



Illinois
Department of
Agriculture



HOME SHOW & SPECIAL EVENTS

PREMIUM BOOK

As the Governor of the great state of Illinois, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the 104th annual Du Quoin State Fair.

Inspired by this year's theme, Miles of Smiles, we are proud to celebrate this time-honored tradition in southern Illinois. Year after year, the fair brings people together to enjoy the very best of our state — from agriculture and entertainment to family fun and, of course, fair food.

The Du Quoin State Fair continues to grow and thrive, as reflected in the record-breaking attendance in 2026. That success not only highlights the fair's enduring appeal but also reinforces its role as a major economic driver for southern Illinois. To ensure this proud tradition continues for generations to come, we have invested more than \$30 million in improvements to the fairgrounds since 2019, strengthening and preserving this historic venue for the future.

We are grateful to the hardworking men and women whose dedication and resilience keep agriculture, our state's number one industry, strong and resilient. We also extend our sincere appreciation to the staff, volunteers, exhibitors, vendors, and countless individuals who make the Du Quoin State Fair bigger, better, and more enjoyable each year.

Thank you for being part of the 2026 Du Quoin State Fair. We hope your time here is filled with memories that last long after the final fireworks fade.

All our best,



JB Pritzker, *Governor* MK Pritzker, *First Lady*



On behalf of our entire team at the Illinois Department of Agriculture, we are proud to welcome you to the 2026 Du Quoin State Fair, one of our family's favorite summer traditions and a celebration we look forward to all year long. We are so glad you're here.

Whether this is your first visit or a family tradition years in the making, we are excited to celebrate everything that makes the Du Quoin State Fair such a special part of summer in Illinois.

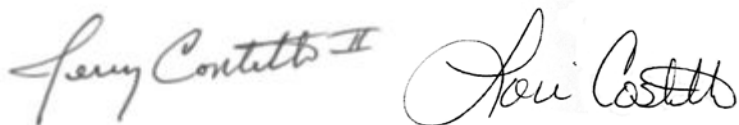
Of course, no fair visit is complete without the classics — a fresh corn dog, a cold lemon shake-up, and a ride on the Ferris wheel. But there's even more to discover around every corner. Feel the excitement of harness racing and USAC and ARCA auto racing on the legendary Magic Mile. Enjoy Grandstand concerts, demolition derby action, truck and tractor pulls, live entertainment and magic shows. Spend time browsing unique treasures at the Rusty Truck Vintage Market and visit the Illinois Product Expo to sample delicious local favorites and shop local.

As the state's number one industry, Agriculture remains at the heart of the Du Quoin State Fair. We invite you to visit the barns and learn more about the hardworking young people and farm families who make Illinois agriculture thrive. From cattle and sheep to goats and swine, the livestock exhibits offer a chance to connect with those who feed our nation.

We are also proud to continue improving the fairgrounds to make your experience even more memorable. Thanks to the Pritzker administration and the General Assembly, over \$30 million has been invested in infrastructure improvements, including \$16.4 million dedicated to much needed road repairs. The results speak for themselves as these 1,400 acres have never looked better.

Thank you for being part of the Du Quoin State Fair story. We hope you experience Miles of Smiles and make plans to do it all again in 2027!

Warm regards,

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature on the left is 'Jerry Costello II' and the second signature on the right is 'Lori Costello'. Both are written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jerry and Lori Costello



DEPARTMENT 40

COOKING CONTESTS

CAKE DECORATING

FIRECRACKER SPICE CHALLENGE

BLUE RIBBON ROUTE 66 BBQ CONTEST

MYSTERY SACK COOKING CONTEST

PATRIOTIC CHARCUTERIE BOARD

4-H FLORAL CHALLENGE-CENTERPIECE MAKING

RED, WHITE, AND BLUE DESSERT SHOWDOWN

ROUTE 66 SODA POP CHALLENGE

ROUTE 66 WAFFLE SHOWDOWN

STAR SPANGLED APPETIZER CHALLENGE

GENERATION SHOWDOWN – KIDS VS KIN

PATRIOTIC PIE BAKE-OFF

FARMYARD GINGER BARN CONTEST

FFA & 4-H WHEELBARROW CONTEST

4-H FOOD CHALLENGE

CAKE DECORATING

Sponsored by:
U of I Extension
Franklin, Jackson, Perry, Randolph & Williamson Counties
Saturday, August 29
3:00 p.m. – Stage at Expo Hall

