



2026-2027 Steer Validation Program

Texas 4-H/FFA Validation Guidelines

2026-2027 Texas 4-H and FFA Market Steer Validation Program Guidelines

****Please be aware that dates listed on these guidelines are *state deadline dates only*. Local deadlines take priority over the listed dates on this document. Additionally, the validation fees listed in these guidelines are the *state validation costs only*. Local fees may apply and will take priority over the fees listed in this document.****

Important Dates

- **March 1-April 9, 2026** www.texaslivestockvalidation.com is open for the County Validation Chairman to submit tag orders. **\$25.00** validation fee. **ONLY one** order per county. Please do not mail payment until you receive an invoice.
- **April 26, 2026** Invoice sent to the County Validation Chairperson.
- **June 23, 2026** Late tag orders are due. **\$30.00** validation fee.
- **June 30, 2026** Late invoice sent to the County Validation Chairperson.
- **June 1-30, 2026** Steers to be eligible at the 2024 fall shows and 2025 spring shows must be physically validated.
- **June 1-July 8, 2026** ******www.texaslivestockvalidation.com is open to ASTs/CEAs **ONLY** to enter validation information. Resources for data entry will be available at www.texasyouthlivestock.com ******
- **July 8, 2026** Physical validation paperwork, including DNA hair envelopes, must be postmarked and sent to Texas 4-H Headquarters.

Texas 4-H and FFA are founded on integrity, accountability, and ethical behavior as essential to youth development. These programs provide meaningful learning experiences that build character, responsibility, and life skills through active participation and personal effort. Upholding these standards ensures fairness, preserves the educational purpose of the programs, and prepares youth for success beyond their 4-H and FFA experiences. Any action that violates these expectations or impedes the ability to uphold program standards constitutes a rule infraction.

****Steer data will be entered online at www.texaslivestockvalidation.com****

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Officials of major livestock shows in Texas are participating in a program supported by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Texas Education Agency, Department of Agricultural Education, whereby all 4-H and FFA steers exhibited at their shows will be required to be identified appropriately with an official Texas Steer Visual/Electronic Identification (EID) Tag, tattoo, and DNA Assay. A special tag has been designed specifically for the Texas 4-H/FFA Steer Validation Program.

Please see appropriate show rules to determine which major livestock shows require steers to be officially validated through the Texas 4-H/FFA Steer Validation program.

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Please note: These guidelines may be updated periodically, and the most current version will be the one in effect.

Definition of Terms

County-Level State Validation Committee:

This committee is comprised of a minimum 4 individuals including the chair and co-chair (as needed). This committee is responsible for the facilitation of physical validation which includes, but is not limited to: selecting validation dates, times, and locations, gathering equipment needed to conduct validation (including the documentation provided by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension), and is responsible for any locally incurred expenses resulting from the administration of the Texas 4-H and FFA Validation Program. This committee will also oversee the physical validation process, as well as any matters throughout the feeding period including retagging of livestock.

County-Level State Validation Chairperson:

This individual (or individuals in the case of a co-chair) is responsible for establishing a local committee, ordering validation materials, submitting validation information online, and overseeing the overall responsibilities of the committee. The chair and co-chair must be a County Extension Agent or Agricultural Science Teacher. A co-chair is necessary if the chairperson also serves as a parent or supervisor. Each individual should only sign once per form/DNA envelope for each validated animal. The chairperson will be the main point-of-contact for any validation communication throughout the validation and feeding period.

Species Specific State-Level Validation Chairman:

This chairman is responsible for the oversight of each species validation program across the state. They manage and facilitate each species' related documentation, deadline dates, and are available to answer any questions or concerns regarding the Texas 4-H and FFA Validation Program.

State Species Specific Validation Programs:

Texas Steer and Heifer Validation – Dr. Billy Zanolini

Texas Lamb and Goat Validation – Mr. Marty Gibbs

Texas Swine Validation – Mrs. Tammy Glascock

State Validation Program Executive Committee:

This committee serves as a final evaluation and declaration of determinations or disqualifications made by the State Level Species-Specific Validation Committee regarding appeal requests.

State Validation Compliance Team:

This team is comprised of employees of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Serve who are dedicated to providing support to the Texas 4-H/FFA Livestock Validation programs by working alongside local county-level state validation committees to uphold the integrity of the Texas 4-H/FFA Livestock Validation programs. This group is called upon to assist in making validation compliance check as needed.

County Level State Steer Validation Committee Structure & Responsibilities

1. A 4-H and FFA “County Level State Steer Validation Committee” shall be organized in each county where steers are being fed by members of either organization for exhibition at the major livestock shows that require steers to be state validated. The committee *shall be composed of County Extension Agents-Agriculture and/or 4-H (CEA), Agricultural Science Teachers (AST)* in the county. When needed, the 4-H and FFA County Validation Committee may also include representatives from the county show/fair boards or other local leaders in the youth livestock program.
2. If there is not a “County Level State Steer Validation Committee”, the County Extension Agent is responsible for calling the first meeting to *organize* one. All County Extension Agents-Agriculture and/or 4-H and all Agricultural Science Teachers in the county shall be invited to this meeting. The number and composition of the committee will be determined at this meeting. It may be as large as the local agents and teachers deem practical; *however, there may not be fewer than four members on this committee.* A Chairperson, who MUST be present at validation, shall be selected from this group. The chairperson must be a County Extension Agent or Agricultural Science Teacher. A Co-Chair may be selected (and must be a County Extension Agent or Agricultural Science Teacher) to serve as well. This is necessary for instances where the chairperson may also be a supervisor or parent of an exhibitor. Each signing party on validation forms must only sign once. Therefore, a co-chair may be selected to sign when needed. There may be many counties wherein this committee will be all County Extension Agents and Agricultural Science Teachers. County Extension Agents and Agricultural Science Teachers who have members or students validating in a particular species are highly encouraged to participate in that species committee and be present at validation.
3. In counties *where there are fewer than **four** people* eligible to serve on this committee, a **fourth member shall be selected locally**. He/she must be representatives from the county show/fair boards or other local leaders in the youth livestock program and be mutually acceptable to the County Extension Agents and Agricultural Science Teachers.
4. In counties with a County Extension Agent vacancy, the appropriate District Extension Administrator may serve on the “County Level State Steer Validation Committee”. Further, the District Extension Administrator may assign a County Extension Agent from another county within the corresponding district to serve on the validation committee. In cases of vacancies by County Extension Agents and/or Agricultural Sciences Teachers to serve, the State Level Species Specific Chairperson must be contacted to provide guidance on selecting a chairperson and committee.
5. The “County Level State Steer Validation” Chairperson is responsible for ordering official Texas Steer Visual/Electronic Identification (EID) tags for his or her county.
6. The committee will make arrangements for ear tagging tool, tattoo plier, and any other equipment necessary for carrying out this program. The “County Level State Steer Validation Committee” is responsible for any locally incurred expenses resulting from the administration of the Texas 4-H and FFA Steer Validation Program.
7. The **committee will meet as a group** to conduct the validation of all 4-H/FFA steers in the county. **Steers must not be validated by less than three committee members and have County Extension Agent and Agricultural Science Teacher representation. The chairperson (and co-chair, if applicable) must be present for physical validation.**

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8. Participating shows are requiring all (Livestock) to be validated at a time, place, and date determined by the “County Level State (Livestock) Validation Committee” between June 1 and June 30. If exhibitors have conflicts that interfere with the scheduled validation day(s) or acquires additional (Livestock) after scheduled validation day(s), the exhibitor must contact the County Level State (Livestock) Validation Chairperson and request an alternate validation. The County Level State (Livestock) Validation Committee has the authority to set an alternative validation at the time, place, and location of their choosing. Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES will fewer than three committee members be present during an alternate validation. To minimize excessive conflicts, the committee is strongly encouraged to set a non-published make-up validation day at the end of June to proactively prepare for unforeseen needs and circumstances. *Note – Committees should make every effort to grant all reasonable requests for an alternate validation on or before **June 30, 2025**. The Texas Validation Executive Committee reserves the right to settle disputes between the “County Level State (Livestock) Validation Committee” and exhibitors state validating livestock.

