

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR COMPETITION

Entry Rules & Information

1. All exhibitors must abide by the administrative rules of the Illinois State Fair. No employee (includes full-time, part-time, and/or contractual employees) of the Illinois State Fair or member of their Immediate Family is allowed to own or exhibit any animals and/or articles in any competitive event in which they are employed as a judge or superintendent. (Immediate Family is defined as the spouse, children, stepchildren, parents or stepparents, brothers, sisters, stepbrothers or stepsisters.)
2. Where discrepancies exist between printed and online versions of this premium book, the online version shall take precedence.
3. Entries in all classes shall be made through the online fair entry system at the Illinois State Fair website. No other type of entry will be accepted. Assistance with entries is available at the Competitive Events Office, Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. All entries must be submitted online on or by July 15, 2026, unless otherwise noted. Payment must be made via credit card at the time at entry. No other type of payment will be accepted. Fees will not be refunded.
4. The Illinois State Fair takes reasonable precautions to ensure the safety of all exhibits, but in no case will the Management assume liability or be responsible in any way for the loss, damage, or injury to the property of any exhibitor while it is on the grounds. Application of entry will be deemed an acceptance of this and all other rules governing this division.
5. Any items not picked up at the end of the Fair will be taken to the Illinois State Fair offices at the Emmerson Building. Items will be held for pick-up until September 15, 2026.
6. Entered recipes cannot be acknowledged or returned. The Illinois State Fair reserves the right to publish entered recipes without recourse to the originator or any sponsor.

Awards & Premiums

1. Arrival schedule for placing entries to be judged is given at the beginning of the various sections. Please read these instructions carefully.
2. Awards will be given by the judges in each section. No person will act as judge in any class in which he may be interested as the exhibitor, agent or employee of an exhibitor, or otherwise. If such circumstances should occur, the Superintendent of the department shall remove such judge, and substitute another temporarily if needed. If an official judge without such a conflict is not present, the Superintendent of the department has the authority to appoint a capable judge, provided the appointee has no conflict.
3. At the time of check in, if an exhibit is identified as erroneously entered, the Department Superintendent has the authority to transfer the exhibit to the correct class. If the correct class has already been judged, it shall not be reopened, and the entry will be ineligible for competition. There will be no refund of entry fee for erroneously entered exhibits. "Erroneously entered" shall refer to exhibits that do not meet the technical requirements for the class (e.g. a floriculture class for miniature design, where the entered item is larger than the definition for miniature design in the premium book, may be moved to the small design class, if the entry meets the appropriate definition in the premium book).
4. If it is ascertained any exhibitor has made or caused to be made any false statement in regard to any entry exhibited, or ownership of same, they will be disqualified.
5. Where there is only one exhibitor in a class, the first prize, based on published judging criteria, will be awarded. Where there is competition in a class, all prizes shall be awarded so far as there are premiums offered in the premium book.

6. If it is ascertained that any exhibitor or spectator associated with an exhibitor attempted to interfere with the judge in the performance of their duty in any matter, that exhibitor shall be disqualified from all further competition at that year's State Fair and forfeit any premiums and/or ribbons already awarded.
7. In the event of a violation, the exhibitor and their entry shall be disqualified. Illinois State Fair will provide the disqualified exhibitor with a Notice of Disqualification setting for the reason for the disqualification. A disqualified exhibitor shall have 10 days following receipt of the notice of Disqualification to file a Petition with the Director of the Illinois Department of Agriculture. The procedures set forth in 8 Illinois Administrative Code 1, Subpart C, shall govern the process of filing and considering a Petition from a disqualified exhibitor.
8. If another exhibitor or any member of the public has reason to believe that an exhibit should be disqualified, they may contact the superintendent for that department, and/or State Fair Officials and must present their evidence in writing. If, after reviewing evidence, the State Fair disqualifies the exhibit, the complaining party's name and evidence may be included in the Notice of Disqualification. The basis for a disqualification cannot be anonymous.
9. Results of judging will be available on the Illinois State Fair website at: www.statefair.illinois.gov, at the conclusion of the Fair and once results have been certified.
10. The Fair has no responsibility for payment of Special Awards offered by businesses or individuals.
11. Records of placing and awards shall serve as the final evidence for payment of premiums. Ribbons/Rosettes will not serve as evidence. Judges will certify their rankings at the time of judging, and such certification will support the completed records of placing and award.
12. Errors in premiums statements and replacement of premium checks will not be allowed past the first day of November following the Fair, after which time the books are closed. Incorrect or unclaimed premiums will be forfeited.
13. The Department of Agriculture shall use its best efforts to secure sufficient appropriations to fund premiums. In any year for which the General Assembly of the State of Illinois fails to make an appropriation sufficient to pay such premiums, premium amounts may not be accurately reflected in the General Premium Book.