

2026 PA FARM SHOW

DEPARTMENT 15 - CHEESE

MEET YOUR COMMITTEE CHAIR PERSON!

Sue Miller and her family run Birchrun Hills Farm, a first generation, family-owned dairy farm in the highlands of Birchrunville in southeast Pennsylvania. In 2023, the family was recognized for their dynamic business model, commitment to sustainable farming practices, and local food system advocacy.



ENTRY DEADLINE

All entries must be made online using FairEntry software no later than November 13, 2025.

Please be sure to review all general rules and department rules prior to entering.



New for 2026

New Chair

Help us welcome new Chair Sue Miller



PA Secretary of Agriculture, Russell C. Redding

Pennsylvania's State Fair showcases top competitors from 108 county and local fairs, and the diversity and quality of Pennsylvania's agriculture industry, the innovative people who make it thrive, and the faces of our proud past and promising future. The show offers visitors a peek into the industry that supports 593,000 Pennsylvania jobs and contributes \$132.5 billion to Pennsylvania's economy every year. See you at the PA Farm Show!

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Links	<p>See General Rules and Regulations online at https://www.farmshow.pa.gov/pafarmshow/exhibit/rules-regulations</p> <p>Use shipping tag online at https://www.farmshow.pa.gov/pafarmshow/exhibit/forms-registration</p> <p>Enter online at 2024 PA Farm Show Family Living, Commodities, Beer, Wine & Cider - FairEntry.com</p>														
General	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This competition is open to any Pennsylvania cheese maker holding a valid dairy foods manufacturing permit from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. 2. Cheeses may be made from pasteurized or raw milk. If the cheese is made from raw milk, it must be aged at least 60 days prior to shipping and the cheese maker must have an aged raw milk cheese permit. Raw milk cheese must conform to PDA regulations for milk sanitation in Chapter 59a. 3. Each company may submit up to five (5) cheeses, either different classes or multiple cheeses in the same class (Limit: 3 cheeses per class). 4. Cheese entries become property of the Pennsylvania Farm Show. 5. Cheeses will be on display at the 2026 Farm Show. If your soft cheese is a winner, you may be asked to submit fresh samples for the display. 														
About Cheese Entries	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Cheese entries must be available for commercial sale for at least six months prior to judging (since June 1, 2025). In the case of seasonal or fresh cheeses, these cheeses should be part of the dairy's product line for at least one year. Experimental cheeses will not be accepted. 7. Cheeses must be entered into the contest in the form in which they are manufactured as whole wheels, loaves, or blocks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not cut your cheese. Exceptions are made for cheeses that are cut as part of the normal manufacturing process, such as feta blocks in brine, smoked cheeses, or cheeses that receive other surface treatments. • 40-pound blocks cut from 640-pound blocks may be entered. • Cheeses that are manufactured in formats larger than 45 pounds, cut pieces will be allowed per guidelines in the following chart. 														
Entry Guide	<table> <tr> <th>If the cheese is originally manufactured in this size:</th><th>Submit this many blocks/wheels</th></tr> <tr> <td>Larger than 80 pounds</td><td>1/4 (one-quarter)</td></tr> <tr> <td>Larger than 45 pounds, less than 80 pounds</td><td>1/2 (one-half)</td></tr> <tr> <td>Larger than 5 pounds, less than 45 pounds</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr> <td>Larger than 3 pounds, less than 5 pounds</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr> <td>Larger than 1 pound, less than 3 pounds</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr> <td>Less than 1 pound</td><td>6</td></tr> </table>	If the cheese is originally manufactured in this size:	Submit this many blocks/wheels	Larger than 80 pounds	1/4 (one-quarter)	Larger than 45 pounds, less than 80 pounds	1/2 (one-half)	Larger than 5 pounds, less than 45 pounds	1	Larger than 3 pounds, less than 5 pounds	2	Larger than 1 pound, less than 3 pounds	3	Less than 1 pound	6
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RULES AND REGULATIONS

