



Agricultural Fair Stipend Fund Guide

2026



Term	Definition	Details
Stipend eligible educational agricultural talks, workshops, and demonstrations	<p>Educational agricultural talks, workshops, and demonstrations must be designed to educate fairgoers about Maine’s agricultural history and/or current practices, such as the work of farmers, food producers, and foresters. Eligible educational activities must be scheduled to occur at a specific and limited time and be listed in the fair’s schedule to encourage fairgoer attendance. Talks, workshops, and demonstrations must be facilitated by a person(s) knowledgeable on the topic and must include explaining and/or showing fairgoers a particular skill, technique, or expertise.</p> <p>Qualifying educational agricultural talks, workshops, and demonstrations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Are easy to find on the fair schedule •Inform fairgoers about an agricultural skill, technique, and/or expertise •Occur in spaces that promote learning •Are not limited to youth but may be designed to engage youth and/or may be facilitated by youth •Are designed to give the audience a tangible skill and/or a greater appreciation for agriculture <p>Allowances will not be made for activities that are not listed at a specific time in the fair’s schedule or that are not available for fairgoer attendance. Payments, fees, gratuities, and/or honorariums paid to vendors or exhibitors for fair attendance or livestock or product display are not eligible for Stipend Fund allowance.</p>	<p>Educational competitions or events may offer a stipend-eligible premium.</p> <p>Examples of qualifying educational competitions and events include sheepdog trials, judged educational displays, judged speeches or debates on an agricultural topic, competitive woodsman and other agriculture-related contests and trials.</p> <p>Examples of potentially qualifying non-competitive educational activities include horse or tractor logging demonstrations, draft horse, oxen, and teamster demonstrations, fruit, vegetable, livestock, farming, or forestry talks, fiber dyeing, weaving, or knitting workshops, cooking, canning, or food processing workshops, and sawmill and forestry demonstrations.</p>
Event	"Event" means a pulling competition or livestock exhibition.	
Livestock	"Livestock" means cattle, equines, goats, members of the genus Lama, rabbits, sheep and swine.	
Poultry	"Poultry" means domesticated fowl and domesticated waterfowl.	
Premium	"Premium" means a ribbon, trophy, or monetary amount, or a service or object with monetary value, awarded as a prize in a competition or event.	

Stipend Fund Eligible Categories	Preapproved (Examples, not all-inclusive)	2025 Submitted by Fairs for Commissioner Review and Approved for 2026 Stipend Allowance
<u>Categories A - J are limited to premiums offered as prizes in a competition or event.</u>		
A. Livestock and poultry;	Cattle, oxen, equine, goat, llama, rabbit, sheep, and swine competitions	Judged goat or livestock display, pig scramble, mutton busting
B. Vegetables, grains, fruits, and flowers;	Flower, fresh or dried fruit and vegetables, grain, and hay competitions.	Judged the largest vegetable, veg. oddity, most unusual fruit
C. Products derived from livestock and dairy products;	Milk, ice cream, cheese, milkshake, eggs, fiber, and meat competitions.	Judged fleece show
D. Home-canned, home-cooked, and home-baked goods;	Food products (jam, pickles, honey, syrup, vinegar) made in the home (not at a commercial facility)	Non-commercially produced honey and maple, homebrew
E. Grange and farm exhibits;	Judged grange exhibits	Judged farm tractor show
F-1. Youth agriculture events	Livestock and pulling competitions are limited to youth entries, e.g., 4H dairy or goat show	4H pig race
G. Mechanical arts exhibits;	Judged robotics, engineering, Legos, woodworking, STEM, compost, mechanics, tractor safety posters, welding, and metal work exhibits	Lego contest
H. Arts and crafts produced in the home;	Competitions for needle and fiber arts, crochet, homemade clothing, photography, painting, and other arts and crafts not produced by a commercial artist.	Youth poster contest, mobile contest, youth food package design contest, scarecrow contest
I. Pulling contests for equines and oxen;	Draft horse and oxen pulls	
J. Pulling contests for farm tractors and pickup trucks;	Farm tractor and pickup truck pulls	

Category K. Qualifying non-competitive educational agricultural talks, workshops, and demonstrations will be eligible for a Stipend Fund allowance.

