Eastern Michigan Fair
LAPEER COUNTY 4-H DEPARTMENT
FAIR CONFLICT RESOLUTION POLICY

The mission of the MSU Extension 4-H Youth Development Program is to create opportunities for young people to develop good character, life skills, specific project skills, and knowledge through positive, hands-on educational activities. This is primarily accomplished through 4-H Clubs and events organized by adult volunteers around specific areas of interest or “project areas”. Participation in the fair is one opportunity for young people to exhibit their finished 4-H projects for evaluation and recognition.

In Lapeer County, the Fair Manager and the Board of Directors of the Lapeer County Agricultural Society operate the Eastern Michigan Fair under the Michigan Department of Agriculture rules for fairs. The 4-H Department of the Eastern Michigan Fair is open to exhibits of 4-H and FFA members. The following process is a joint effort of the 4-H Youth Program, FFA, and the Lapeer County Agricultural Society Board of Directors.

The purpose of the conflict resolution process is to resolve complaints concerning rules in a fair and timely manner that reinforces ethical behavior and good sportsmanship. The MSUE 4-H Codes of Conduct required for volunteers and members will be in effect throughout this process. Any inappropriate behavior will result in a warning and action up to and including dismissal from judging. Further action may be taken if sufficient evidence exists to merit such action.

In order to ensure that the complaint receives an impartial hearing, every effort will be made to see that no individual serves in more than one superintendent position. If it does happen that an individual has a dual role or is a parent or party in the complaint in addition to being a superintendent, an alternate is to be designated. It is recommended that each project area have at least two superintendents. Therefore, if one superintendent is a party in the complaint (i.e., a parent or leader of the party who is filing the complaint or who is named in the complaint), or serves in another position involved in the resolution procedure, another of that area’s superintendents will hear the complaint as needed. In the event that there is only one 4-H Superintendent for the project area, and that superintendent is a party in the complaint (as described above), the complainant will go directly to the 4-H General Superintendent. In the event that both 4-H Indoor General Superintendents are party to the complaint, the complainant goes to 4-H staff. In the event that the 4-H General Livestock Superintendent is also the sole superintendent in the project area in question, or is the leader or parent of the complainant or a party named in the complaint, the Vice President of the 4-H Livestock Committee replaces the 4-H General Livestock Superintendent in the Conflict Resolution Process for this complaint. The Eastern Michigan Fair General Livestock Superintendent and 4-H General Livestock Superintendent will not be the same person.

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4-H Department Fair Conflict Resolution Process

1. The alleged rule violation must be written on a 4-H Youth Department Rules Violation Form and signed by the complainant. The forms are available at the 4-H Office at the fair, the Eastern Michigan Fair Office, and the Lapeer County MSUE office.

2. All 4-H Youth Department Fair Rules Violation Forms are subject to the Freedom of Information Act and therefore cannot be kept confidential. Any party named in the complaint will have the right to read the Fair Rules Violation Form.

3. The complainant describes the concerns in writing on the 4-H Youth Department Fair Rules Violation Form, lists the fair book page and rule related to the complaint, signs the form, gives the bottom copy to the 4-H office at the fair, and takes the original form (with remaining copies attached) to his/her 4-H Club Project Leader for the related project area. The Leader discusses the concern with complainant and signs the form. If the complaint is resolved at this point, the Leader and the complainant describe the agreement on the form, sign and date the form, and file it with the 4-H office at the fair. A copy is also given to the Eastern Michigan Fair.

4. If the concern is not resolved, the Club Project Leader and the complainant take the form to the project area 4-H Superintendent(s). If the complainant is a youth member, the parent/legal guardian of the youth will also accompany them (with parental/guardian consent another adult may accompany the youth). If there is no project superintendent who is not a party to the complaint, the complainant goes directly to the 4-H General Superintendent. The Superintendent(s) discusses the issue with the parties and signs the form. If the complaint is resolved, the Superintendent(s) and the complainant describe the agreement on the form, sign and date the form, and file it as above.

5. If the concern is not resolved, the complainant takes the written form to the 4-H General Superintendent or designee as described in the policy of Livestock or Indoor Projects as appropriate. The General Superintendent or designee signs and dates the form. This Superintendent or designee consults with 4-H staff, the project superintendents and all other involved parties to investigate the complaint. Every effort is made to make a determination in a timely manner no later than 24 hours after the 4-H General Superintendent or designee receives the form, or as soon as is reasonably possible. The 4-H General Superintendent or designee, in consultation with project area superintendents and 4-H staff, will make an unbiased decision based on thoughtful consideration of the issues and evidence.

6. To assist in resolving the complaint in a timely manner, the complainant, named party(s), and superintendents are required to move through the steps without undue delay. When the complaint is taken to the next step, it should be done in no more than 12 hours.
7. If the complaint is filed prior to a judging event, the party(s) named in the alleged rule violation, their parent(s) and leader(s) will be informed privately that a complaint has been filed and is being investigated. The judging will continue as scheduled, but the placings are subject to change if the complaint is upheld. They are also informed that if the complaint is sustained, and it is found that misrepresentation has taken place, the exhibit(s) will be declared ineligible, the placing(s) (if the member named in the complaint has placed) will be voided, and the exhibitor will be required to remove the exhibit(s) in question from the Fairgrounds in a timely manner. The other placings will stand and the placing that was voided will not be awarded.

If the investigation cannot be completed before the class is judged, the exhibitor will be allowed to show. In the interests of fairness, the judge will not be informed that a complaint has been filed. If the investigation finds that misrepresentation has taken place, the exhibit(s) will be deemed ineligible to show, the placing(s) (if the member against whom the complaint has been sustained has placed) will be voided, and the exhibitor will be required to remove the exhibit(s) in question from the Fairgrounds.

If misrepresentation is discovered after a market livestock project has been judged and prior to the Livestock Auction, the exhibit(s) will be deemed ineligible to show, the placings will be voided as above, and the animal(s) in question will not be permitted to sell. If the investigation finds after a market livestock project(s) has been sold, that misrepresentation has taken place, any monies above the market price, (as determined by the 4-H Livestock Auction Committee), will be retained by the 4-H Livestock Committee. The member will receive the day’s going market price for the market livestock project animal(s) in question, minus all fees assessed to 4-H auction participants by the 4-H Livestock Committee. Other livestock project animals will not be moved up in the placings.

If any reward has already been awarded, the exhibitor will be required to refund all premiums, trophies, awards, ribbons, and/or sale money. The Fair Book and the Michigan Department of Agriculture Rules for Fairs will be the guidelines for this process.

8. The determination of the 4-H General Superintendent will be written on the Fair Rules Violation Form. Copies will be given to the Eastern Michigan Fair office and the 4-H office at the fair. The complainant and party(s) named in the complaint will be notified of the determination in person or by phone.

9. The complainant or affected party may appeal to the Fair Manager (or Eastern Michigan Fair General Livestock Superintendent if designated by the Fair Manager).

10. The complainant or party(s) named in the complaint has the right of appeal to the Fair Board according to the process described in the fair book under Section 6 of Protests and Appeals. Upon appeal to the Fair Board, the decision of that Board is final and there is no further appeal.