About Cheese Entries	<p>9. Cheeses may be submitted in their normal company packaging.</p> <p>10. Cheeses may not be plugged or resealed. Entries with a trier hole will be disqualified. The exception is Swiss cheese, which may have one (1) trier hole.</p> <p>11. The cheese that won first place Best in Show in the previous year may not be entered in the current year.</p>
Entry Forms & Fees	<p>12. The fee is \$35 per cheese entry.</p> <p>13. Online entries must be received by Thursday, November 13, 2025.</p> <p>14. Online entries can be made at 2025 PA Farm Show Family Living, Commodities, Beer, Wine & Cider - FairEntry.com.</p> <p>15. A copy of the PDA dairy foods permit must be emailed immediately following your online entry to farmshow@pa.gov.</p>
Entry Submission	<p>16. One copy of the shipping tag should be placed on the outer packaging and one copy placed inside the packaging with the cheese.</p> <p>17. Cheeses must be shipped to arrive on Tuesday, December 9 or Wednesday, December 10, 2025.</p> <p>Ship to: Farm Show Cheese Competition Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex & Expo Center 2300 N. Cameron St. Harrisburg, PA 17110-9443</p> <p>18. All cheeses should be carefully packaged to stay cold and avoid physical damage during shipping.</p> <p>19. If cheeses are hand-delivered to the Farm Show Complex, they must arrive at the Cameron Street Lobby Security Desk by 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 9 or Wednesday, December 10, 2025. They should be packaged to stay cold and in boxes/coolers that are taped shut to avoid damage during handling.</p>
Classes	<p>20. Please review the entire list of classes (below) carefully to ensure your cheese is entered in the correct class.</p> <p>21. The Contest Chair reserves the right to change classes based on the final number of entries. If a class is too small then classes may be combined, and if a class is too large then the class may be split.</p> <p>22. The Contest Chair may move a cheese to a more appropriate class if necessary.</p>

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Judging	<p>23. Judging will take place on Thursday, December 11, 2025.</p> <p>24. Cheese will be judged for appearance and makeup, body and texture, and flavor and aroma characteristics.</p> <p>25. Each cheese is judged individually, based on its own merit with respect to the variety. Cheeses are not compared to each other. For open class cheeses, the cheese characteristics will be judged based on the description provided by the cheese maker.</p> <p>26. Judging teams consist of one technical and one aesthetic judge. The technical judge begins with 60 points and deducts points for technical defects. The aesthetic judge begins at 0 and adds up to 40 points for desirable qualities. The technical and aesthetic scores are added for the final score.</p> <p>27. The three cheeses with the highest scores in each class will receive awards.</p> <p>28. The top scoring cheese in each class will be entered in the Best of Show competition. Judges will rank their top three cheeses from all 20 categories. The top three ranked cheeses overall will be awarded prizes for Best of Show.</p>
Awards	<p>29. Awards will be presented in a ceremony at the Farm Show on Saturday, January 10, 2026.</p> <p>30. A first-, second-, and third-prize rosette will be awarded for each class.</p> <p>31. A first, second and third Best in Show will be awarded premiums and medals. 1st-\$168.30, gold medal; 2nd-\$112.20, silver medal, 3rd-\$84.15, bronze medal.</p>
Cheese Class Description	<p>32. Soft cheeses: 50% or greater moisture</p> <p>33. Semi-soft and semi-hard cheeses: greater than 39% and less than 50% moisture</p> <p>34. Hard cheeses: 39% or lower moisture</p>

REGISTRATION

See General Rules, Regulations & Health Requirements online at
<https://www.farmshow.pa.gov/pafarmshow/exhibit/rules-regulations>

Use shipping tag online at <https://www.farmshow.pa.gov/pafarmshow/exhibit/forms-registration>

HOW TO ENTER



Use Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox for best results.



Register all entries for each exhibitor in the family before proceeding to payment section.



Be sure to click the SUBMIT button when you have completed your entries.



Check your email inbox for a confirmation email with a list of your entries and invoice.



Be sure you receive the second email when your entries are approved by the Farm Show.



[Step by step entry video](#)



[Step by step entry document](#)



RULES AND REGULATIONS

Cow Milk Cheese		
1	Cheddar, Colby & Monterey Jack from Cow Milk	Unflavored Cheddar, Colby and Monterey Jack made from cow milk.
2	Soft (unripened and ripened) Cheese from Cow milk	Unflavored, open class for soft, unripened and white mold surface-ripened (bloomy rind) cheese from cow milk. Including cottage cheese, ricotta, quark, and brie types.
3	Semi-soft, Semi-hard, and Hard Cheese from Cow Milk	Unflavored, open class for semi-soft, semi-hard, and hard cheese made from cow milk. Including Swiss, Alpine, and Gouda types.
Goat Milk Cheese		
4	Soft, (unripened and ripened), Semi-soft, Semi-hard and Hard Cheese from Goat Milk	Unflavored, open class for soft unripened, white mold surface-ripened (bloomy rind), semi-soft, semi-hard, and hard cheese made from goat milk.
Sheep Milk Cheeses		
5	Soft, (unripened and ripened), Semi-soft, Semi-hard, and Hard Cheese from Sheep Milk	Unflavored, open class for soft unripened, white mold, surface-ripened (bloomy rind), semi-soft, semi-hard, and hard cheese made from sheep milk.
Mixed Milk Cheeses		
6	Soft, (unripened and ripened), Semi-soft, Semi-hard, and Hard Cheese from Mixed Milk	Unflavored, open class for soft unripened, white mold surface-ripened (bloomy rind), semi-soft, semi-hard, and hard cheese made from mixed milk. Indicate % of each milk.
Cheeses from All Milk		
7	Blue-veined	Blue-veined cheese made from cow, goat, sheep, or a combination of milk (indicate % of each). Indicate if the rind is intended to have mold.
8	Washed Rind and Smear Ripened	Cheese made from cow, goat, sheep, or a combination of milk (indicate % of each) that is smear-ripened or washed during ripening
9	Smoked	All smoked cheese made from cow, goat, sheep, or a combination of milk (indicate % of each) Cheese may be naturally smoked or contain smoke flavoring. Indicate cheese type and other flavors, if applicable.
10	Flavored Cheddar, Colby, & Monterey Jack from All Milk	All flavored Cheddar, Colby and Monterey Jack (except smoked) from cow, goat, sheep, or a combination of milk (indicate % of each). Indicate the flavors
11	Flavored Cheese, Open Class from All Milk	All flavored and marinated cheese (except smoked) from cow, goat, sheep, or a combination (indicate % of each milk), except smoked cheese. Cheeses may be soft, semi-soft, semi-hard, or hard. Indicate the flavors.