<p>K. Educational agricultural talks, workshops, and demonstrations;</p>	<p>Goat demonstration, sheep dog demonstration, sheepdog trial, woodsman contest, compost demonstration, horse or tractor logging demonstration, draft horse, oxen, and teamster demonstrations, fruit, vegetable, livestock, farming, or forestry talks, fiber dyeing, weaving, or knitting workshops, cooking, canning, or food processing workshops, agriculture related energy and livestock shelter demonstrations, stoneworker, sawmill and forestry demonstrations, and farmer health and wellbeing talks and demos.</p>
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Agricultural events approved by the Commissioner not listed above

<p>L. Any other agricultural event approved by the commissioner.</p>	<p>All 2025 requests approved by the Commissioner fit within one of the above categories.</p>
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Activities Not Eligible for Stipend Fund Allowance

Activity	Examples
Animals	Animal Show not separated by species (may include pets, poultry, and fowl), petting zoos, payments for animals other than competition and event prize premiums, and pet contests
Auto & Motor Sports	ATV, UTV, lawn mower, garden tractor, trike pulls, car shows, car engine failure, demo derby, tough truck, ATV contests, mud runs
Awards and Giveaways	Citizenship Award, Drivers Education Giveaway
Bulk Supplies	Bulk ribbons and trophies not assigned to a specific qualifying competition or event, Carnival prizes, prize booths, Craft tables, and craft supplies at the fair (not arts and crafts produced at home)
Eating Contests	Eating and/or drinking competitions (watermelon, hot dog, pie, moxie, etc.)
Exhibitor, Vendor, and Volunteer Compensation	Born on Fairgrounds, Livestock exhibitor compensation for being on site, Oxen Weekly Exhibitor Stipend & Oxen & Steer Week Pay, Sow & Litter Exhibitor fee for bringing x# pigs, volunteer and vendor compensation, food vouchers for fair staff, volunteers, exhibitors; volunteer hours
Exhibits that don't fit into eligible categories	Exhibits that don't fit into a statute listed category, school exhibition hall entries that don't fit into a statute listed category
Fair promotional items	Fair posters, banners, swag; uniforms, auction t-shirts, clothing not awarded as a premium prize for a competition or event.
Games of Chance	Raffles, bingo, drawings, including non-specified raffles, Bossie bingo, cow chip bingo, bike raffles
Human contests and games	Arm wrestling, tough man, bed racing, back seat driver, frozen t-shirt contest, He-Man/She-Woman competitions, kissudoko, penny scramble, Connect4, cribbage, board and card games, talent contest, farmer olympics
Music & Entertainment	Battle of the bands, musician showcase, comedy, magic show, horse-drawn wagon rides
Non-Ag Demonstrations	Civil War historical re-enactment or demonstrations, Railroad Displays & Demonstrations
Non-competitive Displays	Hay bales for display, non-judged tractor displays; educational displays (not judged, no prize, not a talk, workshop, or demonstration)
Non-livestock	5K Races, stick horse races, cannabis,
Pageants and beauty contests	Baby and toddler contests, doll dress-up contest, costume contest
Parades & Scavenger Hunts	Scavenger Hunts, escape rooms, parades
Toss/Throw contests	Corn hole, skillet toss, hay bale toss, hammer throw, horseshoes, keg toss, manure pitch
	<i>Last Revised: 5/20/2026</i>

Checklist of Requirements to Receive a Stipend Fund Distribution Payment

All listed requirements must be met to receive Stipend Fund payment.

- 1. **Hold an agricultural fair license that is valid for the year for which the stipend is calculated per 7 M.R.S. §86(6)**
- 2. **Must meet the definition of Agricultural fair in accordance with [7 M.R.S. §81\(1\)](#):**
"Agricultural fair" or "fair" means an exhibition that is designed to promote education and encourage improvement in agriculture and that includes, but is not limited to, the following:
The awarding of premiums for livestock competitions; [PL 2005, 563, §3]
The display of and awarding of premiums for horticultural products; [PL 2005, 563, §3],
The display and presentation of agricultural activities and projects undertaken by youth organizations. [PL 2005, §3]
- 3. **Must adhere to all requirements of [7 M.R.S Chapter 4](#):**
Agricultural Fairs and Pulling Events in accordance with [7 M.R.S. §82 \(4\)](#).
Neglect or failure on the part of a licensee to adhere to the requirements of this chapter is sufficient cause for withholding that licensee's stipend.
- 4. **All fairs must meet the standards for facility improvements set by the commissioner for that licensee in accordance with [7 M.R.S. §82 \(2-3\)](#).**
- 5. **Has submitted a complete and accurate Annual Report, "Annual Stipend Fund Report" in accordance with 7 M.R.S. [§82](#), [§88](#), and [§90](#).**
- 6. **Has demonstrated qualifying premiums and payments in accordance with [7 M.R.S. 86\(5\)](#).**
- 7. **Has demonstrated that the minimum premiums established in [7 M.R.S. 86\(7\)](#) have been paid**
- 8. **Has awarded premiums for livestock competitions in accordance with [7 M.R.S. 81\(1A\)](#).**
- 9. **Has awarded premiums for horticultural products in accordance with [7 M.R.S. 81\(1B\)](#).**
- 10. **Has displayed and presented agricultural activities and projects undertaken by youth organizations in accordance with [7 M.R.S. 81\(1C\)](#).**
- 11. **Through evaluation, it has demonstrated that exhibits of vegetables, fruits, grains, or dairy products are:**
 - Regularly displayed in an attractive manner upon the fairgrounds during the fair.
 - The products exhibited are representative of those produced in the county in which the fair is held.
 - The quality of the products is acceptable to the commissioner in accordance with [7 M.R.S. 86\(6B\)](#).
- 12. **Through evaluation, it has demonstrated that the fair is conducted in accordance with performance standards in accordance with [7 M.R.S. 86\(6D\)](#).**
- 13. **The health status of domestic animals shown or exhibited at the fair satisfies the health requirements established by the commissioner in accordance with [7 M.R.S. 86\(6C\)](#) and 7 [M.R.S. 1811](#) and [DACF Chapter 206 Rules: Prevention and Control of Certain Diseases of Domestic Animals and Poultry](#).**
- 14. **A licensee may not distribute profits as a primary purpose.**
A licensee is not eligible for a stipend if the licensee is an entity with stockholders or members and the commissioner determines that the primary purpose of the licensed entity is the distribution of profits to its members or stockholders consistent with [7 M.R.S. 87\(1\)](#).
- 15. **Premiums on unregistered males prohibited.**
A stipend may not be paid to any licensee offering or paying premiums on unneutered male animals over 6 months of age that are not recorded in the books of record for their respective breeds as recognized by the commissioner. The commissioner may make verification of breed records a required part of the sworn certificate and annual report in accordance with [7 M.R.S. 87\(2\)](#).

