



NATIONAL YOUTH CATTLE WORKING CONTEST

2026 OFFICIAL RULES

Entry Fee: \$300 per team

Eligibility: Eligible teams must have won their state contest and meet state eligibility requirements (Please refer to NYCWC by laws). Each team will consist of three members. **Team members must have a current BQA number and be 14-19 years of age as of January 1 of the current contest year.** Teams may represent county 4-H programs, FFA chapters, county cattlemen's groups or comprised of individuals from different counties. Teams must be entered on the official entry form at www.nationalcwc.com and provide a completed Code of Conduct form for each team member. Code of Conduct will include each team member's parent/ guardian's signature indicating their permission for their child to participate.

All teams and contestants must have chute side experience and have practiced on live cattle prior to competing in the contest. All contest officials have the discretion to intervene in any situation deemed necessary.

Team members must be Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) Certified to compete. BQA certification must be completed/verified and submitted by September 1, 2026. BQA Certification can be completed in any of the following ways:

1. Instructor-led training by a BQA Certified Instructor
2. Online at the National BQA Website
bqa.beeflearningcenter.org

*****Contestants that do not have a current BQA certification or equivalent by September 1, 2026, are ineligible to compete.**

***BQA Certification is valid for three years. If you have questions about the BQA Certification Status of youth

contestants, please contact your state BQA Coordinator.

Teams will be comprised of three members and one optional alternate. A coach can enter four team members in the national contest. Team member names must be identified during the team registration process. At the time of contest check-in, the three active team members must be designated.

Entry Deadline is September 1, 2026, at 11:59 PM EST – no exceptions.

*****Individuals are only permitted to compete in the National Youth Cattle Working Contest one time. All competing members entered future National Youth Cattle Working Contest. Non-competing alternates are still eligible for future contests.***

Contest Protocol: Protocol modifications may be made by superintendents on the day of contest that may supersede these rules as needed. Each team will be required to work three head of cattle through an alley into a chute and properly catch each animal's neck in a head gate. All products and equipment will be provided to each team at the contest.

Before the cattle processing begins, each team will be given the products to be used along with a cattle processing plan(s). Team members will be required to complete the cattle processing plan(s) form in 30 minutes. Information included on the processing plan(s) include procedures to be completed, products to be used, route of administration, location on animal for application, dosage, and pre-slaughter withdrawal time.

All maps will be scored (and corrected if needed) and returned to each team as their turn arrives to compete at the chute.

Please familiarize yourself with the Cattle Processing

Plan(s). Please remember that all products and procedures (even those that do not involve a product [Blood sample, ear notch, etc.]) should be listed on the Cattle Processing Plan(s). If more than one animal type is utilized, multiple processing plan(s) will be completed.

Each team will be responsible for the preparation and administration of animal health products and procedures. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Vaccines
 - Killed
 - Modified Live
 - Combo
- Ear tagging
 - Visual
 - EID
 - Insecticide
- Deworming
 - Pour-on
 - Injectable
 - Drench
- Ear notching
- DNA sampling
 - Hair
 - Blood
 - Tissue
- Implanting
- Tattooing
- Weighing
- Record Keeping

In addition to the cattle processing plan(s) and cattle handling activities, each team will be required to complete a team problem addressing quality assurance with regards to product selection, administration, and withdrawal times or cost benefits of an animal health program. Example problems will be made available. The team problem will be worth 25 points and teams will have 20 minutes to complete the team problem.

At the contest, teams will be sequestered in a holding location during and after completing their processing plan(s) and team problem. No phones are allowed until after the team has competed. Teams will remain in the designated area until it is their turn to work their cattle. Coaches will not be allowed contact with contestants while in the holding location and/ or prior to entering the chute/working area. After completing their working session, teams may watch subsequent teams compete.

GUIDELINES FOR SCORING YOUTH CATTLE WORKING CONTEST

The Cattle Processing Plan(s) provide information about the products that are used, how they are used, and where they are administered; and the procedures completed. This document becomes a permanent health record for this group of cattle. If the cattle are sold this document would accompany the cattle, so the new owner is aware of the details surrounding health products administered to the cattle. Every cell on the plan(s)

should have something written in it for each product used, so not leave cells blank. The correct procedure for administering each product will be corrected on the cattle processing plan(s), if necessary. Failure to apply a product or improper administration will result in point deductions. Products should be applied in accordance with the team's approved cattle processing plan(s). In the Cattle Processing Plan(s), the following information is requested, and guidelines for answering these questions are provided:

Product Name or Procedure - Complete name of product as it appears on the label.