2026 PENNSYLVANIA FARM SHOW CHEESE COMPETITION - OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

Entry Form, Payment, and Copy of PDA Permit must arrive by 5 p.m., Thursday, November 13, 2025.

Payments must be made by credit card only - Please contact the Farm Show Office at 717-787-5373.

Complete and mail to: Farm Show Cheese Competition Phone: 717-787-2905 Date:
PA Farm Show Complex & Expo Center FAX: 717-705-9900
Received: 2300 Cameron St
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9443

Class Number	Name of Cheese	Cheese Description. For non-Standard of Identity cheeses, provide a description of the cheese characteristics for judge's reference. For blue-veined cheeses, indicate if the surface has mold development. For mixed milk cheeses, indicate the % of each type of milk. For flavored cheeses, indicate type of flavoring. If needed, attach additional pages.	Total Weight of Entry	Number of Pieces in Entry

Name of contact person

Signature of contact person

Company Name

Phone Number

Cell Number

Email Address

Address

Name of cheese maker (if different from contact person)

City

Zip

2026 PENNSYLVANIA FARM SHOW CHEESE COMPETITION - SHIPPING TAGS

Cheeses must arrive on December 9 & 10, 2025

INSIDE SHIPPING TAG

Place this tag inside the package WITH the product

Company Name	
Address City, Zip Code	
Contact Person	
Contact Phone	
Class Number(s)	
Cheese Name(s)	

TO: Pennsylvania Farm Show Cheese Competition

Pennsylvania Farm Show
Complex & Expo Center
2300 North Cameron Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9443

OUTSIDE SHIPPING TAG

Place this tag on the outer package

Company Name	
Address City, Zip Code	
Contact Person	
Contact Phone	
Class Number(s)	
Cheese Name(s)	

**PERISHABLE
REFRIGERATE**

TO: Pennsylvania Farm Show Cheese Competition

Pennsylvania Farm Show
Complex & Expo Center
2300 North Cameron Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9443

FIRE REGULATIONS

1. All exit corridors and emergency exits must be kept clear; no partial blocking will be permitted.
2. All fire alarm pull stations must be kept clear.
3. Fire extinguishers may not be covered by any drapes or hidden by any type of displays.
4. No motorized camping units or vehicles may contain more than one (1) gallon of fuel while on display.
5. All pressurized fuel tanks may be drained.
6. All fuel fills must be locked and fuel caps must be taped closed with duct tape.
7. Any living trees and shrubs are acceptable as long as the shrubbery is individually bagged and baled.
8. Artificial trees and shrubbery must be treated with a flame proofing material. The fire official may request certification of flame proofing.
9. Any type of mulch materials must be treated with a flame proofing material or watered daily. If treated with a flame proofing material, certification may be requested by the fire official.
10. Smoking is prohibited in the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex & Expo Center.
11. No open flames, fires or burning of any kind will be permitted within the Complex. No exterior burning is allowed unless the Department of Environmental Protection and the Bureau of Fire grant permission.
12. Vendors setting up tents, canopies and membrane covering must provide fire department with fire rating of material. Vendors must also provide any required portable fire extinguishers as needed.
13. Outside propane tanks shall be protected by posts or other approved physical barriers (Jersey barriers).
14. Extinguishers need to be visible, accessible and located in a conspicuous location where they will be readily accessible and immediately available for uses. These locations shall be along normal paths of travel.
15. Doors shall never be blocked or tied off.
16. The Fire Prevention Code of Harrisburg will be strictly enforced.

