, and Aksarben (Nebraska) for livestock. All other national contests occur after that date. *Please note*, this may vary from year to year as contests dates change.

A little more about this: Grade 13 4-H membership status being complete as of September 30th of the year (the 4-H year runs from October 1st - September 30th). They will no longer be able to enroll as a member because 4-H membership is for members in grades 3 - 13. This is a decision that comes from Divisional and UW Madison policies. You need to be a currently enrolled 4-H member at the time of the national contest. Grade 13 members will not be enrolled (due to “aging out” of the program) during the national contest timeframe and therefore are ineligible to compete at national contests after that date - regardless of age.

When moving on to state or national contests, the top three scoring individuals on the team need to continue to state. The top three scoring members of the state team need to continue to National. If the person in the top three happens to be in grade 13, and the national contest occurs after September 30th, that would make your team ineligible to compete.

Therefore, it is encouraged that grade 13 individuals compete as individuals and not as a team member. Note, if a grade 13 team member reached their 19th birthday prior to January 1, 2026, they need to compete as an individual – to align with national contest rules, being part of the team isn't an option.

10. **Eligibility if you have competed in past contests:** Individuals who are no longer eligible to compete as part of a team due to previous national competition or age/grade may judge as an individual for the experience, but their scores will not count as part of the team nor will they be counted as a member of the county team.
11. **Members in postsecondary education:** A 4-H member who is participating in or has completed post-secondary (university, college, junior college, technical school) course work in Livestock Judging/Evaluation and/or Dairy Cattle Judging/Evaluation is not eligible. A 4-H member who has participated in a post-secondary judging contest is not eligible.
12. **What to bring for the contest:** Contestants need to bring 2 pencils. In addition, participants may bring a clipboard and blank paper. A packet of judging cards and a scantron sheet will be provided. A scantron sheet will be used for the contest answers. It is a good idea if they practice before the contest with this type of sheet.
 - A. **Not allowed in contests:** No contestants shall be allowed to take any notes, books, or printed materials into the contest. (This includes, but is not limited to the PDCA Scorecard, note cards with scorecard breakdown on them, cow parts, etc.) Also, no smart phones, smart watches, or communication devices are allowed during the contest - they should be left with coaches or trusted adults until you are done with the contest.
13. **Communication during contest:** While the contest is in progress, there will be no communication among the contestants, or between a contestant and anyone else, except the group leader and contest superintendent. Failure to comply with this rule may result in disqualification of involved contestants and teams. Coaches around the ringside are cautioned to hold discussions to a minimum.
14. **Participant accommodation:** If a participant needs an accommodation to help them be as successful as possible at this event, please contact the WI State 4-H Office.
15. No handling of the animals by the contestants will be permitted.

Dairy Specific Rules

An individual who has participated in the National 4-H Dairy Judging Contest (Madison, WI) is not eligible to compete again at Madison or any other 4-H contest as part of a team. Any individual who has competed at Harrisburg or Louisville may **not** repeat at the same contest but may compete at Madison or the other 4-H contest. Individuals who are no longer eligible to compete as part of a team due to previous national competition may judge as an individual for the experience, but their scores will not count as part of the team, nor will they be counted as a member of the county team.

- a. **Please note - previous contest or FFA contest participation:** National contest participants must not have participated previously in the youth division of this contest. 4-H contestants may participate in the NAILE contest after they have participated in the National 4-H Dairy Cattle Judging Contest or National FFA Dairy Cattle Career Development Event, but not during the same calendar year.

2026 Area Animal Science Days

Sites and Offerings

June 19, 2026, Grant County

Location: Grant County Fairgrounds, 916 East Elm Street (County Road A) Lancaster, Wisconsin 53813

Events Offered:

- Livestock Judging,
- Dairy Judging,
- Dairy Showmanship (each county doing dairy judging should bring at least two leads people),
- All Species Poster and Photography Contest (no charge for the poster and photo contest but must enter on the form)

June 30, 2026, Clark County

Location: 1121 E Division St, Neillsville, WI 54456

Events Offered:

