



— TENNESSEE FFA —

GRILL MASTERS — HANDBOOK —



PRESENTED BY THE TENNESSEE BEEF INDUSTRY COUNCIL



EVENT OVERVIEW

The Tennessee Beef Industry Council proudly serves as the presenting sponsor of the Tennessee FFA Grill Masters Beef Barbecue Competition. This exciting event is designed to educate FFA members about the beef industry, while also teaching proper grilling and beef preparation techniques—all in a fun and competitive environment.

The 2026 Tennessee FFA Grill Masters Beef Barbecue Competition will take place on Monday, August 17, during the Wilson County Fair – Tennessee State Fair.

EVENT RULES

- All participants must successfully complete the online Beef University “Beef Grades, Cuts and Preparation” module. To complete the training, visit <https://www.beefu.org/course/>. Certificates of completion should be sent to Valerie Bass at vbass@tnbeef.org.
- Participants must be an active FFA member at the time of the competition.
- Participants can be middle or high school FFA members.
- Teams will be comprised of 2-3 FFA members per chapter and 1 team per chapter. Teams may also have a coach. The coach could be the chapter advisor, another FFA member, a parent, or an alumni member of that chapter. Coaches cannot cook but they can be in the prep area and give tips and advice to the team as needed.
- The cooking and preparation portion of the competition will last one hour. Each team will then be given 3-5 minutes to present their dish and explain the technique behind it.
- Teams will be judged for proper station management. Each team will start out with 20 total points. As the station management judge goes around, he or she will be taking away points for any poor station management practices that they observe.
- Teams will present their dish to the judging panel. Teams will be judged on station management, dish presentation, and taste. Please see the rubric for scoring.
- Each team will have an 8’ table with a tablecloth.

RECOGNITION

- First place team will receive trophies, a smoker grill, aprons, and \$200.
- Second place team will receive trophies, a Lodge Cast Iron Sportsman's Grill, grilling set, and \$150.
- Third place team will receive trophies, a Beef It's What's For Dinner Lodge Skillet and \$100.
- *Prizes will be awarded to the FFA chapter. The Beef University module MUST be completed to receive your prize.