Managing Validation Conflicts

- The county committee will meet to determine the validity of the conflict.
- If the conflict is determined to be valid, the committee is expected to make reasonable accommodations to validate the project, including scheduling a separate validation day, time, and/or location.
- Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES will fewer than three committee members be present during an alternate validation.

Exceptions to these guidelines may be granted by the State Steer Validation Coordinator/Chairperson.

It should be noted that validation is a proof of ownership as required by major livestock shows in Texas. It does NOT automatically enter exhibitors in a major livestock show or county show.

“ By signing this document, the exhibitor and parent/guardian, recognize his/her responsibilities for the primary and continuous care of livestock projects throughout the feeding period and hereby authorizes the State Validation Coordinator or designated representatives and/or State Validation Compliance Team, supervising AST/CEA and the “Species Specific County-Level State Validation Committee” the right to inspect your livestock project(s), along with any other state validated livestock projects on premises, at any time during the feeding period with or without prior notice. State validated livestock must be made available for inspection at any time requested at the address listed on validation record or any other property (public or privately owned) where the livestock may be located. Failure to make inspection available as requested will constitute a violation of validation rules and will lead to disqualification of the livestock in question and any other validated livestock. Additionally, any exhibitor in violation of the primary and continuous daily care rule is subject to disqualification.” –Rule 3, Ethics Policy

Rule #3 of the Ethics Policy has been enhanced to include a process for approving state validated livestock to be outside of the direct care of the livestock exhibitor, their immediate family, and/or County Extension Agent or Agricultural Science Teacher. PLEASE READ THE ENTIRE RULE #3 FOR A FULL EXPLANATION OF THIS RULE.

To obtain prior approval, exhibitors must complete an official 4-H/FFA Validation Rule #3 Prior Approval Form. Exhibitors not obtaining prior approval as outlined ON THE ETHICS POLICY will be subject to disqualification of the livestock in question and any other state validated livestock projects. The form can be accessed here:

<https://texasyouthlivestock.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Rule-3-Approval-Form.pdf>



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Validation Checks and State Validation Compliance Team

As noted in the Texas 4-H and FFA Livestock Program Ethics Policy, exhibitors and their families authorize, *“the State Validation Coordinator or designated representatives and/or State Validation Compliance Team, supervising AST/CEA and the “Species Specific County-Level State Validation Committee” the right to inspect your livestock project(s), along with any other state validated livestock projects on premises, at any time during the feeding period with or without prior notice. State validated livestock must be made available for inspection at any time requested at the address listed on validation record or any other property (public or privately owned) where the livestock may be located. Failure to make inspection available as requested will constitute a violation of validation rules and will lead to disqualification of the livestock in question and any other validated livestock. Additionally, any exhibitor in violation of the primary and continuous daily care rule is subject to disqualification.”*

These validation checks may be conducted by any of the parties stated above. These checks may occur at the time of physical validation or during the feeding period. These checks may be random or directed in nature, as deemed necessary by the Species-Specific State Validation Coordinator. Additionally, counties found to be in violation of validation process procedures are subject to review by the Species-Specific State Validation Chairperson.

Parties suspected to be in violation of the Texas 4-H and FFA Livestock Program Ethics Policy will be further investigated by the Species-Specific State Validation Chairperson and the State Validation Executive Committee. As signed in the Texas 4-H and FFA Livestock Program Ethics Policy, *“a violation of validation rules will lead to disqualification of the livestock in question and any other validated livestock.”* Additionally, any exhibitor in violation of the rule is subject to disqualification.

The State Validation Compliance Team are employees of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and serve as a means to help uphold the integrity of the Texas 4-H and FFA livestock program. These employees are trained and trusted by both organizations to carryout processes as set forth by the state-level livestock validation programs.



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Validation Paperwork

The County Level State Steer Validation Committee Chairperson shall double-check all validation materials before submitting the **ORIGINAL** materials to the State Coordinator.

- Make sure **ALL potential** exhibitors' signatures have been included
- All information requested on paperwork is completed

Special note: no signatures should be obtained on forms before validation. Signatures should be obtained after physical validation to confirm the process was executed.

The only signatures that should be present before validation are in the event that a Parental Waiver is needed due to parent/guardian absence.

Steer Validation Committee Form

The Steer Validation Committee Form (See page 19) collects the names and signatures of those conducting physical validation. The form also secures contact information of the County Level State Steer Validation Committee Chair. The State Steer Validation Coordinator will communicate directly with the validation Chairperson for the county.

Parental Waiver

If the parent or guardian of an exhibitor is unable to attend the validation, the parental waiver form must be utilized (See page 20). The validation committee should be notified in advance if a parent/guardian will not accompany the exhibitor during validation. The County Level State Steer Validation Chairperson should retain a copy of the waiver for county records. A Parental Waiver/Hold Harmless Agreement does not substitute a parents' or legal guardians' signature on any of these forms or hair sample envelope(s).

Ethics Policy

The "Texas 4-H/FFA Livestock Program Ethics Policy" Form has been included to ensure all exhibitors and parents/guardians are aware of **the practices or procedures that are unacceptable and defined as being deceptive, fraudulent, unethical, and inhumane in care, fitting, preparation, and showing of all classes of livestock.** Consequences of and penalties associated with these practices are noted (refer to ethics policy).

Special emphasis on rule #3:

"To gain the life skills developed through the livestock project; exhibitors must be closely engaged in the continuous feeding, maintenance, training, grooming and overall welfare of his/her animals. Exhibitors and immediate family/guardians are responsible for providing the primary and continuous daily care of livestock projects throughout the validation period. The validation period begins immediately following the county-level state validation date (not the validation deadline date listed previously) through exhibition at all livestock shows (exhibitors must provide continuous care for breeding heifers, sheep, swine and goats throughout the animal's eligibility to show). Facilities and location/space are a major determining factor in livestock species selection by the exhibitor. In some instances, it may be in the best interest of the exhibitor and his/her learning experience to select a species project that is best suited for his/her facilities and feasibility of housing projects."

a. 4-H and FFA livestock project exhibitors are under the supervision of an Agricultural Science Teacher or County Extension Agent who serves as the advisor for that project. Excessive involvement of third-party consultants, breeders, fitters not affiliated with the Texas 4-H and/or Texas FFA programs is prohibited. Third-party involvement interfering with the exhibitor's ability to provide primary daily care of and engagement with livestock projects may result in the disqualification of all state validated livestock projects owned by all associated exhibitors/families. Likewise, third-party involvement interfering with the County Extension Agent and Agricultural Science Teacher's ability to properly supervise the livestock project may result in the disqualification of all state validated livestock projects or future validation records.

b. Livestock projects must be raised at the physical address of validation record. Prior approval must be granted by the "Species Specific County-Level State Validation Committee" in the event the animal will be outside the direct care of the exhibitor, immediate family/guardian, and/or the supervising County Extension Agent or Agricultural Science Teacher. Failure to gain approval from the supervising Agricultural Science Teacher/County Extension Agent and the Species-Specific County-Level State Validation Committee will result in the disqualification of all state validated livestock.

c. To obtain prior approval, exhibitors must complete an official 4-H/FFA Validation Rule #3 Prior Approval Form. Exhibitors not obtaining prior approval as outlined above will be subject to disqualification of the livestock in question and any other state validated livestock projects. The form can be accessed here: <https://texasyouthlivestock.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Rule-3-Approval-Form.pdf>

d. By signing this document, the exhibitor and parent/guardian, recognize his/her responsibilities for the primary and continuous care of livestock projects throughout the feeding period and hereby authorizes the State Validation Coordinator or designated representatives and/or State Validation Compliance Team, supervising AST/CEA and the "Species Specific County-Level State Validation Committee" the right to inspect your livestock project(s), along with any other state validated livestock projects on premises, at any time during the feeding period with or without prior notice. State validated livestock must be made available for inspection at any time requested at the address listed on validation record or any other property (public or privately owned) where the livestock may be located. Failure to make inspection available as requested will constitute a violation of validation rules and will lead to disqualification of the livestock in question and any other validated livestock. Additionally, any exhibitor in violation of the primary and continuous daily care rule is subject to disqualification.

