



Bee Culture

ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-SEVENTH
NEBRASKA STATE FAIR

August 28 – September 7, 2026

Grand Island, NE



Join the Bee Culture Department in celebrating “It All Happens Here” at the 2026 Nebraska State Fair.

Superintendent: Brian Nilson, Marquette, NE

Phone: 402-617-2936

Email: bpnilson@msn.com

Judges

Dr. Judy Wu-Smart: Extension & Research Entomologist, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Luke Noris: University of Nebraska-Lincoln Bee Lab

Shelby Kittle: University of Nebraska-Lincoln Bee Lab

Important Dates

Entry Deadline: Wednesday, August 26, 7 pm

Exhibit Delivery: Wednesday, August 26, 9 am – 7 pm

See Page 9 for drop-off and pick-up locations

Judging Day: Friday, August 28, 8 am. Association exhibits must be in place by Friday, August 28, 8 am. Please make arrangements with the Education Department if you want to place an exhibit in the Education Department.

Exhibit Release: Monday, September 7, 6 pm – 8 pm. ****Early Release is Prohibited****

Tuesday, September 8, 8 am-Noon

Located in the 4-H/FFA Fieldhouse

As an Open Class exhibitor you are an important part of what makes the Nebraska State Fair great. If you've appreciated your involvement and want to find other ways to support Competitive Exhibits, we hope you'll consider coming out to volunteer with us during the event! All volunteers get to pick what department they'd like to volunteer, they receive free gate admission for each shift worked and a complimentary official souvenir shirt. For more information or to register as a volunteer, please contact Haley Hewen at hhewen@statefair.org or visit www.statefairvolunteer.org.

Bee Culture Department Divisions

- Divisions 2401-2408 are open to all ages.
- Division 2409-2413 are youth divisions ages 18 and under

Class Premiums and Overall Awards

The **Nebraska State Fair & Grand Island Casino Resort** will pay premiums to the Best of Division: Division 2401 \$35 – Divisions 2402-2406, 2407 & 2408 (combined), 2409-2413 \$15.

Nebraska State Fair also pays out for the overall sweepstakes winners. 1st \$300, 2nd \$200, and 3rd \$100.

The premiums listed below are paid by the Nebraska Beekeepers Association

Place	Ribbon	
1	Blue	\$15
2	Red	\$12
3	White	\$8
4	Pink	\$5

In addition, there are 6 overall awards for Open Class Divisions 2401-2408 (total value of \$325) and 8 overall awards for Youth Divisions 2409-2413 (total value of \$325) provided by the Nebraska Beekeepers Association and various private donors. More details at the end of each of the Open Class and Youth Divisions.

Included in the overall awards are sweepstakes awards, one for Open Class Divisions 2401-2408 and one for Youth Divisions 2409-2413 plus entries made by youth (18 and under as of January 1) in open class divisions where there are no corresponding youth division classes. The sweepstakes awards are based on total points accumulated from entries in the specified divisions as follows:

- 1st Place – 5 points
- 2nd Place – 4 points
- 3rd Place – 3 points
- 4th Place – 2 points

Overall Sweepstakes Sponsored by Grand Island Casino Resort

These are based on a point system. 1st place – 5 points, 2nd place – 3 points, and 3rd place – 1 point. Best of Show – 15 points, Reserve Best of Show – 12 points, Best of Division 10 points, Reserve Best of Division 7 points. Note: If an exhibitor wins for 2 consecutive years, they will be ineligible to win for the following 2 years.

- 1st place - \$300
- 2nd place - \$200
- 3rd place - \$100

The first-place winner will then go in for a people's choice Overall Sweepstakes Winner receiving a plaque and their name engraved on a trophy that will be displayed each year during the fair. The voting will begin the final weekend of fair after all static events are complete. It will be a google form that you will use an email address to submit a vote.

Judging results will be available at www.statefair.org. Menu – Competitive Exhibits

Department Rules

It's the Exhibitor's responsibility to be familiar with the [General Rules & Regulations](#) linked here which apply to all Nebraska State Fair open class departments of Competitive Exhibits and to the specific rules for each department.