Contact the Harrisburg Bureau of Fire with any questions regarding the above regulations at 717-255-6464 or fax to 717-255-6448.

R. E. Gallatin Jr.
Fire Inspector
123 Walnut St. Suite 220
Harrisburg, PA 17101
Phone: 717-225-3105



2026 PA FARM SHOW

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TIPS

EARLY DETECTION

- Early detection is the most effective way to prevent emergencies or lessen their impacts.
- Vendors and exhibitors will likely be the first to witness, experience, or report incidents.
- You can be the difference in preventing something harmful from happening.
- To report any type of threat or emergency incident, notify the PA State Police Command Post.

BOMB THREATS

- Threats can be made in person, by phone, or in written message.
- Collect as much detailed information as possible about the threat (when, why, how, exact wording of threat, type of voice, personal appearance, clothing description, name, gender, phone number, physical address).
- It is especially important to know the perpetrator's timeline for activation of the device (when will it occur?).
- Immediately report the threat to the State Police Command Post.
- Authorities will investigate the threat and make the proper decisions accordingly in coordination with facility management.

LOST CHILDREN

- Be sure to get the full name of the lost child and keep them safe with you. Notify the Farm Show security desk or closest security/law enforcement team. PSP or Farm Show staff will help to reunite lost children with loved ones.

STATE POLICE

717-787-4171

FARM SHOW SECURITY

717-231-6565

SHELTER IN PLACE

- Although rare, there could be incidents that occur outside the facility that could put people at risk (chemical fire, very severe weather). In these instances, a shelter-in-place plan will be implemented for the welfare of all occupants.

SUSPICIOUS OBJECT

- Do not touch or disturb the object.
- Maintain a safe distance from the object and attempt to isolate the area.
- Notify the State Police Command Post with a description and location of the object.

SUSPICIOUS PERSON

- Observe the circumstances and behavior of the suspicious activity.
- Notify the State Police Command Post and provide as much detail as possible.
- Details about the person should include direction of travel, appearance, height and weight, build, clothing, speech, and anything about the behavior that indicates suspicion.

SEE SOMETHING? SAY SOMETHING!

Security and Law Enforcement Stations are located at the Cameron Street Lobby entrance and the Crossroads Security Office

EMERGENCY

PREPAREDNESS TIPS

STATE POLICE

717-787-4171

FARM SHOW SECURITY

717-231-6565

FLOODING

- Facility management will attempt to mitigate the effects of flooding and natural disasters before they happen and will work with all show vendors during this type of event.
- The Maclay and West parking lots are susceptible to flash flooding.
- Avoid contact with flood water.
- If major interstates or surrounding roads are being closed, facility management will make announcements accordingly.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY

- Notify the State Police Command Post and they will dispatch emergency medical services to the location.
- Describe the nature and severity of the medical incident and location of the victim.
- Do not attempt to move the person unless you are a trained medical responder.
- Stay with the victim and seek help from others if necessary.
- If rendering aid due to your training, be careful not to expose yourself to hazards such as fire, electricity, hazardous materials, or blood borne pathogens

FIRE & EVACUATION

- If you see a fire, activate the nearest alarm or notify the Farm Show Security Desk.
- The City of Harrisburg Bureau of Fire will respond to the alarm.
- When the building evacuation alarm is activated, leave by the closest and safest exit and alert others to do the same.
- Quickly take all personal belongings.
- Please listen to the instructions of the PA system announcements, Farm Show Complex employees, or responders.
- Do not use elevators!
- The facility is equipped with sprinklers and ABC fire extinguishers.
- Once outside, move a safe distance from the building.
- Do not return to an evacuated building until the 'all-clear' sign is provided by the Fire Chief, a Police Officer, or any other official first responder.
- Do not operate cell phones during an evacuation until the 'all-clear' is given

VIOLENT BEHAVIOR

- Your safety comes first. Use your best judgement to preserve your life.
- Report any physical abuse to the State Police Command Post.
- If there's an active shooter in the facility but not in your area, evacuate the facility and find safety.
- If the active shooter is near your area and preventing your escape, go to a room that can be lock or barricaded or hide and remain silent.
- If the shooter knows you are there but you feel you can flee, quickly evacuate the area.
- If you feel like fleeing is not possible, you can either confront, or attempt to overpower the person.
- If there is a shooter, messages regarding the known location of that person may be broadcast over the PA System.

SEE SOMETHING? SAY SOMETHING!

Security and Law Enforcement Stations are located at the Cameron Street Lobby entrance and the Crossroads Security Office

FAMILIAR FACES

MAIN HALL

Lizzie Bailey and Madi Shaw

have once again committed to being your Main Hall floor managers. In addition, they will coordinate and host all activities on the Main Hall stage.

Interested in giving a presentation? Reach out!



PAFARMSHOW.GOV