Ethics Policy continued

e. The following is intended to serve as a guideline for housing state validated livestock. Texas 4-H and FFA livestock exhibitors are expected to follow these guidelines under the supervision and approval of their county level state validation committee and supervising Agricultural Science Teacher and/or County Extension Agent. In any instance of discrepancy, the Species-Specific State Validation Chairperson and the State Validation Executive Committee have the right to interpret these rules and will have the final decision on all housing inquiries.

i. All state validated livestock should be housed at the home of the livestock exhibitor or a family member or at a county or school ag facility. Any exhibitor who has existing livestock facilities or existing land to build such should house their livestock projects at their residence or at a county or school facility. It is the burden of the livestock exhibitor family to research and contact all school or county facilities in the county before exploring alternative options.

ii. If the previous facilities do not exist, an alternative facility may be investigated to house the livestock. A facility of this nature can only be explored after previously listed facilities have been exhausted. Alternative facilities must be within the exhibitor's county and/or school district, unless deemed appropriate by designated approval documents. Alternative housing addresses must be listed on the Texas 4-H/FFA Livestock Program Ethics Policy Acknowledgement/Signature Form. Additionally, alternative facilities may only be used with approval from the County-Level State Validation Committee. These requests may be denied based on existing evidence of possible housing facilities listed in #1 AND/OR due to concerns of excessive third-party involvement. The burden of seeking approval is on the livestock exhibitor family. The Species-Specific State Validation Chairperson and the State Validation Executive Committee have the right to interpret these rules and will have the final decision on all housing inquiries in instances of disagreement or interpretation. If an exhibitor is concerned of a potential housing facility that may not be acceptable according to the listed criteria, please contact the Species-Specific State Validation Chairperson for an advisory opinion. All interpretations, decisions and settlements will be made by program leadership to align these rules with the best interest of the program and participants. These requests and/or appeals will be approved/denied based on, but not limited to, the following criteria: existence or availability of housing facilities listed above, location, proximity to exhibitor, excessive third-party involvement, and previous instances of rule violation or excessive third-party involvement at the intended location. Excessive third-party involvement may be defined as, but is not limited to, the following:

- 1) Decision making or advice counter to that of the supervising County Extension Agent or Agricultural Science Teacher
- 2) Daily or frequent feeding, training, maintenance, washing, rinsing, blowing, or other care practices
- 3) Interfering or denying access to CEA, AST, and/or any other county or state level committee member as listed in Rule #3 to supervise or check state validated livestock
- 4) Encouragement of or use of unethical fitting or showing practices as listed in Rule #9
- 5) Excessive or misleading advice at livestock shows

Special emphasis on rule #4:

"Animals validated for major livestock shows may also be exhibited at other shows. Be advised, however, that if any validated animal is exhibited and SOLD at any other show (including a county show), the animal will be ineligible to show at any subsequent major livestock show. Additionally, state validated livestock offered for sale during the feeding period via private treaty, private or public auction will be ineligible to show at any subsequent major livestock show. If ownership changes or has the possibility of changing through a sale offering (including animal(s) purchased back by the exhibitor of validation record), regardless of method or length of time, that chain of animal ownership is considered broken and will be ineligible to show at any remaining livestock shows in the feeding period requiring state validation."



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NOTE: Each exhibitor is required to complete a **separate** ethics policy form. **Original** forms should be sent to the State Coordinator. Each exhibitor should be given a **copy (blank or signed)** of the ethics policy form to keep for their reference.

Validation Form

The validation form collects required data.

Special note: each exhibitor should be given a copy of the Ethics Policy to keep for their reference.

- 1) Exhibitor Information - Fill in names and contact information for **EACH** potential exhibitor.
 - a) A steer may be validated in the name of two or more exhibitors, if they meet the following criteria.
 - They are siblings, step-siblings, or legally adopted. If siblings have different last names, it must be noted on the validation form.
 - All listed are bona fide junior exhibitors and eligible to show as junior exhibitors as stated in the stock show rulebook.
 - All permanently reside in the same county.
 - Any exceptions must be granted by State Steer Validation Coordinator.
- 2) Tag Number: assigned at physical validation
- 3) Description and Color (see page 10): specific color(s), breeder, steer's name, etc. This is to help correctly identify steers with lost ear tags validated under an exhibitor/family with multiple steers. Example: Two black steers lose a tag.
- 4) Appropriate Signatures

Special note: no signatures should be obtained on forms before validation. Signatures should be obtained after physical validation to confirm the process was executed.

NOTE: All possible exhibitors must sign the Validation Form.

DNA Collection Envelope

Each steer validated will have hair taken for the DNA Assay identification program. Hair samples will be pulled by a member of the County Level State Steer Validation Committee or local veterinarian during validation and put in individual DNA Assay envelopes provided for each steer. See **Procedures for DNA Assay Hair Collection and Cattle Hair Sample Collection Instructions** for detailed instructions.

NOTE: All possible exhibitors must sign ALL hair sample envelopes.

Steer Data

Steer validation data will be entered at www.texaslivestockvalidation.com . Instructions can be found at www.texasyouthlivestock.com .

The only signatures that should be present before validation are in the event that a Parental Waiver is needed due to parent/guardian absence.

Physical Validation Process

During validation, the Texas 4-H and FFA Steer Validation Form and the Texas 4-H/FFA Livestock Program Ethics Policy Form will be completed, the steer will be tagged, tattooed, and have hair samples collected.

Suggested Physical Validation Supplies

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Squeeze and/or clipping chute | <input type="checkbox"/> Hair pulling pliers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> All paperwork and envelopes | <input type="checkbox"/> Paper towels / rags |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ear tags | <input type="checkbox"/> Rubbing alcohol |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ear tagging tool (EID compatible) | <input type="checkbox"/> Latex gloves |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tag remover | <input type="checkbox"/> Hand sanitizer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tattoo kit | <input type="checkbox"/> Disinfectant for equipment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tattoo ink (green ink preferred) | |

Detailed Overview/Workflow of Physical Validation

1) Exhibitor Information

- a) Family completes personal information on validation materials upon arrival to physical validation but does not sign until completion.

Validation Form: Complete one per family

Ethics Policy Form: Complete one for each exhibitor

- Parental Waiver (if applicable, obtained prior to validation)

2) Tattoo

- a) Tattoo animals **RIGHT ear** with the county tattoo number (See Procedures for a Better Tattoo). Place the tattoo in the in the lower third of the ear just below the cartilage rib, centered from outside to inside. Tattoos will be verified at shows. If the county tattoo is not present or not readable, the animal is subject to disqualification.

Special note: make sure the tag is not covering the tattoo if they are in the same ear. Try to tag in the left ear and tattoo in the right ear. **The State Validation Committee reserves the right to disqualify an animal if its tattoo, brand, or primary form of identification cannot be read safely.**

3) Ear Tag

- a) Tag animal's **LEFT ear** with the visual tag number facing the back of the steer and the EID button on inside of the ear. *Make sure the EID button number and Visual Tag numbers match.*
- b) Place tag between the ribs of the ear, about 3/4 of the length of the ear from the tip.

NOTE: Do NOT alter tags in **size, shape, form, or color**. If lost, the exhibitor must purchase a replacement tag for \$25 at the show or contact County Extension Agent and/or County Level State Steer Validation chairperson regarding replacement ear tags. Steers without tags are subject to disqualification. [Ear Tag & Tattoo Video https://youtu.be/XagNvtx4Zbl](https://youtu.be/XagNvtx4Zbl)

****Important Note**** The county validation chairperson **MUST notify** the Texas 4-H Steer and Heifer Validation Program (dottie.goebel@ag.tamu.edu) **at LEAST 3 weeks prior** to the show if an animal is **retattooed**.

****Important Note**** A “complete validation” is defined as completing all necessary forms, online upload of information, *as well as* a secured placement of validation tags onsite. All livestock are required to have tags placed in their ears at the time of county-level state validation. Additionally, tags must remain in the ear through exhibition. **Tags should not be cut out of the ear of validated livestock for any reason. In the event of medical circumstances requiring the tag be cut out, please consult a veterinarian.** If a livestock validation visit is conducted, all livestock must be in compliance with a complete validation. If livestock are not in compliance, they may be subject to disqualification.