Treats Against - Provide the disease/virus the product protects against. Make sure to give the specified scientific name, abbreviations will not be accepted.

Product Type - MLV, Combo, killed – the product type should be listed as one of the three choices or N/A if it is a procedure or a product that does not fit one of those three categories.

Route of Administration - The footnote of the Processing Plan provides the following possible responses - Subcutaneous (SQ), Intramuscular (IM), Topical (T), Oral (O), Intranasal (IN) and Ear Tag (ET), Epidermis (E). Proper administration is found on the label. Do not include where the product is administered here, that information is dealt with separately.

Location of Administration - Location is to be noted on the animal illustrations which appear at the top of the Cattle Processing Plan by writing the number of the product on the designated space.

Injectable products can be given only in the neck. Note that there is a right side and a left side depiction provided. Do not give 2 different injectable products in the same location.

For pour-on dewormers, draw a line with a beginning and ending point to indicate the entire region of the top line where the product is to be poured.

Dose - Dosing information is found on the product label. Dose provided needs to be practical based upon the instrument used to measure the dose. In other words, if a dewormer is calculated to be given at the rate of 26.4 ml, and the dosing instrument is scaled in multiples of 5 ml, then the dose given should be listed as 30 ml. You can't accurately measure the 26.4 ml dose with the instrument used, and under dosing of dewormer is a bad technique, so you would round up.

Tags - If more than one tag should be given, one should be placed in each ear. Tag placement should be correctly shown on the cattle processing plan.

*****The weight of the cattle being used may be given to the participants by contest administration prior to the Cattle Processing Plan(s) being completed. If the weights are not given, contestants will be expected to weigh animals and calculate the correct dose before administering.**

Pre-slaughter Withdrawal - Should be recorded in days. This information is found on the product label. If there is no withdrawal required, then record a '0' in the space for that product.

Remaining Processing Plan Requirements - The following pieces of information are also required elements on the Cattle Processing Plan(s) and will be scored as noted.

- **Product Description** – should be listed as it appears on the label and includes the diseases for which the product is being given to prevent or treat. If documenting a procedure use the content column to list the type of sample being collected or N/A if more appropriate.
- **Product Type** – MLV, Combo, killed – the product type should be listed as one of the three choices or N/A if it is a procedure or a product that does not fit one of those three categories.
- **Serial/Lot #** - Serial number or lot number (if a serial number is not present) for all items associated with any single product should be listed. Some products may have multiple components with different serial or lot numbers, and each one is to be listed. \
- **Expiration** – the expiration date for all products should be listed. If a procedure or product that does not contain an expiration date, please list "N/A".

Procedures Performed: The judge's job is to evaluate the proper use of the instrument, proper handling of the product, safe and effective delivery of the product to the cattle, and to determine if the product is given in the way described on the Cattle Processing Plan(s). The judge is to closely observe these factors for each animal worked by the team. If all 3 head of cattle are not worked, then no score will be given, and the team will be disqualified.

Specific guidelines for evaluation and scoring for each type of product follow.

Vaccination Injections. These should all be given according to label directions and the cattle processing plan(s). Watch carefully to be sure that subcutaneous (SQ) shots are being administered under the skin and inside of the triangle. Either the one-handed technique (needle goes in at a very steep angle) or two-handed tenting technique is acceptable.

Intramuscular (IM) injections should be given in the triangle in front of the scapula, above the neck vertebrae and at least 2 inches down from the top of the neck to stay out of the ligamentum nuchae. All IM injections should be given deep enough to be sure they are in the muscle (depth of a 1" needle). Aspiration to be sure that the needle is not in a vessel is encouraged. Intranasal (IN) products require administration in the nostril. The IN cannula must be used and replaced for each animal. Vaccine hydration is often required and must be done properly. A new sterile syringe should be used every time a vaccine is drawn up and administered. If a needle is

dropped or bent or burred it should be replaced.