- Livestock Judging,
- Dairy Judging,
- Dairy Showmanship (each county doing dairy judging should bring at least two leads people),
- Horse Judging Mini Clinic and fun contest
- All Species Poster and Photography Contest (no charge for the poster and photo contest but must enter on the form)

AREA ANIMAL SCIENCE DAYS
TENTATIVE PROGRAM SCHEDULE FOR ALL LOCATIONS
(May vary at each site)

8:00 – 9:00 am	Registration Dairy All Species Poster and Photography Drop-off Dairy Showmanship Contestants - Report to areas after they are registered
9:00 am	Orientation in respective areas
9:15 am	Dairy Showmanship Contest Begins Dairy Judging Begins Livestock Judging Begins Horse Judging Clinic/Judging Begins - Clark County Only
11:30 am	Lunch begins – or as released by judging area (lunch available by pre-registration only)
1:00 pm	Oral Reasons - Senior Dairy & Livestock Judges (Reasons will follow evaluation portion of the contest and may be earlier than this posted time depending on the contest – please check with your contest areas for more details)
2:30 pm	Poster and Photography Pick-up
Awards:	Presented in the contest locations as they are available

RULES OF WISCONSIN 4-H DAIRY JUDGING CONTESTS

Please see *Contestant Eligibility and Rules - All Contests* for more information on participant eligibility and other pertinent information

Determination of Ratings

Fifty points shall be possible for placings in each of the eight classes (if possible, six cow classes and two heifer classes). Fifty points shall be possible for each of the three sets of oral reasons for senior judges. Twenty-five points shall be possible for each of the two sets of Type Analysis Questionnaires for junior judges. Reasons and TAQ's will only be given on cow classes. TAQ scores will be included in the individual's final contest score. The two sets of TAQ's will be given to the contestants during two of the cow classes. A correct answer to each of the five questions will be worth 5 points. If there is a close second choice, 3 points may be awarded for the second best answer.

Time and Reasons

Contestants will have a total of 15 minutes for all evaluation classes, both reasons and non-reasons classes. This aligns with national dairy judging contests.

Who needs to give reasons? All seniors will be required to give three sets of oral reasons. Two minutes are allowed for oral reasons on a class. Contestants will be expected to give oral reasons without using notes. When grading reasons official judges will consider accuracy, poise, confidence, delivery, and forcefulness of presentation.

Using notes during reasons: Contestants who use their notes during oral reasons will be scored on a basis of 40 points maximum.

SELECTION OF TEAMS FOR THE WISCONSIN 4-H STATE DAIRY JUDGING CONTEST

2. **Who is invited:** At least the top two Junior and Senior teams from each Area Days will be invited to the State Contest. More teams will be invited based on the criteria below. The final invitation decision will be made by UW Extension staff members working with the contest.
3. **Criteria:** Additional teams will be invited based on the following criteria:
 - a. Size of area contests, b. Oral reasons scores, c. Point breaks in the overall team scores
4. **Team members:** A county team, Junior or Senior, must be comprised of the top three scoring individuals from the county team at Area Animal Science Days. A county team, Junior or Senior, must be comprised of the top three scoring individuals from the county team at Area Animal Science Days (AASD). The 4th team member (alternate) may be selected or designated by the county AND must have participated in an Area Animal Science Day Contest.
 - a. If there is a valid reason (approved by State 4-H Office) that one of the first three placing individuals needs to be replaced, this substitution must come from the same AASD contest that the team earned the right to compete in the state contest. The replacement must be the next highest scoring individual. If there is a substitution of any of the top placing three (3) team members, the team score is automatically recalculated using the replacement's score. The team may or may not move forward to the state contest depending on the new team score.
5. **Grade 13 members:** WI 4-H members that are in the 13th grade and have reached their 19th birthday prior to January 1, 2026 are eligible to compete at the AASD contests and state contest as individuals but not as a member of a team. Those grade 13 members that have not reached their 19th birthday, prior to January 1, 2026, should talk with their coaches about the best decision to compete as a team or as an individual because it could disqualify a team from competing at a national contest opportunity.