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4) Collect DNA (See Procedures for DNA Assay Hair Collection and Cattle Hair Sample Collection Instructions)

- a) Collect one hair envelope per steer
- b) Pull hair from accessible area (suggest tail switch). Pull directly away from skin, not at angle.
- c) Obtain 30+ hairs with follicles, at least 2 pulls if from tail switch (5 pulls from the poll, neck or tail head).
- d) Do NOT touch follicles. Clean pliers and hands between animals.

NOTE: Do not staple the DNA envelope.

Hair Sample Video: <https://youtu.be/9l-9QFJZF8U>

TEXAS 4-H & FFA VALIDATION HAIR SAMPLE			EAR TAG NO. OR PLACE HEIFER U/I LABEL HERE
DATE	COUNTY NAME OR NO.	SPECIES	
EXHIBITOR PRINTED NAME(S)*			
EXHIBITOR SIGNATURE(S)*			
PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN SIGNATURE		SUPERVISING CEA/VAT SIGNATURE	
TECHNICIAN PRINTED NAME		TECHNICIAN SIGNATURE	
<small>Please pull at least 40 hairs with the follicles intact (do not cut). Avoid contamination with other hair samples and keep dry. Sign and seal envelope in the presence of exhibitor. It should be noted that validation is a proof of ownership as required by major livestock shows in Texas. It does NOT automatically enter exhibitors in a major livestock show or county show.</small>			
<small>*Breeding animals can only be validated to a single exhibitor.</small>			
<small>COPYRIGHT © 2015, ANIMAL ID, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED</small>			

5) Physical Validation Process Concludes

- a) If possible, provide supervising CEA/AST with **copy** of Validation Form.
- b) Validation Chairperson takes possession of all original validation paperwork and any unused tags.**

STEER

TEXAS 4-H AND FFA MARKET STEER VALIDATION FORM

County Name: _____ County Tattoo #: _____ Date: _____

NAME(S): _____ OR _____
Last First MI Last First MI

_____ OR _____
Last First MI Last First MI

ADDRESS: _____ CITY: _____ ZIP: _____ PHONE: _____

FAMILY EMAIL ADDRESS (Required): _____

Validation #	Color/Pattern/Descr.	Validation #	Color/Pattern/Descr.	Validation #	Color/Pattern/Descr.

Exhibitor's Signature(s): _____

Validation Chairperson Signature: _____

CEA/AST Signature: _____ Club/Chapter: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Printed Name: _____

ATTENTION: Exhibitor(s), parent/guardian, supervising teacher/agent and committee members are equally responsible for making sure the steers are ear tagged properly and that all information found on this validation form is correct. It should be noted that validation is a proof of ownership as required by major livestock shows in Texas. It does NOT automatically enter exhibitors in a major livestock show or county show.



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Submitting Validation Paperwork and DNA

The County Level State Steer Validation Committee Chairperson will send all required validation materials **postmarked on or before July 8, 2026, via priority/certified mail, return receipt requested to:**

***Only use mailing address if using USPS, shipping address should be utilized for all other carriers (UPS, FedEx, DHL, etc.)**

Shipping Address:

Dottie Goebel
ATTN: Steer Validation
1504 6th Street
2473 TAMU
Bryan, TX 77843

Make sure the following are completed BEFORE returning the Validation Materials

_____ Validation forms include exhibitor contact information and following signatures:
 Each potential Exhibitor Parent or Legal Guardian Supervising CEA or AST Validation Chair*
**If the Committee Chairperson is the supervisor of the exhibitor of the steer, another committee member will sign for the Chairperson.*

_____ Hair envelopes include exhibitor name(s), county name or number, tag number, and following signatures:
 Each potential Exhibitor Parent or Legal Guardian Supervising CEA or AST Technician

_____ An Ethics Policy Form is completed by all possible exhibitors.

Please use validation checklist on page 15 to prepare validation materials before mailing to the Texas 4-H Headquarters.

All forms **MUST be signed by the exhibitor, exhibitor’s parent or exhibitor’s legal guardian, the supervising Agricultural Science Teacher or County Extension Agent, and the County Level State Steer Validation Committee Chairperson. If the Committee Chairperson is the supervisor of the exhibitor of the steer, another committee member will sign for the chairperson.**



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Checklist for Submitting Validation Materials

Organize and Sort Validation Materials

_____ CHECK THAT ALL SIGNATURES ARE OBTAINED. Processing of materials will be delayed and additional paperwork will be required for missing signatures.

_____ Validation Forms: Place in alphabetical order by exhibitor last name.

- Secure validation form in separate stack for shipping.

_____ DNA Envelopes: place in numerical order and secure in separate stack for shipping. **Do not staple the DNA envelope.**

_____ Ethics Policy Forms: place in alphabetical order by exhibitor last name and secure in separate stack for shipping (submit **ORIGINAL** forms). Verify **ONE** Ethics Policy Form completed **PER EXHIBITOR.**

_____ Parental Waiver/Hold Harmless Form (if applicable): place behind exhibitors corresponding Ethics Policy. A Parental Waiver/Hold Harmless Agreement does not substitute a parents' or legal guardians' signature on any of these forms or hair sample envelope(s).

_____ Return completed Steer Validation Committee Form with validation materials.

_____ Return unused hair sample envelopes and validation forms, *free of markings.* **DO NOT return unused tags.**

_____ **Do not combine/mail Steer and Heifer validation materials.**



2026-2027 Steer Validation Program

Texas 4-H/FFA Validation Guidelines

Submit Validation Materials Postmarked by **July 8, 2026**

_____ Include all validation materials listed starting on page 9 and mail to:

* **Only use mailing address if using USPS, shipping address should be utilized for all other carriers (UPS, FedEx, DHL, etc.)**

Shipping Address:

Dottie Goebel
ATTN: Steer Validation
1504 6th Street
2473 TAMU
Bryan, TX 77843

_____ Upload steer validation information **online** at www.texaslivestockvalidation.com. The system will open **June 1, 2026** and will close **July 8, 2026**.

_____ **Supervising CEA/AST and County Validation Chair should maintain at least one file copy of all validation forms throughout the 2026-2027 validation period. The family should receive a copy.**



2026-2027 Steer Validation Program

Texas 4-H/FFA Validation Guidelines

Payment Process

The Validation Chairperson that **submitted the order** will be invoiced for validation fees for the entire county. ***They will receive an invoice for the whole county based on how many steer tags were ordered.***

\$25 per head March 1-April 9. Payment will be due at the time of invoicing, *not ordering*. Invoices will be sent on April 26.

\$30 per head April 10-June 23. Payment will be due at the time of invoicing, *not ordering*. Invoices will be sent on June 30.

Please send payment with the invoice for each ordering period. County and/or Chapter checks can be payable to **Livestock Validation Account 218400** and mailed to the address below. Please **mail checks AFTER receiving invoice.**

Dottie Goebel
ATTN: Steer Validation
1504 6th Street
2473 TAMU
Bryan, TX 77843

Important Note:

The county validation committee will make arrangements for all equipment and shipping necessary for carrying out this program. The "County Level State Steer Validation Committee" is responsible for any locally incurred expenses resulting from the administration of the Texas 4-H and FFA Heifer Validation Program. **The County Validation Committee may not charge more than \$5.00 more than the original cost of the validation materials - \$30.00 total. If the local cost to validate is more than what an additional \$5.00 per validation fee will provide, please contact Texas Steer Validation for assistance.**

Replacement Ear Tag

Exhibitors should be instructed to immediately notify their supervising County Extension Agent or Agricultural Science Teacher when an ear tag is lost or damaged. They in turn should notify the Validation Chairperson within ten days for consideration of replacement. The Chairperson will arrange for the committee to determine validity of loss. If the committee concurs, they can assign a replacement tag from their county reserve or secure a replacement tag from the State Coordinator. The Ear Tag Replacement form can also be found at <http://texasyouthlivestock.com/beef-cattle/steer-validation/>.