Additional Rules Specific to the Bee Culture department are:

- The exhibitor or his/her authorized agent must have produced all entries in this competition in Nebraska
- Only one entry per exhibitor in any one class
- Entries shall bear no labels or markings.
- Judges will use score cards for judging. Points will be deducted for entries less than the specified amounts.
- The judge may but is not required to award a ribbon for the first four places in each class.
- Entries received later than the delivery deadline will be labeled "For Display Only."
- No late entries including add-ons and substitutes at check-in time.

- The exhibitor's age as of January 1 is used for age-restricted classes. Birthdate is required on the entry form.
- No early release of exhibits.

Entering Exhibits – Deadline is Wednesday, August 26, 7 pm

Exhibitors may purchase \$5 Exhibitor Gate Tickets. A maximum of 5 exhibitor tickets per family is allowed. No refunds will be given on any unused or lost tickets. To purchase these tickets, go to <http://bit.ly/4bVSm5v> and use the password CVENT. Exhibitor tickets go off sale Thursday, August 27, 2026, at 11:59 pm.

Please note that daily gate admission for seniors (age 60+) and kids (6-12) is \$6 for any day of the fair. Find additional ticket deals and details at www.statefair.org "Buy Tickets".

Online Registration: The most time and cost-efficient way to enter is online. Exhibitors can enter all their open-class exhibits and order exhibitor tickets (optional) in one session. Online entry begins around July 1. Instructions on how to enter online are found on the website www.statefair.org – Menu – Competitive Exhibits – Scroll down to Agricultural Products – Online Entry

Mail-In or In-Person Registration: When using mail-in or in-person registration, the exhibitor must use a separate form for each department entered. Either print the entry form from the following link: [2026 Bee Culture Entry Form](#) or request a form from the Nebraska State Fair Office, 501 E Fonner Park Rd Ste 200, Grand Island, NE 68801, Phone 308-382-1620.

Entry forms must be mailed, faxed, or delivered to the Nebraska State Fair. Deadline for Bee Cultures is Wednesday, August 26, 7 pm.

- Mailing Address: Nebraska State Fair, PO Box 1387(envelopes only), Grand Island, NE 68802-1387
- Fax: 308-384-1555
- In-person delivery: Nebraska State Fair, 501 E Fonner Park Rd Ste 200, Grand Island, NE 68801

Guidelines for Completing Entry Form

- Enter all items you plan to bring. There is no entry fee. Items not brought will be deleted at the fair.
- The entry form description is for identification purposes only. It should only be a few words long, provide identifying size and subject to help locate item by site. Do not include the class name/number as part of the description.
- Retain a copy of the entry form. A copy is required when you deliver your exhibits. For online registration, print either the entry receipt activity report or a packing/loading report.

Delivery of Exhibits – 4-H/FFA Fieldhouse - Deadline is Wednesday, August 26, 7 pm

Entries can be delivered in person or sent by USPS, FedEx, or UPS.

- In-Person: bring the exhibit(s) along with a copy of the entry form to the Bee Culture area in the 4-H/FFA Fieldhouse. Enter Gate 5 and enter through the North or West Doors. Receiving time is Wednesday, August 20, 9 am-7 pm.
- Ship by USPS, UPS, FedEx: refer to [Shipping Options](#) for detailed instructions on packaging, where to send exhibits, and include a prepaid return label with the exhibit. Note that items sent by mail may experience long delivery delays.

Return of Exhibits – Early release is prohibited.

- In Person: Items can be picked up Monday, September 7, 6 pm-8 pm or Tuesday, September 8, 8 am-noon. You will be asked to sign the release list to collect your entries.
- Shipping: Exhibitors who want items returned by mail or a delivery service must make this notation on the entry form enclosed with the exhibits. A prepaid return label must be included. Please send entries for other departments separately. Exhibits will not be accepted or returned by COD. Refer to [Shipping Options](#) for return information.

Exhibits not picked up during release time or without a prepaid return label must be picked up from the Nebraska State Fair office, 501 E Fonner Park Rd Ste 200 Grand Island NE, by Friday, October 30. After that items will be donated to charity.