Please note, grade 13 members (regardless of age), are not eligible to participate in national contests that occur after September 30th of the year. There are currently only three national judging contests that occur before September 30th, Harrisburg for dairy, World Dairy Expo for dairy, and Aksarben (Nebraska) for livestock. All other national contests occur after that date. Please note, this may vary from year to year as contest dates change.

A little more about this: Grade 13 4-H membership status is complete as of September 30th of the year (the 4-H year runs from October 1st - September 30th). They will no longer be able to enroll as a member because 4-H membership is for members in grades 3 - 13. This is a decision that comes from Divisional and UW-Madison policies. You need to be a currently enrolled 4-H member at the time of the national contest. Grade 13 members will not be enrolled (due to "aging out" of the program) during the national contest timeframe and therefore are ineligible to compete at national contests after that date - regardless of age.

When moving on to state or national contests, the top three scoring individuals on the team need to continue to state. The top three scoring members of the state team need to continue to the National competition. If the person in the top three happens to be in grade 13, and the

national contest occurs after September 30th, that would make your team ineligible to compete.

Therefore, it is encouraged that grade 13 individuals compete as individuals and not as a team member. Note, if a grade 13 team member reached their 19th birthday before January 1, 2026, they need to compete as an individual – to align with national contest rules, being part of the team isn't an option.

6. **Individual Member Selection:** In the Senior age group, the two highest placing individuals at each Area Animal Science Day not designated on a team which is already invited to the State Contest will be invited to participate. Please see additional notes about age guidelines.
7. **National Contests:** The high-placing Senior team at the state contest will represent Wisconsin at the National 4-H Dairy Cattle Judging Contest held at World Dairy Expo in Madison, WI. The second-place Senior team will compete at the Pennsylvania All-American Invitation Dairy Cattle Judging Contest in Harrisburg, PA. A third Senior team consisting of the four highest scoring individuals at the state contest who are not on the first or second place team and are eligible to compete will represent Wisconsin at the North American Invitational Dairy Judging Contest in Louisville, Kentucky. No other teams will be allowed to participate in a regional or national contest.
 - a. **Please note - previous contest or FFA contest participation:** National contest participants must not have participated previously in the youth division of this contest. 4-H contestants may participate in the NAILE contest after they have participated in the National 4-H Dairy Cattle Judging Contest or National FFA Dairy Cattle Career Development Event, but not during the same calendar year.
8. **Identifying clothing:** At the state contest, no contestant shall wear pins, badges or other marks of identification which may reveal his or her identity or that of the area they are representing. If a contestant chooses to wear a shirt with county identification on it, they will be asked to wear a sticker over this identification during the contest so that they may not be identified by contest officials.
9. Participants will judge 10 classes at the state dairy judging contest.
 - a. **Senior participants** will give four sets of oral reasons.
 - b. **Junior participants** will answer twenty Type Analysis Questions (TAQ). Junior participants will take a cow parts quiz at the state contest, this quiz will be scored separately from the judging scores.
 - c. **Junior Reasons:** Junior reasons will take place for junior participants. Reasons will be taken by coaches at the contest and will be given as a team. These coaches will rank the teams. THESE ARE OPTIONAL.
10. **National contest qualifiers:** If a team qualifies for a national contest, they must take the top three individuals from the state contest on to the national event. The fourth individual may be any member from that county who competed during the current year at the state judging contest and/or Area Animal Science Days.
- 11.

DAIRY SHOWMANSHIP CONTEST

There is no fee to register for dairy showmanship but you must complete the registration form

- The Showmanship Contest will be held in conjunction with the Judging Contest.
- **Each county participating in the judging contest must send at least two leads people.** A county may bring as many showmen as they wish.
- **Because the majority of the animals used in the contest are cows, leadspersons must be at least 12 years old and have experience leading cattle.** This is a safety consideration.
- They will report to the Cattle Superintendent. Leads people will be judged as they lead.
- The score card on which they will be judged is as follows:

SCORECARD FOR DAIRY SHOWMANSHIP

Name and Number of Contestant: _____

E-mail: _____

County: _____ Age: _____

Breed: _____ Ring: _____ Rotation: _____

Factors to Evaluate

<u>When Scoring Showmanship</u>	<u>Possible Score</u>	<u>Contestant's Score</u>
1. Appearance and Attitude of Exhibits	20	_____
2. Leading the Animal	20	_____
3. Posing the Animal	20	_____
4. Control of the Animal	20	_____
5. Poise and Alertness of Exhibitor	20	_____
	TOTAL	100

Comments :

RULES FOR WISCONSIN LIVESTOCK JUDGING CONTEST

Contestants and Eligibility

1. All contestants must be registered by: June 2, 2026
2. If there are questions regarding contest eligibility, contact the Wisconsin State 4-H Office.
3. To be eligible for the contests, each county must enter their teams by the entry deadline. This helps with planning and making sure there are ample supplies, lunch, etc.
4. Each contestant must be a currently enrolled 4-H member.
5. Youth must represent the county in which they are enrolled. Youth can only represent one county at the contest.
6. **Age Divisions:**
 - a. Junior – Age 8-13 as of January 1, 2026. Youth must be in or completed 3rd grade, 8-year-old Cloverbuds cannot participate.
 - b. Senior – Age 14-18 as of January 1, 2026.
 - c. Grade 13 members: Grade 13 members: WI 4-H members that are in the 13th grade and have reached their 19th birthday prior to January 1, 2026 are eligible to compete at the AASD contests and state contest as individuals but not as a member of a team. Those grade 13 members that have not reached their 19th birthday, prior to January 1, 2026, should talk with their coaches about the best decision to compete as a team or as an individual because it could disqualify a team from competing at a national contest opportunity.

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A little more about this: Grade 13 4-H membership status being complete as of September 30th of the year (the 4-H year runs from October 1st - September 30th). They will no longer be able to enroll as a member because 4-H membership is for members in grades 3 - 13. This is a decision that comes from Divisional and UW Madison policies. You need to be a currently enrolled 4-H member at the time of the national contest. Grade 13 members will not be enrolled (due to “aging out” of the program) during the national contest timeframe and therefore are ineligible to compete at national contests after that date - regardless of age.

When moving on to state or national contests, the top three scoring individuals on the team need to continue to state. The top three scoring members of the state team need to continue to the National competition. If the person in the top three happens to be in grade 13, and the national contest occurs after September 30th, that would make your team ineligible to compete.

Therefore, it is encouraged that grade 13 individuals compete as individuals and not as a team member. Note, if a grade 13 team member reached their 19th birthday prior to January 1, 2026, they need to compete as an individual – to align with national contest rules, being part of the team isn't an option.

7. **What to bring:** Participants are to bring a clipboard, blank paper/steno notebook and pencils.
 - a. **What is not allowed:** No additional county sheets are allowed during judging. A packet of judging cards, scantron sheet, and materials will be provided.
 - b. Electronics (phones, iPads, watches, etc.) will be left with coaches and parents during the contest. Youth will not have electronics during the contest.
8. **Communication during the contest:** While the contest is in progress, there will be no discussion between the contestants, except the group leader and the station teacher. Failure to comply may result in the disqualification of the individual (s) involved.
9. No handling of the animals will be permitted. However, at the discretion of the Livestock State Specialist, there may be opportunities to handle market lambs.
10. All seniors are required to give oral reasons. Two minutes are allowed for oral reasons. Reasons are graded on accuracy, comparison, terminology, grants, and remarks in accordance with the following:

1. First pair of animals	15 points
2. Second pair of animals	15 points
3. Third pair of animals	15 points
4. Reasons for placing last animal	5 points
TOTAL	50 points

When grading reasons, the following items may be considered: poise, confidence, delivery, and forcefulness of presentation. Juniors may or may not have a practice session for reasons as well.

Using notes during oral reasons: Contestants who use their notes during oral reasons will be scored on a potential of 40 points maximum. Those who don't utilize their notes will have a potential of up to 50 points.

11. The classes are generally the following and are subject to change. Breeding heifers, Market steers, Breeding sheep (rams or ewes), Market Lambs, Breeding Gilts, Market Hogs. Some locations might have a meat goat class (either a breeding doe and/or bucks or market wethers).