Any unused tags can be used by the County Level State Steer Validation Committee as replacement tags. However, tags **CANNOT BE TRANSFERRED** from county to county.

Process for securing a replacement tag from county reserves:

- 1) Retag steer with tag from county reserves. Two members of the county validation committee must be present at the time this occurs.
- 2) Complete **ALL PARTS** of the Ear Tag Replacement Form (**Ear Tag Replacement Form p. 26**) and submit to the State Coordinator. (see deadlines below)

Process for securing a replacement tag from the State Coordinator

- 1) Complete the **BOXED** section only of the Ear Tag Replacement Form (**Ear Tag Replacement Form p. 26**) and submit to the State Coordinator.
- 2) Within 7 to 10 working days a replacement tag will be sent to the County Steer Validation Committee Chairperson.
- 3) Retag steer with new tag. **Complete the remainder** of the Ear Tag Replacement Form (**Ear Tag Replacement Form p. 26**) and submit to the State Coordinator. (see deadlines below)*

*Deadlines for submitting ear tag replacement forms

Once the retagging process is complete, the Ear Tag Replacement Form must be **RECEIVED** by the State Coordinator **TWO WEEKS** prior to the intended date of show. Forms may be emailed to dottie.goebel@ag.tamu.edu

If possible, tags should be replaced prior to arrival at a major show; however, if needed, tags may be replaced for \$25 at major shows. Retagging usually occurs day of check-in.

County Transfers

If an exhibitor transfers counties after validation, **the validation chairperson in the county in which the steer was originally validated** must complete the **Change of County Request Form** found at <http://texasyouthlivestock.com/beef-cattle/steer-validation/>.

Change of Ownership

For cases where a steer has been validated to one family but prior to the June 30 deadline is sold to another family, the steer can properly be validated in the new owner(s) names by following details outlined in Change of Ownership Form. See page 30.

2026-2027 Steer Validation Program

Texas 4-H/FFA Validation Guidelines

Texas 4-H/FFA Steer Validation Committee Form For _____
 _____ County _____ Month/Year

Address _____
 City/ZIP _____
 Phone _____
 Fax _____
 Email _____

Validation Chairperson Contact Information:

Date: _____

POSITION	CEA, AST, or Leader/Show Board Rep. <i>Check Appropriate</i>	NAME	SIGNATURE
Chairman	<input type="checkbox"/> CEA <input type="checkbox"/> AST		
Member	<input type="checkbox"/> CEA <input type="checkbox"/> AST <input type="checkbox"/> Co-Chair <input type="checkbox"/> Leader or Show Board Rep.		
Member	<input type="checkbox"/> CEA <input type="checkbox"/> AST <input type="checkbox"/> Leader or Show Board Rep.		
Member	<input type="checkbox"/> CEA <input type="checkbox"/> AST <input type="checkbox"/> Leader or Show Board Rep.		
Member	<input type="checkbox"/> CEA <input type="checkbox"/> AST <input type="checkbox"/> Leader or Show Board Rep.		
Member	<input type="checkbox"/> CEA <input type="checkbox"/> AST <input type="checkbox"/> Leader or Show Board Rep.		
Member	<input type="checkbox"/> CEA <input type="checkbox"/> AST <input type="checkbox"/> Leader or Show Board Rep.		
Member	<input type="checkbox"/> CEA <input type="checkbox"/> AST <input type="checkbox"/> Leader or Show Board Rep.		
Member	<input type="checkbox"/> CEA <input type="checkbox"/> AST <input type="checkbox"/> Leader or Show Board Rep.		

*****For the Chairperson*****

- Please clarify to your committee members that signing this form verifies that they are members of the steer validation committee for the above-mentioned county. With this membership comes the responsibility of overseeing the steer validation process.
- As chairperson, you are responsible for ensuring that you and/or at least one member of this committee witnesses the validation and hair collection of each validated animal.



2026-2027 Steer Validation Program

Texas 4-H/FFA Validation Guidelines

Parental Waiver

I, _____, being the parent or legal guardian of _____, a minor and an exhibitor (hereinafter referred to as Exhibitor) in the 2024-2025 Texas 4-H/FFA Junior Livestock Steer Program, am unable to be present during the Steer Validation Process and at the time hair samples will be collected for steer identification purposes.

I hereby authorize the _____ County Level State Steer Validation Committee to complete the validation process for Exhibitor's steer(s) in his/her presence. I recognize that he/she is a minor child and will be acting without my parental guidance and oversight.

Finally, I agree and acknowledge that because I am not able to be present during the Steer Validation Process, I hereby waive any and every right to challenge, question, or contest any and all actions or inactions of the County Level State Steer Validation Committee during the Validation Process for Exhibitor's steer(s). As parent and/or legal guardian of Exhibitor(s), I fully understand and acknowledge that if the requirements for the validation of his/her steer(s) are not completed correctly, (1) the steer(s) will not be eligible for competition in the Junior Livestock Steer Program at Major Livestock Shows, and (2) I hereby agree to hold harmless for any and all purposes and to relinquish any present or future claims against all members of the County Level State Steer Validation Committee and/or other person(s) that participated in my attempted validation of Exhibitor's steer(s).

Date

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian

NOTE: A Parental Waiver/Hold Harmless Agreement does not substitute a parents' or legal guardians' signature on any of these forms or hair sample envelope(s)



2026-2027 TEXAS 4-H/FFA LIVESTOCK PROGRAM ETHICS POLICY (Updated April 2026)



Texas 4-H and FFA are founded on integrity, accountability, and ethical behavior as essential to youth development. These programs provide meaningful learning experiences that build character, responsibility, and life skills through active participation and personal effort. Upholding these standards ensures fairness, preserves the educational purpose of the programs, and prepares youth for success beyond their 4-H and FFA experiences. Any action that violates these expectations or impedes the ability to uphold program standards constitutes a rule infraction.

This ethics policy applies to any 4-H/FFA member planning to exhibit animals at livestock shows in Texas, as well as the exhibitor's parents/guardians, advisors, and third-party personnel acting on behalf of the exhibitor. It is the responsibility of the 4-H/FFA member and their parent/guardian to inform any person acting on behalf of the exhibitor of the Texas 4-H and FFA Livestock Program Ethics Policy and all associated rules and consequences. All classes of livestock offered at livestock shows in Texas are subject to this policy, including, but not limited to: cattle, goats, sheep, swine, poultry, rabbits, equine, and any other livestock classes offered. This "Texas 4-H/FFA Livestock Program Ethics Policy" will be enhanced with additional rules and guidelines which individual fairs and livestock shows adhere to on the local, county, regional, and state levels. The provisions contained in this policy do not constitute a contract, express or implied, between Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Texas 4-H, Inc., or Texas FFA and any applicant, participant, or parent. Additionally, the terms and conditions contained herein do not create or expand legal rights already existing under the law.

4-H and FFA livestock project exhibitors are under the supervision of an Agricultural Science Teacher or County Extension Agent who serves as the advisor for that project. The major livestock shows of Texas support the educational content and leadership provided by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, and the Agriculture Teachers Association of Texas. Also, the major livestock shows of Texas fully support the administrative authority of Agricultural Science Teachers and County Extension Agents to certify the fulfillment of all validation protocols and appropriate paperwork between the exhibitor, Texas 4-H/Texas FFA, the major livestock shows of Texas and the supervising educator. Exhibiting livestock is a privilege, and exhibitors must comply with this document and respect the authority granted to his/her supervisor. Additionally, any verbal, physical, or otherwise demonstrated threats or comments toward validation personnel, volunteers, or show leadership will not be tolerated.

The following practices or procedures are unacceptable and are defined as being deceptive, fraudulent, unethical, and inhumane in the care, fitting, preparation and showing of all classes of livestock. The use of any illegal drug is prohibited. Any practice used to alter the appearance of an animal entered in livestock events is prohibited (See Rule #9 & #10). Proof of any animal being subjected to illegal and/or unethical practice(s) and/or procedure(s), including inhumane animal treatment, abuse, or neglect, described herein may result in disqualification. If a violation is found of any of the rules or requirements of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to: interim suspension, disqualification, a cancelled validation record, and/or future validation records.