In addition, Pari-Mutuel Fairs must:

- 16. Pari-mutuel fairs must conduct racing in conjunction with a licensed fair in accordance with [7 M.R.S. §89](#).
- 17. Pari-mutuel fairs must host at least one racing meet during its licensed fair dates in accordance with [7 M.R.S. §89](#).
- 18. Pari-mutuel fairs must keep fair exhibits in an attractive display for a minimum of 3 consecutive days in accordance with [7 M.R.S. §89](#).
- 19. Pari-mutuel fairs must demonstrate that the total premium payments for fair exhibits must be An amount equal to or greater than the premiums paid for pulling contests at the fair and race meet, and not less than 25% of the premiums paid for harness horse races conducted during the licensed agricultural fair in accordance with [7 M.R.S. §89](#).
- 20. Pari-mutuel fairs must demonstrate improvements to racing facilities in accordance with [7 M.R.S. §82 \(2\)](#).

2026 Annual Report Schedule

Annual Reports are requested to be submitted to the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry by the dates listed below. Annual Reports should be completed using the current form, which may be downloaded from the Agricultural Resource Development Division Agricultural Fair Program web page. Annual Reports should be completed for the current calendar year, and all premiums paid (including those that are not stipend eligible) should be accounted for. Should a fair have expenditures that occurred after the previous year's Annual Report submission, they may be included in this year's report.

Fair Dates	Fair	Annual Report Due Date
June 11 – 14, 2026	Springfield Fair	September 17, 2026
June 18 – 21, 2026	Pittston Fair	September 21, 2026
June 24 – 27, 2026	Monmouth Fair	September 27, 2026
July 9 – 12, 2026	Ossipee Valley Fair	October 12, 2026
July 10 – 12, 2026	Houlton Fair	October 13, 2026
July 17 – 19, 2025	Waterford World's Fair	October 19, 2026
July 30 – August 8, 2026	Bangor State Fair	November 8, 2026
August 5 – 9, 2026	Union Fair	November 9, 2026
August 5 – 9, 2026	Northern Maine Fair	November 9, 2026
August 9 – 16, 2026	Topsham Fair	November 16, 2026
August 13 - 22, 2026	Skowhegan State Fair	November 22, 2026
August 27 – 30, 2026	Acton Fair	November 30, 2026
August 27 – 30, 2026	Piscataquis Valley Fair	November 30, 2026
August 29 – 30, 2026	Washington County Fair	November 30, 2026
September 3 – 7, 2026	Blue Hill Fair	December 1, 2026
August 29 – September 7, 2026	Windsor Fair	December 1, 2026
September 4 – 7, 2026	Harmony Free Fair	December 1, 2026
September 10 – 13, 2026	Clinton Lions Agricultural Fair	December 1, 2026
September 10 – 13, 2026	Litchfield Fair	December 1, 2026
September 16 – 19, 2026	Oxford County Fair	December 1, 2026
September 18 - 20, 2026	New Portland Lion's Fair	December 1, 2026
September 20 – 26, 2026	Farmington Fair	December 1, 2026
September 24 – 27, 2026	Common Ground Country Fair	December 1, 2026
September 27 – October 3, 2026	Cumberland Fair	December 1, 2026
October 4 – 11, 2026	Fryeburg Fair	December 1, 2026