



# LJCA YOUTH CATTLE WORKING Contest

## 2026 OFFICIAL CONTEST RULES

**Eligibility:** Each team will consist of three members. **Team members must be a LJCA member, have a current BQCA number and are a high school freshman to high school senior.** Teams may represent parish 4-H programs, FFA chapters, parish cattlemen's groups or comprised of individuals from different counties. Teams must be entered on an official entry form and provide a completed permission form for each team member. Permission Forms 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 situations when deemed necessary.**

**Team members must be Beef Quality & Care Assurance (BQCA) Certified to compete.** BQCA certification must be completed/verified and submitted no later than March 27, 2026. BQCA Certification can be completed in any of the following ways:

1. Via an instructor-led training by a Louisiana BQCA Certified Instructor.
2. Online at the National BQA Website- <https://bqa.beeflearningcenter.org/>

**\*\*\*Contestants that do not have a current BQCA certification by March 27, 2026, are ineligible to compete.**

\*\*\*BQCA Certification is valid for three years.

Teams will be comprised of three members and one optional alternate. All team members and alternates must stay the same after qualifying for the state contest, no substitutions from other teams is allowed. The alternate from the qualifier may compete as an active in the state contest. Team member names must be identified during the team registration process. Contestant information will be entered, and active team members will be designated at contest check-in.

Individual contestants may only compete on ONE team at the State Contest.

**Entry Deadline is Monday, March 16, 2026 at 11:59 PM EST – no exceptions.**

**The individuals who competed on the winning team of the state contest are no longer eligible to compete in future LJCA Cattle Working Contests. Non-competing alternates are still eligible for future contests.**

**Contest Protocol:** Each team will be required to work three head of cattle through a holding pen 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 and form. Team members will be required to complete the cattle processing plan form in **30 minutes**. Information included on the processing plan includes 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. This is the cattle processing plan that will be used for the State & National Contest. Please remember that all products and procedures (even those that do not involve a product [Pulling blood sample, etc.]) should be listed on the Cattle Processing Plan.**

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

- Vaccines
  - 7-way clostridial
  - Respiratory complex (intranasal or subcutaneous)
- Ear tags, removal/administration (visual, EID tags, or insecticide)
- Dewormer (pour-on, injectable or drench)
- Maternal Bovine Appeasing Substance (mBAS)

**Practices/procedures that may include but not limited to the following:**

- Ear notching
- Hair DNA sample
- Implanting

**In addition to the cattle processing plan 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 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** provides 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 should have something written in it for each product used, do not leave information blank. The correct procedure for administering each product will be corrected on the cattle processing plan, 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. In the Cattle Processing Plan, the following information is requested, and guidelines for answering these items are provided:

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

**Product Description** - 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. When the choice of SQ or IM is given, the proper response is always SQ.

**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 that is to be used when calculating dosage(s) will be provided by the Contest Administrators prior to completion of the Cattle Processing Plan**

**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 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. The judge is to closely observe these factors for each calf 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. Watch carefully to be sure that 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 are acceptable.

IM injections should be given in the triangle in front of the scapula, above the neck vertebrae (tendency is to give the injection too far down where neck bones are), 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. Intranasal products require administration in the nostril, this can be done in one or both nostrils. The IN cannula must be used and replaced for each calf. Vaccine hydration is often required, and must be properly done. A new sterile needle 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. A separate, clean syringe should be used for every different vaccine or medication; syringes may not be shared between products. Handlers are expected to safely change needles between animals, while syringes may be reused for the same vaccine or medication provided the syringe remains clean, properly functioning, and uncontaminated.

**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 clostridium and respiratory vaccine
- Failure to change cannulas between calves
- Failure to administer into the nostril
- Failure to change needle if it was dropped, burred, or bent

**Possible 1 Point deductions to include:**

- Took more than 1 attempt to administer properly
- Injection not given where indicated on cattle processing plan
- IM injection was given too shallow in the muscle
- IM injection was given too low or high on the neck
- 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 the judge deems necessary.

**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. Ear notchers should be disinfected between every use.

***Subtract 2 points each time the following occurs:***

- Sample is not of sufficient size
- Failure to disinfect your notchers
- Tube is not correctly labeled or closed

***Subtract 1 point(s) each time the following occurs:***

- 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 the judge deems necessary.

**Hair DNA Sample** - 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.

***Subtract 1 point(s) each time the following occurs:***

- No follicles obtained when pulled.
- Follicles are dirtied when placed into the envelope.
- Envelope is not correctly labeled, or sealed.

**Point deductions are at the discretion of the judge.**

Additional points may be deducted if the judge deems necessary.

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

***Subtract 2 points each time the following occurs:***

- 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.

**Subtract 1 point(s) each time the following occurs:**

- 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 the judge deems necessary.

**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 pastes 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 also to 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 calf 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 calf 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 also 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 product on a team mate, *the injections should be completed before the topical dewormer is applied.*

Applicators can be gun-type devices with adjustable dosing capability that pump product 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 calf. 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 calf spit out
- Improper measure of dosage for proper applicator
- Handling products labeled 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

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 deduct an additional point and do not allow them to proceed without fixing the error.

**Point deductions are at the discretion of the judge.**

Additional points may be deducted if the judge deems necessary.

**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

**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 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:**

- Team had to have more than one attempt to properly load cattle into alley chute

- Noisy handling
- Team had to have more than one attempt to properly catch the animal
- Failure to use squeeze before starting processing
- Failure to release squeeze before releasing calf
- Failure to latch crowd gate
- Failure to use bar behind calves
- Failure to remove bar in chute after releasing calf when gate is open for next calf

**Common errors:**

- Missed head
- Failure to use or release squeeze
- Failure to use or remove bar behind calves
- Excessive roughness in moving cattle.
- Failure to use or latch the crowd gate.

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 calves 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, by twisting a tail, or electric cattle prod as a last resort. 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 calf turned around. Time should begin again once the calf is turned around or returned to the tub to be reloaded. Deductions will not be made if a calf goes down in the chute if this is beyond the control of the handlers. Handlers should attempt to get the animal back on its feet. If the calf does not get up, Contest Administrators may stop the timer to assist in safely raising the animal. Timing will resume once the calf is standing. How handlers respond to this situation will be considered a subjective measure of the team's overall handling ability.

**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 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. No deduction should be made for putting an arm through the chute if it is done appropriately and high enough in the chute so a calf cannot injure the arm.

**Common Errors:**

- Handler's head is too close to the calf's head during tagging, notching, or implanting so the calf can swing their head up and strike the handler.
- Dropping the tailgate on the calf
- Attempting to inject in the neck in front of the head catch – this may be further explained, on site, if the chute is designed with a neck extender.
- Handling needle in an unsafe manner

**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 State Contest.** The actual cattle working will be timed. Timing will begin after the cattle processing plan is 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 is automatically disqualified if they exceed the 20-minute maximum time allowed. **All contest officials have the discretion to intervene in situations when deemed necessary.** Any time over 10 minutes will receive a 1-point deduction each 30 seconds over time. 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 a calf 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.

**Team Problem** - In addition to the cattle processing plan 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- 20 Points
- II. Procedures Performed- 60-80 Points (*Varies on how many procedures are performed.*)
  - a. Vaccination Injections
  - b. Dewormer
  - c. Tags
- 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, Cattle Working Time.