1. **Open to all youth ages 8-18. You do not have to be a 4-H member.**
2. Contestants come at 2:30 p.m. to the EXPO HALL to set up.
3. All equipment and ingredients will be provided.
4. You may bring food coloring of your choice to add to icing.
5. You may bring special decorations for your project if you want.
6. You will be given an hour to finish your cake.
7. Entries for this contest must be submitted by August 25th, 2026 at noon. No late entries will be accepted.
8. Cakes will stay on display in the Expo throughout the duration of the rest of the fair.

Entry forms are available online. Entries can be mailed to:

Du Quoin State Fair Competitive Events

655 Executive Dr.

Du Quoin, IL 62832

or by calling the office at 618-542-1509/618-542-1525

Any questions can be answered by calling the office at 618-542-1509.

No entry fee for this contest.

Entries will be judged on:

Decorative Skill	50%
Taste	30%
Presentation	20%

Awards will be given in two age categories, 8-12 and 13-18.

1st Place- Gift Card

2nd Place – Gift Card

3rd Place – Gift Card

FIRECRACKER SPICE CHALLENGE

Sponsored by:

Farm Fancy

Monday, August 31st

6:00 p.m. – Stage at Expo Hall

Every dish must have a KICK to represent fireworks!

1. Contestants come to the Expo Hall at 6:00pm with their Firecracker dish.
2. Contestants will explain what to expect when taking a bite of their Firecracker dish.
3. Provide plates and samples for judges (4-5)
4. Provide a recipe of what was used to create your food and be sure to include your name.
5. Entry forms are found online. Entries can be mailed to Du Quoin State Fair Competitive Events, 655 Executive Dr., Du Quoin, IL 62832, or by calling the office at 618-542-1509/618-542-1525
6. NO ENTRY FEE. Entries for this contest must be submitted by August 27, 2026.

Entries will be judged on:

Spice Kick	50%
Taste	30%
Presentation	20%

Awards will be given:

- 1st Place
- 2nd Place
- 3rd Place

BLUE RIBBON ROUTE 66 BBQ CONTEST

Sponsored by:

TOMAHAWK BAR & GRILL

Monday, August 31

7:00 P.M. – Stage @ Expo Hall

1. Contestants come to the Expo Hall at 6:00 pm to set up their BBQ plate.
2. Bring your best shredded/sliced BBQ sandwiches.
3. Provide plates for judges (4-6)
4. Bring ready to taste.
5. You can use chow and your favorite recipe of BBQ sauce.
6. Entry forms are online. Entries can be mailed to Du Quoin State Fair Competitive Events, 655 Executive Dr., Du Quoin, IL 62832, or you may call the office at 618-542-1509.
7. NO ENTRY FEE.
8. Entries for this contest must be submitted by August 28, 2026.

No entry fee for this contest.

Entries will be judged on:

Taste	60%
Presentation	20%

Awards will be given:

- 1st Place – Gift Card
- 2nd Place – Gift Card
- 3rd Place – Gift Card

MYSTERY SACK COOKING CONTEST

Sponsored by:

The W Restaurant

Tuesday, September 1st, 2026

7:00 p.m. – Stage at Expo Hall

Bring an electric skillet, utensils, and three (3) condiments or spices of your choice. Salt and pepper will be available along with oil and water for cooking.

At time of contest, you will be given the MYSTERY BROWN BAG with various products purchased by The W Restaurant.