All 4-H/FFA exhibitors must follow these rules to validate livestock through the Texas 4-H/FFA livestock validation program.

1. Exhibitors must be bona fide members of a 4-H Club or FFA Chapter in the State of Texas and be in good standing and eligible to compete in accordance with each respective organization. The exhibitor must care for their animals under the direct supervision of a County Extension Agent or Agricultural Science Teacher. Exhibitors must be enrolled in, and attending, public or private and/or accredited home school elementary or secondary schools in Texas. Texas 4-H and/or Texas FFA reserve the right to seek verification of enrollment, records, and/or passing status from the accredited governing homeschool association. Exhibitors must be Texas residents. State validated livestock must be housed and cared for in Texas.

2. County-Level State Validation serves as proof of ownership for state validated livestock. For breeding animals, the official ownership date is the date reflected on the registration papers. This date is the specific date for each breed of record as recognized by the validation program. (Individual show rules may determine ownership requirements for non-market animals.) Registered breeding heifers must show the exhibitor as the sole owner of the animal on the breed association papers. Registered breeding heifers with additional registration papers within the breed association of validation record or in another breed association may be evaluated for multiple ownership. If additional registration papers are found active within an association indicating ownership information conflicting with the exhibitor's ownership designation, the livestock may be subject to disqualification.

3. To gain the life skills developed through the livestock project, exhibitors must be closely engaged in the continuous feeding, maintenance, training, grooming and overall welfare of his/her animals. Exhibitors are responsible for providing the primary and continuous daily care of livestock projects throughout the validation period. Immediate family members and/or guardians are permitted to provide assistance at the approved livestock housing address. The validation period begins immediately following the county-level state validation date regardless of the validation deadline date listed. Exhibitors must provide continuous care for all state validated livestock through exhibition at all livestock shows and/or the animal's eligibility to show. Facilities and location/space are a major determining factor in livestock species selection by the exhibitor. In some instances, it may be in the best interest of the exhibitor and his/her learning experience to select a species project that is best suited for his/her facilities and feasibility of housing projects.

a. **4-H and FFA livestock project exhibitors are under the supervision of an Agricultural Science Teacher or County Extension Agent who serves as the advisor for that project.** Excessive involvement of third-party consultants, breeders, or fitters not affiliated with the Texas 4-H and/or Texas FFA programs is prohibited. Third-party involvement interfering with the exhibitor's ability to provide primary daily care of and engagement with livestock projects may result in the disqualification of all state validated livestock projects owned by all associated exhibitors/families and any projects at locations associated with such third party. Disqualification due to excessive third-party involvement could result in notification to all state level validation committees in Texas of the involved third-party affiliation and all Texas livestock shows requiring state validation. Likewise, third-party interference with the County Extension Agent and/or Agricultural Science Teacher's ability to properly supervise the livestock project may result in the disqualification of all state validated livestock projects or future validation records.

b. Livestock projects must be raised at the physical address of validation record (the "Premises"). All projects of one species must be housed at the same approved location, provided, however, that exceptions may be made for limitations placed by school/county livestock housing facilities. **Prior approval** must be granted by the "Species Specific County-Level State Validation Committee" in the event the state validated livestock will be outside the direct care of the exhibitor, immediate family/guardian, and/or the supervising County Extension Agent or Agricultural Science Teacher. Failure to gain **prior approval** from the supervising Agricultural Science Teacher/County Extension Agent and the Species-Specific County-Level State Validation Committee may result in the disqualification of all of the exhibitor's state validated livestock.

c. To obtain **prior approval**, exhibitors must complete an official 4-H/FFA Validation Rule #3 Prior Approval Form. Exhibitors not obtaining prior approval as outlined above will be subject to disqualification of the livestock in question and any other state validated livestock projects. The form can be accessed here: <https://texasyouthlivestock.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Rule-3-Approval-Form.pdf> By signing the Texas 4-H and FFA Livestock Program Ethics Policy, the exhibitor and parent/guardian, recognize his/her responsibilities for the primary and continuous care of livestock projects throughout the feeding period and hereby authorizes the State Validation Coordinator or designated representatives and/or State Validation Compliance Team, supervising County Extension Agent or Agricultural Science Teacher and the "Species Specific County-Level State Validation Committee" **the right to inspect any state validated livestock at the Premises, at any time during the feeding period with or without prior notice.** State validated livestock must be made available for inspection at any time requested at the address listed on validation record (Premises) or any other property (public or privately owned) where the livestock may be located. Failure to make state validated livestock available for inspection as requested will constitute a violation of validation rules and may lead to disqualification of the livestock in question and any other state validated livestock. Additionally, any exhibitor in violation of the primary and continuous daily care rule is subject to disqualification.

d. The following is intended to serve as a guideline for housing state validated livestock. Texas 4-H and FFA livestock exhibitors are expected to follow these guidelines under the supervision and approval of their County-Level State Validation Committee and supervising Agricultural Science Teacher and/or County Extension Agent. In any instance of discrepancy, the Species-Specific State Validation Chairperson and the State Validation Executive Committee have the right to interpret these rules and will have the final decision on all housing inquiries.

i. All state validated livestock should be housed at the home of the livestock exhibitor or a family member or at a county or school ag facility. Any exhibitor who has existing livestock facilities or existing land to build such should house their livestock projects at their residence or at a county or school facility. It is the burden of the livestock exhibitor's family to research and contact all school or county facilities in the county before exploring alternative options.

ii. If the facilities described above do not exist, an alternative facility may be investigated to house the livestock. A facility of this nature can only be explored after efforts to house livestock at the facilities described above have been exhausted. Alternative facilities must be within the exhibitor's county and/or school district, unless deemed appropriate by designated approval documents. Alternative housing addresses must be listed on the Texas 4-H/FFA Livestock Program Ethics Policy Acknowledgement/Signature Form. Additionally, alternative facilities may only be used with approval from the County-Level State Validation Committee. These requests may be denied based on existing evidence of possible housing facilities listed in #1 AND/OR due to concerns of excessive third-party involvement. The burden of seeking approval is on the livestock exhibitor's family. The

Species-Specific State Validation Chairperson and the State Validation Executive Committee have the right to interpret these rules and will have the final decision on all housing inquiries in instances of disagreement or interpretation. If an exhibitor is concerned of a potential housing facility that may not be acceptable according to the listed criteria, please contact the Species-Specific State Validation Chairperson for an advisory opinion. All interpretations, decisions and settlements will be made by program leadership to align these rules with the best interest of the program and participants. Any requests and/or appeals concerning alternative housing will be approved/denied based on, but not limited to, the following criteria: existence or availability of housing facilities listed above; location and proximity of the alternative housing to the exhibitor; excessive third-party involvement; and previous instances of rule violation or excessive third-party involvement at the proposed alternative location. Excessive third-party involvement includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- 1) Decision making or advice counter to that of the supervising County Extension Agent or Agricultural Science Teacher
 - 2) Daily or frequent feeding, training, maintenance, washing, rinsing, blowing, or other care practices
 - 3) Interfering with or denying access to CEA, AST, and/or any other county or state level committee member as listed in Rule #3 to supervise or check state validated livestock
 - 4) Encouragement of or use of unethical fitting or showing practices as listed in Rule #9
 - 5) Excessive or misleading advice at livestock shows; or
 - 6) Any rule violations by the livestock housing provider
- iii. Violation of livestock show rules or validation regulations by a livestock housing provider may result in the removal of that location from the list of approved validation housing sites, including Rule #3 Approval Form address.

4. Animals validated through the Texas state validation program may also be exhibited at other shows. Be advised, however, the sale or participation in terminal shows will impact the state validated animals per the directives outlined below involving chain of animal ownership.

a. If any Texas state validated animal is exhibited and SOLD at any other major livestock show officially sanctioned by Texas state validation, the animal will be ineligible to show at any subsequent major livestock show in the animal's lifetime. These shows include: Heart 'O Texas Fair, State Fair of Texas, Grandstand/Hill Country District Livestock Show, Fort Worth Livestock Show and Rodeo, Sandhills Stock Show, San Angelo Livestock Show and Rodeo, San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo, Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, Rodeo Austin, Texas' Elite Showcase, and the Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show.

b. Additionally, Texas state validated livestock offered for sale during the feeding period via private treaty, private or public auction (including terminal county livestock show auctions) will be ineligible to show at any subsequent major livestock show during the feeding period. If ownership changes or has the possibility of changing through a sale offering (including animal(s) purchased back by the exhibitor of validation record), regardless of method or length of time, that chain of animal ownership is considered broken and the animal will be ineligible to show at any remaining livestock shows in the feeding period requiring state validation.