Divisions 2401-2408

Open Class Divisions

Division 2401: Extracted Honey

Entries shall consist of 4 – 1-pound queenline style glass jars.

- 0101 Extra light extracted honey
- 0102 Light-extracted honey
- 0103 Light amber extracted honey
- 0104 Amber extracted honey
- 0105 Dark-extracted honey

Division 2402: Creamed & Chunk Comb Honey

Entries shall consist of 4 – 12 ounce or larger glass jars – cylindrical jars with no embossing preferred.

- 0201 Creamed honey
- 0202 Chunk comb honey

Division 2403: Cut Comb Honey

- 0301 Cut comb honey – entries shall consist of 4 – 12-ounce combs in plastic boxes
- 0302 Section comb honey – entries shall consist of 4 wood sections packaged in cardboard cellophane window cartons or 4 round sections with clear covers and labels or 4 half-combed cassettes.

Division 2404: Beekeeping Photograph

Entries shall consist of one framed 5x7 or 8x10 photograph depicting some aspect of beekeeping. Photograph must be mounted in a frame for display.

- 0401 Beekeeping photograph

Division 2405: Art Design in Beeswax, Molded Items

Entries shall consist of 2 items containing beeswax as an ingredient. Exhibitors must supply ingredient list with weights of ingredients from most weight to least weight.

- 0501 Art designs in beeswax, molded
- 0502 Lotion bars, molded
- 0503 Soap bars, molded

Division 2406: Beeswax Candles

Entries shall consist of a pair of beeswax candles that are either molded or dipped.

- 0601 Beeswax candles

Division 2407: Gift Basket

Entries shall consist of a gift basket of honey and products made from, or with, products of the hive utilizing the **Theme: It All Happens Here or America 250**

- 0701 Gift basket

Division 2408: Beekeeping Craft

Entries shall consist of a craft item depicting some aspect of beekeeping.

0801 Beekeeping craft

Open Class Overall Awards

Best of Show Honey - \$50 cash – **Nebraska Beekeepers Association**

Best of Show Wax Exhibit - \$50 cash – **Nebraska Beekeepers Association**

Best of Show Comb Honey - \$50 cash – **Nebraska Beekeepers Association**

Best of Show Gift Basket or Craft Exhibit - \$50 cash – **Nebraska Beekeepers Association**

Best of Show Beekeeping Photography - \$25 cash – **Nebraska Beekeepers Association**

Open Class Sweepstakes - \$100 cash – **Dr. Judy Wu-Smart**

Divisions 2409-2413

Youth Divisions (18 & under)

Birthday as of January 1 must be listed on entry form.

Division 2409: Extracted Honey

Entries shall consist of 4 – 1-pound queenline style glass jars

0901 Extra light or light-extracted honey

0902 Light amber or amber-extracted honey

0903 Dark-extracted honey

Division 2410: Beeswax, Molded or Sculpted

Entries shall consist of 1 or more items of molded or sculpted beeswax.

1001 Beeswax

Division 2411: Hive Products Display

Entries shall consist of a basket or box of hive products which could include but not limited to extracted honey, comb honey, chunk comb honey, pollen, propolis and products containing honey or beeswax. Using the **Theme: It All Happens Here or America 250**

1101 Hive products display

Division 2412: Visual Arts

Entries should educate the public about some aspects of beekeeping.

1200 Beekeeping drawing or painting: Ages 12 and Under: Entries must consist of a drawing or painting depicting some aspect of beekeeping. Entry must be mounted in a frame for display

1201 Beekeeping drawing or painting: Ages 13-18: Entries must consist of a drawing or painting depicting some aspect of beekeeping. Entry must be mounted in a frame for display

1202 Beekeeping poster: May use photography to tell the story of a beekeeper, or may focus on the lifecycle of a honeybee or honeybee past

1203 Beekeeping photograph: Entries must consist of one 5x7 or 8x10 **framed** photograph

Division 2413: Beekeeping Craft

Entries shall consist of a craft item depicting some aspect of beekeeping.