You will be given one hour to prepare your own creation from the bag. While cooking and stirring, you must come up with a name for the unique original recipe.

Entry forms are online. Entries can be mailed to the Du Quoin State Fair Competitive Events, 655 Executive Dr., Du Quoin, IL 62832 or by calling the office at 618-542-1509.

Deadline to enter is Friday, August 28, 2026.

No entry fee.

Entries will be judged on:

Taste	50%
Creativity/Use of product	30%
Presentation	20%

*Be creative in your design of foods and dips, can add fresh flowers or greens for décor.

Awards to be given:

1st Place

2nd Place

3rd Place

PATRIOTIC CHARCUTERIE BOARD CONTEST

Sponsored by:

Raggedy Sisters

Wednesday, September 2, 2026

6:00 pm – Stage at Expo Hall

1. Contestants come to the Expo Hall at 6:00 pm to set up their boards
2. Board size should be at least 9" x 13".
3. Provide plates for judges (4-6)
4. Think up a name for your charcuterie board. Be creative in your design of foods and dips. You can add fresh flowers, greens, or any other props for décor to go along with the patriotic theme. You may choose sweet, savory, or spicy.
5. Provide a typed copy of what is used on your board and any recipe that may have been used (in sauce, dip, or spread). Be sure your name is included.
6. Entry forms are online. Entries can be mailed to Du Quoin State Fair Competitive Events, 655 Executive Dr., Du Quoin, IL 62832, or you may call the office at 618-542-1509.
7. NO ENTRY FEE.
8. Entries for this contest must be submitted by August 31, 2026.

Entries will be judged on:

Creativity 50%

Taste 30%

Assortment 20%

(Variety of foods)

Awards to be given:

1st Place

2nd Place

3rd Place



4-H FLORAL CHALLENGE CENTERPIECE MAKING

Sponsored by:

U of I Extension

Franklin, Jackson, Perry, Randolph & Williamson Counties

Thursday, September 3, 2026

6:00 p.m. – Stage at Expo Hall

1. **Open to all youth ages 8-18. You do not have to be a 4-H member.**
2. Contestants come at 5:30 p.m. to the EXPO HALL to set up.
3. All vases and flowers will be provided.
4. Bring your own scissors and cutting utensils.
5. You may bring up to 5 special decorations for your project if you want. (Examples: additional special flowers, ribbons, decorative picks, fillers.)
6. You will be given 45 minutes to finish your centerpiece.
7. Entry forms are found online. Entries can be mailed to Du Quoin State Fair Competitive Events, 655 Executive Dr., Du Quoin, IL 62832, or by calling the office at 618-542-1509/618-542-1525
8. Entries for this contest must be submitted by August 25th, 2026 at noon. No late entries will be accepted.
9. Centerpieces will be on display in the Expo throughout the duration of the rest of the fair.

No Entry Fee for this contest.

Entries will be judged on:

Presentation	50%
Creativity	30%
Best Use of Product	20%

Awards will be given in two age categories, 8-12 and 13-18.

- 1st Place – Gift Card
- 2nd Place – Gift Card
- 3rd Place – Gift Card



RED, WHITE, AND BLUE DESSERT SHOWDOWN

Sponsored by:

Fare Foods

Thursday, September 3

7:30 P.M. – Stage @ Expo Hall

1. Contestants come to the Expo Hall at 7:15 pm to set up their dessert.
2. Create desserts using red, white, and blue, ingredients.
3. Provide plates for judges (4-6)
4. Think up a Patriotic name for your dessert. Be creative in decorating your dessert in a patriotic theme.
5. Provide a copy of your recipe and what was used to decorate your dessert. Be sure your name is included.
6. Entry forms are online. Entries can be mailed to Du Quoin State Fair Competitive Events, 655 Executive Dr., Du Quoin, IL 62832, or you may call the office at 618-542-1509.
7. NO ENTRY FEE.
8. Entries for this contest must be submitted by September 1, 2026.

