



COUNTRY HAM

Superintendent: Katie Williams - Marketing Specialist, NCDA&CS.

Registration Deadline: Tuesday, September 15, 2026 at 11:59 PM

**Mailed entry forms must be postmarked by September 1st, 2026*

Entry Fee: \$10 per entry

Entry Take-In & Weigh-In:

- Enter through Gate 3.
- Thursday, October 15th, 2026 from 8 AM-11 AM - Dorton Arena - East Ramp Entrance

**Mailed exhibits must be received by Tuesday, October 13th, 2026*

Judging:

- Thursday, October 15th, 2026 from 1 PM-4 PM

Entry Pick-Up:

- **Cut Hams (Div. 101, Class 03):** Thursday, October 15th, 2026 from 4 PM-7 PM - Dorton Arena
- **Whole Hams (All Other Classes):** Monday, October 26th, 2026 from 8 AM-12 PM - Dorton Arena
 - All unclaimed entries will become property of the N.C. State Fair and be donated to a food bank of their choice.

**Claim ticket from entry tags are required to claim your entries.*

COUNTRY HAM RULES & REGULATIONS

- The General Rules and Regulations of the Fair will govern this department, except in cases of conflict, where the following Rules and Regulations will prevail. Please read all rules & regulations carefully before submitting your entries.
- Submit questions to: NCSFCompetitions@ncagr.gov
- Pre-registration [online](#) is required. Make your entries early.
- Each exhibitor is allowed one entry per Class but may only enter one Division.
- Division 101 is open to any Commercial producers residing in the United States of America. If a Commercial exhibitor has more than one unique brand, each brand may enter as a separate exhibitor.
- Division 201 is open to any Amateur (non-commercial) producers residing in North Carolina only. Amateur producers are allowed one exhibitor per household.
- All entries must be cured, aged, registered, and entered by the exhibitor.
- The right is reserved to reject entries not properly entered.
- All entries must meet a **minimum show weight of 14 pounds**, as determined by a scale during entry take-in.
- Display space is limited; there is no guarantee that all exhibits will be displayed.
- All entries, except in Division 101, Class 03, will be displayed in Dorton Arena for the duration of the Fair.
- For mailed entries:
 - Each entry must arrive in an individual cardboard box that includes the entry tag and has the exhibitor name and address clearly labeled on the box exterior.
 - Please proceed to the next page for further instructions regarding mailed entries...

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- If you want your entry to be returned after the fair, a prepaid postage return address label must be included in your original package. Your entry will be returned to you in the same manner and packaging material in which it was mailed to us. Shipped entries will be placed in the mail to be returned to exhibitors by Saturday, October 31st, 2026.
- Mailed entries must be **received** by Tuesday, October 13th, 2026 at one of the following addresses:

USPS

NC State Fair Country Ham Contest
C/O: Katie Williams
1020 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1010

UPS or FedEx:

NC State Fair Country Ham Contest
C/O: Katie Williams
2 West Edenton St.
Raleigh, NC 27601

- Any ham declared “spoiled” by the judge shall be disqualified and discarded at the conclusion of judging.
- Claim tickets from entry tags are required to claim entries. Exhibitors may have another individual pick-up their entries, as long as the official claim ticket is presented.
- The Country Ham Competition Department Committee will rule on all questions or situations not definitively addressed in the Country Ham Rules & Regulations.

COUNTRY HAM JUDGING CRITERIA

CUT HAM (DIV. 101, CLASS 03)

	POINTS
1. General Appearance <i>Includes conformation, workmanship, meatiness, and color.</i>	20
2. Aroma <i>Will be evaluated both before and after cooking.</i>	10
3. Texture <i>High moisture content or too coarse of a grain is undesirable.</i>	10
4. Inside Color <i>A uniform color of the cut surface is desirable. Hams will not be discounted based on the cure ingredients used.</i>	10
5. Flavor <i>Exhibits the desirable tang and mellowness of a true country ham. Detection of off flavors will be penalized.</i>	50
TOTAL POINTS:	100

WHOLE HAM (ALL OTHER CLASSES)

	POINTS
1. Conformation <i>Refers to general shape of the ham.</i>	20
2. Workmanship <i>Neatness and attractiveness of the trim.</i>	20
3. Meatiness <i>Ratio of lean-to-fat.</i>	20
4. Color <i>Desirability and uniformity of outside color. Hams showing evidence of excessive saltiness, moldiness, or smoke will be discounted.</i>	20
5. Aroma <i>Desirability of aroma as determined by probing.</i>	20
TOTAL POINTS:	100



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DIVISION 101: COMMERCIAL COUNTRY HAM

- For exhibitors actively involved in larger scale production of country hams with federally or state inspected facilities, who reside anywhere in the United States of America.
- All entries in Classes 01 & 02 are required to be displayed for the duration of the fair.

PREMIUMS

National Grand Champion - 1st - \$200 2nd - \$50 3rd - \$25

CLASS

- 01 - Unsmoked Whole Ham *Whole hams placed in a climate-controlled cure no earlier than January 1, 2026.*
- 02 - Smoked Whole Ham *Smoked whole hams placed in a cure no earlier than January 1, 2026.*
- 03 - Cut Ham *Whole hams placed in cure no earlier than January 1, 2026. Hams may be smoked and should not be cut or sliced prior to entry. Hams will be cut during judging.*

DIVISION 102: AMATEUR COUNTRY HAM

- For Amateur producers (non-commercial) who reside in North Carolina.
- All entries are required to be displayed for the duration of the fair.

PREMIUMS

Got to Be NC Champion - 1st - \$150 2nd - \$50 3rd - \$25

CLASS

- 01 - Whole Ham *Whole hams placed in a cure no earlier than January 1, 2026. May use any method of curing and may be smoked or unsmoked.*

COUNTRY HAM SPECIAL AWARDS

AWARDS

- Got to Be NC Champion - Unsmoked Whole Ham *Highest scoring North Carolina-produced ham in Division 101, Class 01*
- Got to Be NC Champion - Smoked Whole Ham *Highest scoring North Carolina-produced ham in Division 101, Class 02*
- Got to Be NC Champion - Cut Ham *Highest scoring North Carolina-produced ham in Division 101, Class 03.*
- Commissioner's Choice Award *Awarded to the Commissioner's favorite-tasting North Carolina-produced Cut Ham entry in Division 101, Class 03.*

PREMIUMS

\$150

\$150

\$150

Ribbon
Only