1301 Beekeeping craft – Ages 12 and under

1302 Beekeeping craft – Ages 13-18

Youth Overall Awards

Best of Show Youth Exhibit - \$50 cash – **Nebraska Beekeepers Association**

Best of Show Honey Exhibit - \$25 cash – **Nebraska Beekeepers Association**

Best of Show Wax Exhibit - \$25 cash – **Nebraska Beekeepers Association**

Best of Show Beekeeping Craft - \$25 cash – **Nebraska Beekeepers Association**

Best of Show Visual Arts - \$25 cash – **Nebraska Beekeepers Association**

Best of Show Hive Products Display - \$50 cash – **Nebraska Beekeepers Association**

Youth Sweepstakes - \$100 cash – **Nilson Farms and Apiary *Given in memory of Joe and Theresa Dolezal**

Plus, a special jacket presented by the Nebraska State Fair Board

Judging Standards for Apiary Products

Extracted Honey

	Points
Appearance & uniformity of containers	5
Uniformity & accurate volume of honey	5
Freedom from crystals	10
Freedom from impurities, including froth	20
Uniform honey in all containers of the entry	5
Color	10
Brightness	10
Flavor & aroma	15
Density, no additional points below 16% moisture	20
Total	100

Creamed Honey

	Points
Appearance & uniformity of containers	5
Uniformity & accurate volume of honey	5
Firmness of set (not runny but spreadable)	20
Texture of granulation (smooth & fine)	20
Absence of impurities, including froth	15
Uniform honey in all containers of the entry	10
Color	10
Total	100

Chunk Comb Honey	Points
Uniformity, cleanliness, general appearance	30
Freedom from impurities & granulation	20
Quality of the liquid honey	25
Quality & neatness of comb honey	20
Uniform & accurate volume of honey	5
Total	100

Cut Comb Honey in Plastic Boxes	Points
Accuracy and neatness of cut edges of comb	20
Uniform depth & filling of honey cells	20
Complete, uniform, & clean cappings	20
Quality, quantity, & uniformity of honey	20
Freedom from leakage & general appearance of pack	20
Total	100

Section Comb Honey (Wood or Round)	Points
Suitability, uniformity, & cleanliness of sections	15
Completeness, uniformity, & cleanliness of cappings	30
Uniform & completely filled honey cells	30
Quality & uniformity of honey	15
Weight & completeness of attachment of comb	10
Total	100

Beekeeping Photo, Drawing, Poster, or Painting	Points
Originality	25
Technical Merit	25
Educational Merit	25
Framed Display	25
Total	100

Beeswax Candles	Points
Color between straw & canary yellow	25
Cleanliness (free from honey & impurities)	25
Freedom from cracking, shrinking, & marks	25
Neatness of workmanship	25
Total	100

Gift Basket or Hive Product Display	Points
Originality	20
Eye appeal & neatness	20
Suitability of containers & contents	20
Quality of contents	20
Use of Fair Theme	20
Total	100

Beekeeping Craft	Points
Originality	25
Neatness of workmanship	25
Educational merit	25
Eye appeal	25
Total	100

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Sites

For Non-Perishable Exhibits

Please package each department's exhibits separately. For example, if you are entering both textile arts and photography, which belong to different departments, package them separately. Ensure a copy of your entry form is taped to the top of each package.

Important: We will not accept exhibits that are not properly packaged. We will make an effort to return your exhibits in the same packaging used for drop-off. To make transportation easier and safer, we recommend packaging your exhibits in a box.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Locations:

This year, exhibits can be dropped off and picked up at the following locations during the Extension Office's business hours:

Drop-Off Dates:

- Thursday, August 13th and Friday, August 14th, 2026

Pick-Up Dates:

- Monday, September 14th and Tuesday, September 15th, 2026
 - Must be picked up no later than September 15th

Location Hours:

- **Lincoln/Logan/McPherson County Extension Office:**
348 West State Farm Rd, North Platte, NE 69101
9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- **Douglas/Sarpy County Extension Office:**
8015 West Center Rd, Omaha, NE 68124
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM
- **Seward County Extension Office:**
322 S. 14th St, Seward, NE 68434
8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Reminder: Please bring a copy of your entry form(s) when dropping off your exhibits.