Entry forms are online and can be mailed to Du Quoin State Fair Competitive Events, 655 Executive Drive, Du Quoin, IL 62832, or completed online at dsf.illinois.gov/competitions/home-show/cooking-contests

No entry fee for this contest.

Entries will be judged on:

Use of RED, WHITE, & BLUE ingredients	50%
Taste	30%
Presentation	20%

Awards will be given in two age categories, 8-12 and 13-18.

- 1st Place – Gift Card
- 2nd Place – Gift Card
- 3rd Place – Gift Card



ROUTE 66 SODA POP CHALLENGE

Sponsored by:

DOWNTOWN FIZZ

Friday, September 4, 2026

6:00 p.m. – Stage at Expo Hall

Make, create, and decorate, your personal dirty soda!

1. Contestants come to the Expo Hall at 6:00 pm
2. There will be a children's division and an adult division.
3. The cups, syrup, ice, straws, and soda will be provided by Du Quoin Downtown Fizz.
4. Each contestant can bring up to 4 items to add to their dirty soda.
5. Each contestant will need to come up with a name for their dirty soda.
6. Entry forms are online and can be mailed to Du Quoin State Fair Competitive Events, 655 Executive Drive, Du Quoin, IL 62832, or completed online at ***dsf.illinois.gov/competitions/home-show/cooking-contests***
7. NO ENTRY FEE. Entries for this contest must be submitted by September 2, 2026

Entries will be judged on:

Creativity	40%
Taste	40%
Visual Presentation	20%

Awards will be given:

- 1st Place
- 2nd Place
- 3rd Place

ROUTE 66 WAFFLE SHOWDOWN

Sponsored by:

Gurtie's Goodies

Saturday, September 5th

10:30 A.M. – Stage at Expo Hall

1. Be creative and put your best waffle art mind to use!
2. Each contestant will get 4 waffles to use for their decorations.
3. Decorate the waffle(s) in a creative way.
4. Contestants can use the waffles for decorations and some for waffle art.
5. Contestants need to bring what they want to decorate the waffle with.
6. THE WAFFLE WILL BE DECORATED AT THE CONTEST.

Pre-registration is required for this contest.

Entry forms are online and can be mailed to Du Quoin State Fair Competitive Events, 655 Executive Drive, Du Quoin, IL 62832, or completed online at dsf.illinois.gov/competitions/home-show/cooking-contests

NO ENTRY FEE.

Entries must be submitted by August 31st, 2026

Entries will be judged on:

Creativity	50%
Use of Decorations	30%
Overall Appearance	20%

Awards to be given:

- 1st Place
- 2nd Place
- 3rd Place



STAR SPANGLED APPETIZER CHALLENGE

Sponsored by:

BANTERRA BANK

Saturday, September 5

1:00 P.M. – Stage @ Expo Hall

1. Contestants come to the Expo Hall at 12:45 pm to set up their appetizer.
2. Create an appetizer using one red, one white, and one blue, element.
3. Provide plates for judges (4-6)
4. Think up a Patriotic name for your appetizer.
5. Provide a copy of your recipe and what was used to make your appetizer. Remember to put your name on it.
6. Entry forms are online. Entries can be mailed to Du Quoin State Fair Competitive Events, 655 Executive Dr., Du Quoin, IL 62832, or you may call the office at 618-542-1509.
7. NO ENTRY FEE.
8. Entries for this contest must be submitted by September 1, 2026.

No entry fee for this contest.

Entries will be judged on:

Use of RED, WHITE, & BLUE elements	50%
Taste	30%
Presentation	20%

Awards will be given in two age categories, 8-12 and 13-18.

1st Place – Gift Card

2nd Place – Gift Card

3rd Place – Gift Card



GENERATION SHOWDOWN: KIDS VS KIN

Sponsored by:

Kalin's Café

Saturday, September 5th

2:00 P.M. – Stage @ Expo Hall

Did your parents or grandparents teach you everything you know about cooking? Did they teach you TOO much? Well, come out to our contest and prove it! Judges will pick who they think has the better dish, dessert, or soup.

