

**DATE:** May 15, 2026

**TO:** Potential Youth Livestock Exhibitors at 2026 State Fair of Virginia

**FROM:** Katherine E. Carter, Extension Youth Animal Science Specialist

Plans are taking shape for the State Youth Livestock Shows at the 2026 State Fair of Virginia in Doswell this fall and we hope that you will plan to join us! This letter contains important information and updates on fair rules and policies, as well as details of the nomination schedule for market lambs/commercial ewes, market goats/commercial does, market beef/commercial heifers, and swine. Please read all of the information carefully and share with any new exhibitors, particularly those in your club or county. All information pertaining to the fair can be found on the Youth Livestock web site at <https://ext.vt.edu/youthlivestock> under the State Fair tab on the homepage.

### **Important Information for 2026**

1) Dates - All beef, sheep, swine and meat goats will show October 1-4, 2026; the second weekend of the State Fair. The tentative schedule for this year's State Fair is included in this packet of information.

2) Nomination of Animals - **All nominations will be done using an online, self-nomination process with animal pictures, and DNA collection/submission.**

**Step 1:** This can be done immediately - Order your DNA envelopes and Tags (Tags for Cattle and Hogs ONLY, if needed) using this link: <https://tinyurl.com/2026-SFVA-DNA-Envelope-Order>

- Please order all your DNA envelopes and Tags (if needed) at one time.
- Families can order for multiple siblings with one submission.
- All orders need to be submitted using the link above no later than Tuesday, June 23<sup>rd</sup> to allow ample time for receipt of supplies and return by the July 1<sup>st</sup> Nomination Deadline.

**Step 2:** Directions for **uploading your nomination information and returning your DNA envelopes and required paperwork** will be included in the packet with your envelopes and tags (if ordered) This information should be read carefully to help alleviate mistakes in the nomination process.

- **The option for DNA Packet in person pick-up is available. Please review the options on the DNA Order Form and choose one of the seven pick-up dates/locations or select that you want/need your packet mailed to you. If you would like to request an alternative pick-up option, please contact Katherine at [carterke@vt.edu](mailto:carterke@vt.edu) to discussion options.**

3) Which animals require nomination, tagging, and DNA submission?

- Beef: ALL Market Steers, ALL Market Heifers, Commercial/Crossbred Heifers
  - Meat Goats: Market Goats and Commercial Does
  - Sheep: Market Lambs and Commercial Ewes
  - Swine: Commercial Gilts and ALL Market Hogs
- \*\*\*PLEASE NOTE: Purebred, registered breeding gilts, **showing as such**, do not need to be nominated; however, if there are any issues with the tattoo, ear notch, or registration papers of a Registered Gilt, she may not show as a commercial gilt if she was not Nominated.

4) Nomination is **NOT** required for the following:

- Registered Breeding Females of ALL Species, Bred and Owned Bulls (Beef, Meat Goats, Sheep, and Swine) that plan to enter and show as a Registered Breeding Female.
  - \*\*\*PLEASE NOTE: If any of these females are deemed ineligible due to problems/inaccuracies with registration papers, tattoos, or ear notches (Gilts), they are NOT eligible to transfer to the commercial division of their species because they were not nominated.
  - Prospect Steers and Prospect Heifers
- \*\*\*PLEASE NOTE: Prospect Steers and Prospect Heifers **MUST** weigh less than 1000 pounds at the State Fair Weigh-In and Check-in to qualify as a prospect. If they weigh 1000 pounds or more, they are

ineligible to show as a Prospect and ineligible to transition to the Market Beef or Commercial Heifer Divisions since they were not nominated.

5) DNA Collection/Submission – All nominated animals must have DNA (hair follicle samples) submitted at the time of nomination. DNA envelopes and any cattle or hog EID tags must be ordered using the link above. **DNA and NOMINATION SUBMISSION DEADLINE IS July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026.**

- 6) Tagging – You will use the following tags as Official Identification for your nominated animals:
- **Sheep and Goats:** Federally Required Scrapie Tag (needs to be a plastic visual tag, not the small metal tags, from the Flock or Herd of origin)
  - **Hogs:** Any USDA-compliant “840” EID Tag (these can be ordered with your DNA envelopes, if needed) Animals should only have ONE EID Tag – do NOT place more than one EID Tag in an animal’s ear.
  - **Cattle:** Any USDA-compliant “840” EID Tag (these can be ordered with your DNA envelopes, if needed) Animals should only have ONE EID Tag – do NOT place more than one EID Tag in an animal’s ear.

**\*\*\*Please Note:** Hogs and Cattle may only have ONE “840” EID Tag. Do NOT remove an existing “840” EID Tag and do NOT add a second “840” EID Tag. Use the original “840” Tag in the animal’s ear\*\*\*

**Please order DNA Envelopes and any needed tags no later than Tuesday, June 23<sup>rd</sup> to allow ample time to receive items and return them by the July 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. One final shipment will be mailed, Wednesday, June 24<sup>th</sup>.**

**Nomination Deadline is July 1<sup>st</sup> at 5:00 PM. This is the date/time that all online information must be submitted and the hard copies postmarked and mailed back to VT.** The system will automatically close at 5:00 pm EST. **In addition to being uploaded into the online portal, all nomination forms and DNA samples must be mailed and postmarked by July 1<sup>st</sup> to:**

Katherine Carter  
175 West Campus Dr  
380 Litton Reaves Hall  
Blacksburg, VA 24061.

\*\*\*There will be options/opportunities to drop off/submit your completed Nomination Paperwork and DNA Samples at each of the in-person pick-up locations. Please utilize those options if possible to avoid paperwork and samples from getting lost in the mail.

**\*\*Please remember that nomination does not constitute entry.** Nominated animals must also be entered using the FairEntry system that will go live for 2026 State Fair of VA on July 3<sup>rd</sup> and close at 5:00 pm on August 17<sup>th</sup>.

- 7) Show Rules/Policy Updates (please see Rules posted online for complete details):
- **Schedule-** see attached schedule for the 2026 SFVA Youth Livestock Events Weekend.
  - Take time to COMPLETELY read the General Rules for SFVA AND the species rules for each species you plan to enter. Not reading is not an acceptable excuse for breaking rules or being uninformed.
- 8) Entries: All ENTRIES for State Fair must be submitted online utilizing the FairEntry system. **The online entry system will open July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2026** and will be available at <https://ext.vt.edu/youthlivestock> or at <http://sfva-youth-livestock.fairentry.com/> All youth beef, sheep, swine and meat goats will be required to be entered by August 17<sup>th</sup>.
- 9) Complete details of the show schedules, judges, policies and rules for each species will be posted at the youth livestock homepage (<https://ext.vt.edu/youthlivestock>). Please check this site regularly for important changes and updates!

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [carterke@vt.edu](mailto:carterke@vt.edu) or call 540-231-2257.