5. DNA samples obtained from livestock at the time of County-Level State Validation must match DNA assays obtained any time during the feeding period for the state validated animal and exhibitor record.

6. A state validated livestock project may not be simultaneously validated in more than one county or state. Additionally, a state validated animal may not be county or state validated under a different exhibitor's name in another county. State validated livestock projects must be validated through the County 4-H Program or Texas FFA Chapter in which they will enter and show the livestock project in Texas major livestock shows.

7. Any method used to misrepresent the age of an animal for a class in which it is shown is deceptive and considered a violation of the rules and guidelines. Any method used to misrepresent the breed or falsification of documents for a breeding animal, as determined by a recognized breed association or livestock show, is deceptive and considered a violation of the rules and guidelines and may result in disqualification of the state validated livestock.

8. Family validation is permitted under certain circumstances. "Family validation" means state validating livestock with related family members in the same household, or separate, in the case of split family divorce situations. To be eligible for family validation, the youth participants must be related family members. "Related family members" for the purpose of state validation means nuclear family, stepfamily, or siblings via guardianship. Failure to utilize the student's legal name on any validation form or livestock show entry form is a violation of the Ethics Policy and may result in disqualification. Documentation, including official government-issued documents, may be requested in order to certify the identity and/or custody status of the youth participant.

9. Showing an animal for another individual by claiming ownership in order to show in a specific livestock class/event or claiming ownership through signage, social media, or any other advertising method is prohibited. A false claim of ownership is a violation of these guidelines and will lead to disqualification.

10. Treating an animal internally or externally, with any irritant, counter-irritant, or other substance used to artificially change the conformation or appearance, or enhance performance, of an animal for show is considered unethical, inhumane, and is prohibited. Surgery, injection or insertion of foreign material under the skin and/or into the flesh of an animal to change the natural contour, conformation or appearance of an animal's body is illegal. This includes, but is not limited to, **injection of gas, air, oil, or other foreign substances**; cutting/tearing of the hide/underneath the hide or removal of tissue in any attempt to alter the physical appearance of the animal; numbing or "deadening" an animal's tail; cutting tendons of an animal; using foreign substances to build or cosmetically re-shape feet; as well as "twining" which includes the attachment of hair or hair substances (i.e. baling twine, cloth, fiber, etc.). Acceptable practices of physical preparation which are allowed include: clipping of hair, trimming of hooves, dehorning, removal of ancillary teats, and docking of tails.

11. The use of unethical fitting, showing and/or handling practices or devices compromising animal welfare will not be tolerated.

12. Livestock exhibitors will be held accountable for the Species-Specific Validation Guidelines for each species in which they state validate livestock projects. Livestock exhibitors will also be held accountable for the rules and guidelines for each major livestock show in which they exhibit state validated livestock. Validation Guidelines may be found at www.texasyouthlivestock.com. To remain in compliance, livestock must be fully validated. A full validation is specific per species and may include: tag, tattoo, nose print, ear notches, and all associated paperwork. Livestock will be held to the full validation as stated in each species validation guidelines. Animals not in compliance with a full validation may be subject to disqualification.

13. The Texas 4-H and FFA State Validation Executive Committee reserves the final and absolute right to interpret these rules and to settle and determine all matters, questions, and differences in regard thereto, or otherwise arising out of, or connected with, or incident to this "Texas 4-H and FFA Livestock Program Ethics Policy". All interpretations, decisions and settlements will be made by program leadership in order to align these rules with the best interest of the program and participants.

Any violation of the Texas 4-H and FFA Livestock Program Ethics Policy and/or associated validation guidelines, as well as specific rules as designated by individual livestock shows, including the use of deceptive information, or any action that impedes, interferes, or obstructs with an investigation or the determination of eligibility, may result in any one or combination of the following: interim suspension pending investigation or appeal, probation, disqualification, ineligibility status, loss of eligibility for future validations and/or participation in organized livestock competition. Additionally, depending on the nature of the infraction, violations could result in notification to all state level validation committees in Texas and all Texas livestock shows requiring state validation of the infraction and the involvement of any third-party. **Possible civil or criminal penalties may be imposed by the proper authorities based on evidence provided by the livestock show of exhibitors in violation of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act/or the animal mistreatment, neglect, and abandonment laws that apply on the local, state, and/or national levels.** All rule violations will be dealt with on an individual basis by the Species-Specific State Validation Committee, State Validation Coordinators, and/or appropriate livestock show officials.

2026–2027 Texas 4-H/FFA Livestock Program Ethics Policy Acknowledgement/Signature Form

I, the parent/guardian and exhibitor, am verifying that I have read the “Texas 4-H/FFA Livestock Program Ethics Policy” and understand the consequences of and penalties involved for illegal, unethical, inhumane, and unfair practices in livestock competition. I am also verifying knowledge that my family and I may be prohibited from future participation in organized validation programs in the State of Texas and could face possible criminal prosecution and/or civil penalties if implicated in any of the aforementioned acts.

ATTENTION: Please list the address the livestock will be housed below. The address where the animal(s) will be located should be approved by the local validation committee. If a housing address change occurs during the feeding period, the exhibitor is responsible for notifying their supervising CEA/AST who-in-turn must notify the county-level state validation committee for approval. It will be the responsibility of the county-level state validation chair to notify the State Specie Specific Validation Chair of the address upon arrival.

IMPORTANT: Only one exhibitor per form.

Physical Address (Livestock Housing)	City	Zip Code
Exhibitor Mailing Address	City	Zip Code

Signatures of Acknowledgement: These signatures verify you have read the 2026-2027 Texas 4-H/FFA Livestock Program Ethics Policy in its entirety (Pages 1-4). Please return this page completed and signed.

Exhibitor (Printed Name)	Exhibitor (Signature)	Date
--------------------------	-----------------------	------

Exhibitor Family Phone Number: _____ Exhibitor Family Email Address: _____

Parent/Guardian (Printed Name)	Parent/Guardian (Signature)	Date
--------------------------------	-----------------------------	------

Supervising CEA/AST (Printed Name)	Supervising CEA/AST (Signature)	Date
------------------------------------	---------------------------------	------

Validation Chairman (Printed Name)	Validation Chairman (Signature)	Date
------------------------------------	---------------------------------	------

FFA Chapter and/or County 4-H Name	County Name
------------------------------------	-------------

State Validation Deadline Dates (These are state deadlines only, local deadlines take priority over the dates listed below):

State Fair and Heart of Texas:

June 30 for steers, heifers, lambs, goats, breeding sheep and goats, and swine

All Other Major Shows:

June 30 for steers

October 31 for lambs and goats

October 1 breeding sheep and goats

October 31 breeding heifers

November 30 for swine

Procedures for DNA Assay Hair Collection

The DNA Assay brings the most powerful technology developed for human forensics to bear on the problem of animal identification. Whether animal or human, an individual's DNA is fixed at the moment of fertilization and can be determined from an analysis of blood or tissue samples. The assay provides individual-specific identification and has been validated in scientific literature and thousands of criminal cases.

1) Sample acquisition:

- a) During validation, the animal's hair is taken and placed in the hair sample envelope. Specific instructions found in **Hair Sample Collection Instructions** (See page 31)
- b) The main concern is collecting at least 30 hair samples with the root bulb attached. This will require more than one pull, and pulls should be from the tail switch.

2) Chain of Custody:

- a) To assure chain of custody, the Technician* should place the validation visual ear tag number on the sample card in front of, and evident to, the exhibitor(s) and his/her parent or legal guardian. The technician, exhibitor(s), exhibitor's parent or exhibitor's legal guardian, and supervising County Extension Agent or Agricultural Science Teacher must sign the hair sample envelope after the hair has been placed inside the envelope and the envelope sealed.