1. Each contestant will have to challenge their kin on an item they both have cooked.
2. The challenger needs to be a child against their kin (parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, etc.)
3. Each contestant will bring the same item that they have made at home.
4. The judges will do a blind taste test and decide who brings home the bragging rights for that dish!
5. Entry forms are online. Entries can be mailed to Du Quoin State Fair Competitive Events, 655 Executive Drive, Du Quoin, IL 62832, or call the office at 618-542-1509.
6. NO ENTRY FEE
7. Entries for this contest must be submitted by Friday, September 4th, 2026

Entries will be judged on:

Taste	50%
Creativity	30%
Overall Appearance	20%

Awards to be given:

1st Place

2nd Place

3rd Place

PATRIOTIC PIE BAKE OFF

Sponsored by:
Checker Flags and Lemonade Stands
Saturday, September 5th
7:00 p.m. – Stage at Expo Hall

Bake and decorate your pie in a Patriotic Theme!

1. Contestants come to the Expo Hall at 4:30 pm with their recreated fair food.
2. Each pie should be decorated with a patriotic theme. (Examples: stars, stripes, or flag inspired lattice crusts.
3. Using locally sourced ingredients will earn you some bonus points. Please bring an index card or piece of paper listing the ingredients you used and from what local sourced store it was bought from.
4. The pies can be sweet or savory.
5. Provide plates for judges (4-5)
6. Provide a recipe of what was used to create your food and be sure to include your name.
7. Entry forms are online and can be mailed to Du Quoin State Fair Competitive Events, 655 Executive Drive, Du Quoin, IL 62832, or completed online at dsf.illinois.gov/competitions/home-show/cooking-contests
8. NO ENTRY FEE. Entries for this contest must be submitted by September 1, 2026.

Entries will be judged on:

Patriotic Presentation	50%
Taste	30%
Creativity	20%
Bonus	list on index card of local ingredients

Awards will be given:

- 1st Place
- 2nd Place
- 3rd Place



FARMYARD GINGER BARN CHALLENGE

Sponsored by:
Kellerman's Feed & Supply
Sunday, September 6th
4:00 p.m. – Stage at Expo Hall

Put your decorating skills to good use and turn a gingerbread house into a barn to celebrate the agriculture at the Du Quoin State Fair!

1. Each contestant will be given a gingerbread house and it is up to them to turn it into a gingerbread barn!
2. Contestants are allowed to bring 3 items from home to decorate the barn
3. We will provide some icing and candy pieces.

Entry forms are online and can be mailed to Du Quoin State Fair Competitive Events, 655 Executive Drive, Du Quoin, IL 62832, or completed online at dsf.illinois.gov/competitions/home-show/cooking-contests

No entry fee.

Entries will be judged on:

Creativity	50%
Originality	30%
Overall Neatness & Appearance	20%

Be creative!

- 1st Place
- 2nd Place
- 3rd Place



FFA AND 4-H FLOWER CONTAINER/TUB CONTEST

Sponsored by:
FFA & 4-H

1. Open to all chapters or clubs of FFA or 4-H.
2. Each chapter or club would find a tub/container and fill it with decorations of your choice.
3. Decorations must be weighted appropriately and weatherproof.
4. Every tub/container must include your chapter or club name.
5. You can paint and decorate the tub anyway you want.
6. Entry forms are found online. Entries can be mailed to Du Quoin State Fair Competitive Events, 655 Executive Dr., Du Quoin, IL 62832, or by calling the office at 618-542-1509/618-542-1525
7. Entries for this contest must be submitted by August, September 24th.
8. To enter this contest please call Ericka Kirk at 618-357-212
9. There will be three places: Grand Prize, Governor's Choice, and Director's Choice.
10. The tubs/containers will then be displayed August 29- September 7 during the 2026 Du Quoin State Fair.

No Entry Fee for this contest.