12. **Update:** High-scoring individuals not already part of a state eligible team may be invited to participate in the State Livestock Judging Contest as individuals at the discretion of the contest organization team. There is no “all-star” national livestock judging contest that individuals can qualify to attend if they are not part of a team.
13. The following rules apply for eligibility at the National Contest in the senior division:
- a. Contestants must be currently enrolled 4-H club members approved by the Wisconsin 4-H Program, Division of Extension, University of Wisconsin-Madison.
 - b. Each contestant must have passed their 14th birthday and not have passed their 19th birthday as of January 1 of the current year.
 - c. Please note that grade 13 members (regardless of age), are not eligible to participate in national contests that occur after September 30th of the year. More information about age parameters is available under *Contestant Eligibility and Rules - All Contests*.
14. Contestants in National 4-H competitive events must not have participated in official post-secondary (University, college, junior college, or technical school) competitive events of a similar nature and in the same subject matter area. Neither can he or she be a member of a post-secondary team undergoing training in preparation for an event (for example, a contestant who has competed in an official collegiate livestock judging contest either on or off campus is ineligible to compete in a similar national 4-H judging contest).
15. Contestants who have participated in the National 4-H Livestock Judging Contest (Louisville) are ineligible to compete a second time. They may participate for the experience, but their scores will not count toward the team total. The Louisville contest is the end of a youth member’s judging experiences.

Horse Judging

Please see *Contestant Eligibility and Rules - All Contests* for more information on participant eligibility and other pertinent information

Please note: this contest is not a qualifier for state horse or national contests. The horse judging event that occurs at WI 4-H Horse Expo in September is the qualifying contest for the national horse judging contests.

Clark County Offering:

A mini horse judging clinic – Have you ever wanted to learn more about judging or wanted to improve your skills even more? If available, the mini clinic will help you do just that. They will be covering both halter and performance classes during this learning time. More information about the mini clinic will be available closer to the event.

Horse Judging Contest: Following the clinic portion, there may be time for a judging contest. This is a great opportunity to practice your skills before the State Horse Contest.

There may also be an opportunity to give a set of reasons. The reasons will not count in your judging contest score but will be a way to practice and get some feedback. If you are not familiar with the term “reasons”- It is when a horse judging contestant gives a one-to-two-minute verbal presentation made by the to an official judge. The contestant justifies the reasons why they placed the specific horses in the contest the way they did.

**** Area Animal Science Day Registration Procedures ****

1. **All registrations are due online by June 1, 2026.**

Registration Link: https://uwmadison.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8dKLhmkehAxDc3k

2. **Each county will register as a team through an online form:**

County Team Registration: In each county, a 4-H adult volunteer/staff member will enter all the team members for each species and contest (this may be multiple coaches or the county staff member, it varies by county). Payments for registration fees and lunches will then be mailed to the host counties (more information below.)

Individual Registration: If you are entering as an individual (without the team), please use the same link above and the same process for entering.

3. **Registration fees are 12.00 per participant.** *You need to register but there is no charge for all species poster, all species photography, or dairy showmanship entries.*

You are responsible for paying for all registered members – if you register a higher number and bring less members, you will be responsible for paying for the higher number of people. No refunds will be given if the participant has paid and can't make the event, however substitutions can be made and will be accepted the day of the event.

All participants will need to pay the registration fee (except as noted above).

4. **The lunch cost is \$10 per person eating** (youth participants, coaches, parents, etc.). Lunches are only available by pre-registration. Please include everyone that will be eating (youth, parents, coaches, etc.) in your count.

5. **Registration and Lunch Payment**

- One check can be written for both registration and lunch payments.
- Make checks payable to the host site you are attending – please see below for more information. (Grant County or Clark County)
- Please make sure to note your county name and species in the memo line, for example “Brown Co. Dairy AASD payment” or if for all species “Grant Co all species AASD payment”
- Please see the addresses below for where to send your payments.

Payment Information:

Questions? If you have any questions about registrations, please contact Jill Jorgensen at jill.jorgensen@wisc.edu / 920-391-4659 or Mike Farrey at mike.farrey@wisc.edu / 608-262-2496