**Technician* - any individual designated by the County Level State Steer Validation Committee to be responsible for collecting hair samples i.e., County Extension Agent, Agricultural Sciences Teacher, etc.

NOTE: In the event of an emergency or special situation that prevents the exhibitor's parent or exhibitor's legal guardian from being present at the time the hair samples are collected and the validation occurs, the Texas 4-H/FFA Validation Program Waiver and Hold Harmless Agreement must be completed. A copy of this form should be retained by the County Level State Steer Validation Chairperson. A Parental Waiver/Hold Harmless Agreement does not substitute a parents' or legal guardians' signature on any of these forms or hair sample envelope(s).

Procedures for a Better Tattoo

During the validation of steers, the County Level State Steer Validation Committee is required to place a tattoo in each steer validated. The following steps should be helpful in having a good legible tattoo.

Step 1. Clean Ear & Select Tattoo Site

Clean the inside of the ear of any dirt, oil, or wax materials before applying tattoo.

Place the tattoo in the lower third of the ear just below the cartilage rib, centered from outside to inside of ear. Avoid the ribs and major blood veins of the ear.

- Do not apply tattoos on the edges of the ear because the edges are usually haired and dark colored, making the tattoo unreadable.

Step 2. Apply Ink

Place a generous amount of tattoo ink inside the ear, on the area that is to be tattooed.

- Although messier, use a paste-type ink which leaves a more legible print. Avoid using roll-on inks, as they are too thin and do not fill up the tattoo with a good legible print.
- The person applying the tattoo ink should wear a pair of plastic surgical gloves.

Step 3. Apply Tattoo

Place the tattoo pliers parallel with the ear ribs and press firmly. Apply enough pressure so that the tattoo needles penetrate the skin.

Step 4. Rub in Ink

Firmly rub tattoo ink into puncture holes using a toothbrush or your thumb.

- In case of excessive blood, apply more tattoo ink and continue to rub in ink until bleeding lessens or stops.

Ear Tag & Tattoo Video <https://youtu.be/XagNvtx4Zbl>



2026-2027 Steer Validation Program

Texas 4-H/FFA Validation Guidelines

This form is to be utilized by the County Level State Steer Validation Chairperson for tag replacements within the county. A separate form must be completed for each replacement tag. **Tags may not be transferred from county to county.**

*****BEFORE SENDING, SEE VALIDATION GUIDELINES FOR DEADLINES*****

EAR TAG REPLACEMENT FORM

This form is to be utilized by the **County Level State Steer Validation Chairperson** for tag replacements within the county. A separate replacement form must be completed and submitted for each lost tag.

Tags may not be transferred from county to county.

COUNTY NAME _____	COUNTY NUMBER _____	DATE _____
EXHIBITOR _____		
(LAST)	(FIRST)	(MI)
ADDRESS _____		
CITY _____	ZIP _____	
PHONE # (_____) _____		
ORIGINAL VAL. TAG # _____		
REPLACEMENT VAL. TAG # _____		
STEER COLOR _____		

EXHIBITOR(S) SIGNATURE _____

AST/CEA SIGNATURE _____

VALIDATION CHAIR SIGNATURE _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE _____

Ear Tag Replacement forms must be completed, scanned and emailed to the State 4-H office to:

Dottie Goebel
dottie.goebel@ag.tamu.edu

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
Date Received: _____	Date Processed and Entered: _____

TATTOO REPLACEMENT FORM

This form is to be utilized by the **County-Level State Validation Chairperson** for tattoos that need to be redone during the feeding period. Market lambs/goats and wether dams/does **MUST** be tattooed with the county number in which they are validated in at the time of physical validation. A separate replacement form must be completed for each family.

TATTOOS MUST BE REDONE AT LEAST THREE WEEKS PRIOR TO THE INTENDED DATE OF SHOW.

COUNTY NAME: _____ COUNTY NUMBER: _____ DATE: _____

EXHIBITOR'S NAME(S): _____

(LAST)

(FIRST)

(MI)

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: (_____) _____

VALIDATION TAG #: _____ SPECIES: _____

VALIDATION TAG #: _____ SPECIES: _____

VALIDATION TAG #: _____ SPECIES: _____

VALIDATION TAG #: _____ SPECIES: _____

VALIDATION TAG #: _____ SPECIES: _____

REASON FOR RE-TATTOO: _____

EXHIBITOR(S) SIGNATURE: _____

AST/CEA SIGNATURE: _____

VALIDATION CHAIR SIGNATURE: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE: _____

Tattoo Replacement Forms must be completed and emailed to the respective office:

Whitney Whitsel
Whitney.whitsel@ag.tamu.edu
Texas Sheep and Goat Validation Program
Tel. 325.657.7323

Dottie Goebel
Dottie.goebel@ag.tamu.edu
Texas Steer and Heifer Validation Program
Tel. 979.321.5326



2026-2027 Steer Validation Program

Texas 4-H/FFA Validation Guidelines

Change of Ownership Form

There may be cases when a steer has been validated to one family, but prior to the June 30 deadline the steer is sold to another family. This steer can be validated to the new owner(s) if the procedures below are followed. This revalidation process will prevent a steer's ownership from being validated to two or more families in one or more counties. Failure to follow proper procedures will result in steers not being properly validated, and therefore ineligible for competition at any Major Livestock Show.

The County Level State Steer Validation Committee Chairperson *in the new county* will follow instructions below.

1. Record previous tattoo number, state validation visual ear tag number, and previous owner's information below.
2. Remove old validation tags and return to state office. If the former owner's validation tag is not in the steer's ear, the tag number must be obtained from the previous county's County Level State Steer Validation Committee Chairman.
3. Check the steer's right ear for previous validation tattoo numbers. Tattoo an X over each of the three former county tattoo numbers. If change of ownership occurs within the same county, the validation committee will scratch the steer from the previous owner's validation form and add the steers' information to the new owner's form.
4. Tattoo new county number in a visible place in the right ear.
5. Place new validation tags in ear as appropriate.
6. New hair samples with the new validation number and exhibitor(s) name(s) must be taken. Follow proper validation procedures for collecting hair.
7. Write "RV" (Re-validated) beside visual tag number on the validation form. Example: 5693-RV.
8. The State Steer Validation Personnel will delete the steer from the previous owner's form.

To be completed by NEW COUNTY on or before June 30 and submitted to State Office with validation materials

New County Name: _____ **New County Tattoo #** _____

Present Owner Information		Previous Owner Information			
Name (Print)	Visual Tag #	Name (Print)	County	County Tattoo #	Visual Tag #



CATTLE HAIR SAMPLE COLLECTION INSTRUCTIONS



1 Check the ear tag number of the animal, and record it on the hair sample envelope.

We strongly recommend that you collect tail switch hair. If this is not an option, then collect hair from the poll, neck or tail head. Clean the sample

area with a paper towel to remove excess dirt if necessary.

Use bent, long or needle nose pliers to collect the sample.



2 Grasp hair close to skin with pliers and pull directly away from the skin. Take at least two pulls. Make sure that the sample has at least 30 hair roots. If tail switch is not available, then take at least 5 pulls from the poll, neck or tail head.



3 Inspect the hair sample to ensure at least 30 hair follicles.

Do NOT cut the hair from the animal. The hair MUST CONTAIN ROOTS for DNA testing. Avoid touching the roots and make sure the hair is dry.

Place hairs in the sample envelope and seal the envelope. Do not put hairs in a plastic bag.



4 Fill out the remaining information lines on the envelope, and have the witnesses sign.

REMEMBER: Cleanse hands and pliers between animal samples to ensure that hairs from different animals are not mixed.



CATTLE HAIR SAMPLE CHECKLIST

- ✓ Insert ear tag number on the envelope
- ✓ Collect hair from tail switch
- ✓ Obtain at least 30 hairs with follicles
- ✓ Take at least 2 pulls
- ✓ Inspect for follicles—do NOT touch follicles
- ✓ Obtain exhibitor signature & seal envelope
- ✓ Clean pliers and hands between animals