Possible 3 Point deductions to include:

- Handling needles in an unsafe manner

Possible 2 Point deductions to include:

- Failure to re-administer product if not given correctly on first attempt
- Shot was given IM instead of SQ
- Failure to use a new disposable needle
- Vaccine was not properly hydrated or mixed
- Syringe was switched between vaccines
- Failure to change cannulas between calves
- Failure to administer into the nostril
- Failure to change needle if it was dropped, burred, or bent
- Injection given behind the neck, too high, too low, or too far forward

Possible 1 Point deductions to include:

- Took more than 1 attempt to administer properly
- Injection not given where indicated on cattle processing plan(s)
- IM injection was given too shallow in the muscle
- IM injection was given too low or high on the neck
- IM injection was not aspirated before given
- Wrong dose given (too much or too little)
- Needle was dropped, burred, or bent

Point deductions are at the discretion of the judge.

Additional points may be deducted if deemed necessary by the judge.

Ear Notching - Notches should be made from the ventral portion of the ear, near the base. Then the notched segment should be placed into a labeled, empty, dry collection tube.

Possible 2 Point deductions to include:

- Sample is not of sufficient size
- Failure to disinfect notching tool
- Tube is not correctly labeled or closed

Possible 1 Point deductions to include:

- Notch is not made in the correct position.
- The sample is fumbled and not correctly inserted in a dry test tube.
- Tube is not correctly labeled or closed.

Point deductions are at the discretion of the judge.

Additional points may be deducted if deemed necessary by the judge

DNA Sample

Hair - 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 the tail switch is not available, then take at least 5 pulls from the poll, neck or tail head. The sample is placed into a clean, dry envelope with tape applied across the hair sample leaving the follicles exposed.

Blood – Label the blood tube with the animal’s identification number. Lift the animal’s tail and palpate the coccygeal vein. Insert needle attached to hub into the vein. Gently slide the blood tube into the hub and hold in place until the tube is full.

Tissue – write the animals identification number next to the tissue sampling unit cartridge before removing it from the box. Properly load the cartridge into the tissue sampling unit ensuring that it is locked into place. Sample the animal in the middle of the ear. Ensure that there is a tissue sample collected in the cartridge and return it to the box next to the proper ID number. If tagging animals as well as collecting a tissue sample, ear tags may be put in the same location as the tissue sample to avoid multiple holes in the ear.

Possible 2 Point deductions to include:

- Failure to label the blood tube
- Failure to properly record animal ID
- Improperly loading the TSU
- Envelope for hair sample is not labeled

Possible 1 Point deductions to include:

- No follicles obtaining when pulling hair
- Follicles are dirtied when placed into the envelope
- Sample falls on ground
- Sample not taken in proper location
- Multiple attempts to obtain sample
- Sample taken from area that is contaminated

Point deductions are at the discretion of the judge.

Additional points may be deducted if deemed necessary by the judge

Implants - All implant products are to be given on the back of the ear, under the skin, with the implant deposited out on the ear and not in the softer tissue at the base of the ear. After correct administration, it should be easily palpated by gently squeezing the site between thumb and finger. If the implant product consists of multiple individual pellets, these should be deposited in a line as they appear in the product cartridge rather than in a cluster.

Implants may be applied to either ear. They must be administered before any insecticide tag is applied, if applicable. However, the “rib” of the ear where the ear tag is applied and where the implant is applied should differ. Points will be deducted if the ear tag button and the implant are in contact with each other. The needle of the implant gun should be disinfected after each

animal, using a disinfectant dispenser sponge wipe, or other technique. However, immersing the needle in disinfectants is not to be done, as this may lead to dissolving implant pellets.

Possible 2 Point deductions to include:

- Implant deposited in a cluster
- Needle run through the ear and implant falling to the ground
- Implant not palpable on the back of the ear in a SQ location.

Possible 1 Point deductions to include:

- Implant is in contact with button or ear tag
- Failure to disinfect implant gun between calves.

Point deductions are at the discretion of the judge.

Additional points may be deducted if deemed necessary by the judge

Dewormer - There are several different ways in which dewormers are designed to be administered, based upon the product. These include oral liquids administered with a drench gun, oral paste administered with a specific gun-type device, topical liquids designed to be poured on the back, and injectable forms. In the case of all but the injectables, the measurement of a specific dose is somewhat imprecise due to both the volume of product included in a single dose, and the accuracy of measurement with the application device. Consequently, the dose applied should be rounded up to the next higher amount that can be measured with the device, rather than some “in-between” quantity.