SUPPLIES

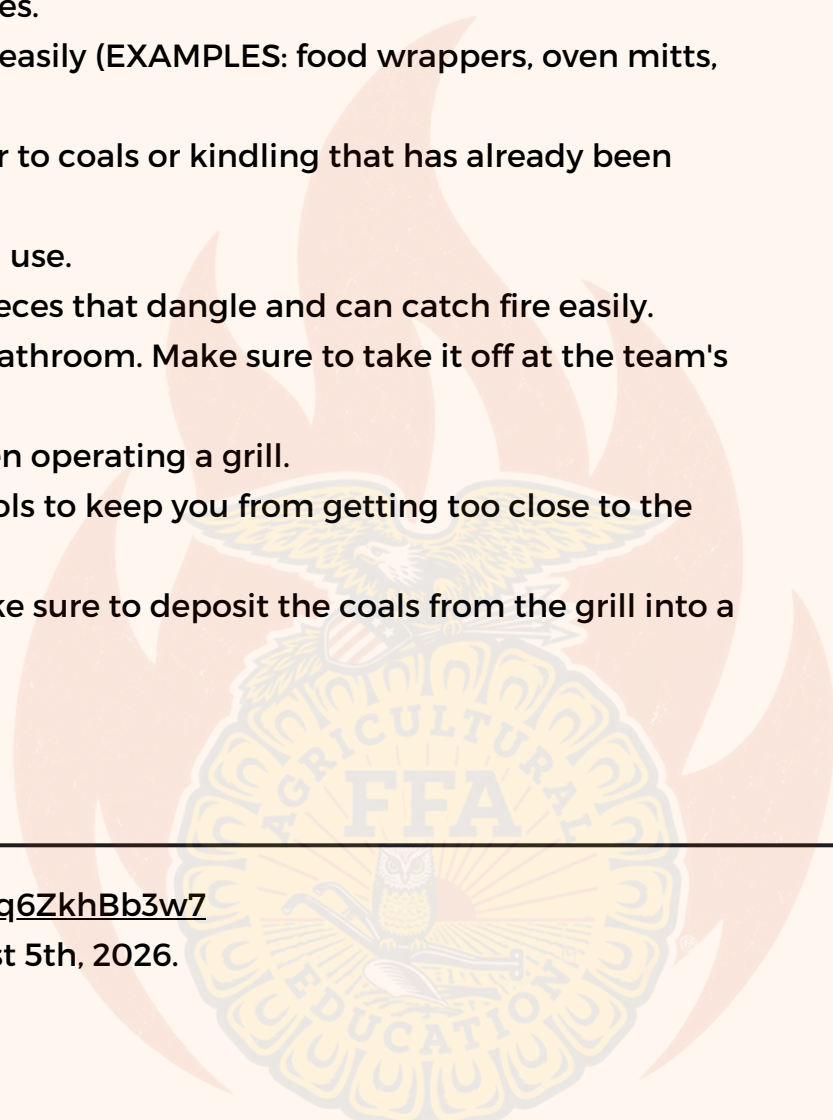
- **Teams will be required to bring their own grill. Grills must be charcoal grills.**
- **Teams must bring a fire extinguisher.**
- Teams should keep a small spray bottle on hand with water for smaller flames that might occur during the grilling process.
- Steaks will be provided for all teams. No outside beef products will be accepted into the contest.
- Suggested supplies teams may wish to bring in addition to grill: chimney, charcoal, charcoal starter, chopping board, tongs, meat thermometer, paper plates, paper towels, additional seasonings, and utensils.
- Please note: refrigeration will not be available. However, chapters are welcome to bring small coolers.

TIPS FOR GRILLING

- Make sure your grill is located on a flat & level surface.
- Keep grill away from overhanging branches.
- Keep grill away from items that can burn easily (EXAMPLES: food wrappers, oven mitts, kitchen towels, and paper towels).
- Do not add lighter fluid or charcoal starter to coals or kindling that has already been ignited.
- Never leave your grill unattended while in use.
- Avoid clothes that have long sleeves or pieces that dangle and can catch fire easily.
- Avoid wearing a cooking apron into the bathroom. Make sure to take it off at the team's station before leaving.
- Make sure to wear closed-toed shoes when operating a grill.
- Make sure to use long-handled grilling tools to keep you from getting too close to the heat and flames of the grill.
- When the team is finished up grilling make sure to deposit the coals from the grill into a metal container on site.

REGISTRATION

- Register HERE: <https://forms.gle/cN2BhtJq6ZkhBb3w7>
- Registration will close Wednesday, August 5th, 2026.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Is the team docked points if they do not have an elaborate dish presentation with a theme?

A: No, the team is not being judged on how good their dish theme is. They are being judged on the beef cut and preparation methods used. (Does the meat look good, is the recipe balanced, has the team achieved the desired degree of doneness they are shooting for?)

Q: Do we have to come up with a theme for our team & table?

A: No, that is strictly up to each individual team. If a team wants to have a theme, that is fine, but it does not factor into the judging.

Q: Can we prep our side dishes ahead of our heat time?

A: Yes, you can prep your sides ahead of time as long as you do not have to light your grill in order to prepare them. Grills are not allowed to be lit until the start of your team's heat.

Q: Can we get our meat cut ahead of our heat time?

A: No, we will hand out the meat at the start of each heat. This is to ensure that all teams are on an even playing field.

Q: Do we get to know what cut the teams will be grilling before the contest?

A: No, everyone will find out on the day of the competition what the cut will be.

MORE INFORMATION

Contact Valerie Bass, Tennessee Beef Industry Council, at 615-896-5811 / vbass@tnbeef.org or the Tennessee FFA Foundation at tnffaoundation@tnffa.org.