Orally administered products (liquid or paste) must be given in such a fashion that the animal does not spit it out. Proper technique involves getting the applicator over the top of the tongue before depressing the trigger. The best way to do this is by entering the side of the mouth with the instrument and gently forcing it between the molars and over the tongue. Putting your hands in the mouth is both awkward and dangerous. With boluses the hand is inserted in the side of the mouth opposite where the worker stands and pressure on the roof of the mouth results in the animal opening his mouth so that the balling gun can be inserted over the root of the tongue.

Proper use of the applicator involves setting it to the proper dose based on weight of the cattle and on the dose described on the label. The applicator needs to be positioned in such a way that product flows into the gun when it is supposed to “reload”. Failure to do this means an incomplete dose is brought into the applicator.

Topically applied products (also known as pour-on) are normally applied in a line down the back of the animal from withers to tail head. Care should be taken to avoid any foreign material that might interfere with the absorption of the topically applied product. Pouring these products in a pool in a single spot is bad technique, resulting in improper absorption of the product. These

products often have a safe handling warning on the label, the result being that they should not be handled with bare hands. To avoid splashing a product on a teammate, the injections should be completed before the topical dewormer is applied.

Applicators can be gun-type devices with adjustable dosing capability that pump products out of a large container or reservoir. There is also a direct applicator bottle whereby a single dose is squeezed from one location of the bottle into another region of the bottle, and this in turn is poured directly onto the animal. The cap of the bottle must be loosened to allow the product to flow from one portion of the bottle into the other.

Possible 2 Point deductions to include:

- Failure to re-administer oral product if animal spit out
- Improper measure of dosage for proper applicator
- Handling products labeled as hazardous without gloves

Possible 1 Point deductions to include:

- Took more than 1 attempt to administer properly
- Failure to apply the topical product from withers to tail head
- Failure to insert applicator of orally administered product sufficiently into mouth
- Failure to wait to complete injections before applying topical product
- Failure to adjust technique if corrected by official
- Applying product on top of foreign material

Point deductions are at the discretion of the judge. Additional points may be deducted if deemed necessary by the judge

Judges should point out errors that pose a safety risk (not wearing gloves) or that result in improper dose being applied (gun not set properly). If a team fails to adjust their technique, then an additional point will be deducted and the team will not be allowed to proceed until the error is corrected.

Tattoo – The number and/or letters to be tattooed into the animal’s ear should be identified, retrieved from the tattoo kit, and disinfected. The ear in which the tattoo will be applied should be identified and disinfected. Once the tattoo gun is loaded with the proper identification, the tattoo should be applied and the ink added. When possible, the tattoo should be applied to the middle of the ear. If the middle of the ear is not possible, the location should be moved within the ear to an area that will be easily visible.

Possible 3 Point deductions to include:

- Failure to apply correct tattoo

Possible 2 Point deductions to include:

- Tattoo equipment is not disinfected before use

- The ear is not properly cleaned and disinfected
- Ink is not applied
- Participant had to be corrected on what tattoo is to be applied
- Tattoo not applied to the correct area

Possible 1 Point deductions to include:

- Tattoo not applied with enough force
- Took more than 1 attempt to administer properly

Point deductions are at the discretion of the judge.

Additional points may be deducted if deemed necessary by the judge

Tags -

Possible 2 Point deductions to include:

- Tags were handled without gloves for insecticide tags
- Tag not placed securely or correctly in ear

Possible 1 Point deductions to include:

- Took more than 1 attempt to administer properly
- Ear tag not placed in 2 ears per instructions on bag
- Ear tag button is in contact with implant
- Tag placed in ear backward (unless placed here to avoid blocking visual tag)
- Tag not placed in location specified on cattle processing plan(s)

Point deductions are at the discretion of the judge.

Additional points may be deducted if the judge deems necessary.

Cattle Handling: Scoring for this is somewhat subjective. Nice, smooth, quiet handling is being sought after. Points may be deducted for noisy or rough handling and errors in catching heads, moving cattle, etc.

Possible 3 Point deductions to include:

- Completely missing an animal

Possible 2 Point deductions to include:

- Rough handling
- Excessive roughness in moving cattle
- Failure to use crowd gate
- Excessive use of cattle stick/electric cattle prod

Possible 1 Point deductions to include (Depending on availability of equipment):

- Team failed to use head restraint or head holder
- Team had to have more than one attempt to properly load cattle into alley chute
- Noisy handling
- Team had more than one attempt to properly catch the animal

- Failure to use squeeze before starting processing
- Failure to release squeeze before releasing animal
- Failure to latch crowd gate
- Failure to use bar behind animal
- Failure to remove bar in chute after releasing animal when gate is open for next animal

It may be necessary to reach into a chute to move cattle. If this is done correctly it should not result in deductions for safety. The reach must come from high enough in the chute to be above where an animal would usually pass to cause arm injury. Cattle may be encouraged to move forward in the chute by walking past them from front to back, by gentle pokes with a working stick or by twisting a tail. Points should be deducted for excessive poking with a stick or outright hitting cattle.

Deductions should not be made for cattle turning around in the chute or alley if this is beyond the control of the handlers. How the handlers deal with such an event is a subjective way to assess the team's handling ability. ***Contest Administrators may stop time on any team to assist with safely getting the animal turned around. Time should begin again once the animal is turned around or returned to the tub to be reloaded.

Point deductions are at the discretion of the judge.

Additional points may be deducted if the judge deems necessary.

Safety: Teams will be evaluated on the way in which they handle the cattle and use the handling equipment. Unnecessary rough or harsh handling of the cattle will result in point deductions. Only equipment provided by the contest will be allowed. The use of any other driving sticks, canes, or other devices is prohibited. The safety of the competitors and the cattle will be emphasized. The cattle should be handled as safely as possible to minimize any potential for injury to team members. **If the judges or contest administration feel that a potentially dangerous situation exists, processing and time will be stopped.** Any action that seems to put the handlers or cattle at risk may result in a deduction for safety.

Point deductions are at the discretion of the judge.

Additional points may be deducted if the judge deems necessary

Time: A 20-minute maximum will be enforced at the National Youth Cattle Working Contest. The actual cattle working will be timed. Timing will begin after the cattle processing plan(s) are approved by the judges, and contestants have been given the ok to begin. Teams will be given 5 minutes to evaluate the working area prior to starting the actual cattle working. A team will be stopped if they exceed the 20-minute maximum time allowed. **All contest officials have the discretion**

to intervene in situations when deemed necessary. It is the responsibility of the teams to know the maximum time limit before the contest starts. Time may be stopped at the discretion of the contest official(s), if necessary, to address an animal in distress or other animal/human safety issues. Once resolved, time will resume. If all 3 head of cattle are not worked then no score will be given, and the team will be disqualified. Points will be given for time as follows:

- Under 10 minutes – 10 points
- 10:01 – 10:30 – 9 points
- 10:31 – 11:00 – 8 points
- 11:01 – 11:30 – 7 points
- 11:31 – 12:00 – 6 points
- 12:01 – 12:30 – 5 points
- 12:31 – 13:00 – 4 points
- 13:01 – 13:30 – 3 points
- 13:31 – 14:00 – 2 points
- 14:01 – 14:30 – 1 point
- 14:31 – 15:00 – 1/2 point
- Over 15 minutes – 0 points

Team Problem - In addition to the cattle processing plan(s) and cattle handling activities, each team will be required to complete a team problem addressing quality assurance with regards to product selection, administration, and withdrawal times or cost benefits of an animal health program. Example problems will be made available. Teams will have 20 minutes to complete the team problem. All numerical values, including calculations throughout the problem, should be rounded to two decimal places.

Scoring Outline:

- I. Cattle Processing Plan(s) - 20 Points
- II. Procedures Performed - 60-80 Points (Varies on how many procedures are performed.)
 - a. Vaccination Injections
 - b. Dewormer
 - c. Tags
 - d. Etc.
- III. Cattle Handling - 10 Points
- IV. Safety - 10 Points
- V. Time - 10 Points
- VI. Team Problem - 25 Points

*Ties will be broken based on the following sections in order: Cattle Processing Plan(s), Cattle Working Time