

**Tennessee Cattlemen's Youth Association**  
**Tennessee's Top Tier sponsored by Merck Animal Health Program Rules**

Tennessee's Top Tier (TTT) *sponsored by Merck Animal Health* is a youth program of the Tennessee Cattlemen's Association (TCA) and Tennessee Cattlemen's Youth Association (TCYA) that exclusively recognizes and rewards TCYA members for their participation and placings through a series of sanctioned junior cattle shows. The TTT program is designed to increase youth involvement at junior cattle shows in Tennessee, promote commitment to the cattle industry at a young age, and allow youth the opportunity to network with their peers and industry leaders.

### **1. Exhibitor Eligibility**

Exhibitor eligibility is limited to Tennessee residents who are enrolled in 4<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades as of January 1, 2026, and are paid members of the Tennessee Cattlemen's Youth Association (TCYA). To be eligible for the TTT program, participants must be in good financial standing with TCA. TTT participants must continue to be in good financial standing with TCA to be eligible to receive TTT awards and to be listed in the TTT final points.

### **2. TCYA Membership**

To receive points, an exhibitor must be a paid member of TCYA. Membership dues must be paid **before** points can be accumulated and must remain up to date to continue receiving TTT points throughout the program year. Youth memberships are \$10, annually. Every reasonable effort will be taken by TCA to remind members to renew their membership, however, it is up to the member to keep their membership up to date.

### **3. Animal Nomination & Enrollment**

To receive TTT points, TTT Exhibitors must complete the nomination form and pay a \$20.00 per head nomination fee. The nomination form and fee only have to be submitted **one-time** for the show season. TTT participants must nominate their animals in the Top Tier program on or before (postmarked) the early entry deadline set forth by the first show from which they wish to start receiving points with that animal. Since Tennessee Beef Agribition does not have an early entry deadline, nominations must be postmarked 15 days prior to the show. Cattle can be nominated at any point during the TTT program year. Nominations must be submitted on the official Tennessee's Top Tier nomination form. By signing the TTT nomination form, TTT exhibitors, parents, and others acting on behalf of the exhibitor agree to abide by all TTT rules. Nomination forms can be found at [www.tncattle.org/tennessee-s-top-tier](http://www.tncattle.org/tennessee-s-top-tier). Nomination forms, required documents, and fees must be mailed to:

Tennessee Cattlemen's Association  
 c/o Tennessee's Top Tier  
 530B Brandies Circle  
 Murfreesboro, TN 37128

### **4. Sanctioned Shows**

**4a.** Each sanctioned show will pick Top 5 Steers and Top 5 Heifers. It is up to the individual show to determine if they give additional awards.

**4b.** Each sanctioned show (that offers showmanship) will include five showmanship divisions, and place 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup>. It is up to the individual show to determine the awards, if any, are given.

**4c. All exhibitors MUST follow the rules outlined by each individual show. TCA/TCYA will not be responsible for the formulation or enforcement of individual show rules. These are the sole responsibility of the show management. If there is a question or discrepancy regarding the show or show rules, exhibitors should contact show management directly. TCA/TCYA do not manage any of the sanctioned shows.**

**4d.** The 2025-2026 points circuit begins on Saturday, December 6, 2025, at the Rocky Top Classic and ends August 13-22, 2026, at the Wilson County / Tennessee State Fair. The circuit will consist of the following shows:

| <b>Show</b>                                                                         | <b>Date</b>                                           | <b>Location</b><br><i>(locations subject to change)</i>           | <b>Contact</b>                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>UTK Rocky Top Classic</b>                                                        | <b>Saturday, December 6, 2025</b>                     | <b>Brehm Animal Science Bldg.</b><br><i>Knoxville, TN</i>         | <b>Eli Munday</b>                             |
| <b>MTSU B&amp;B Preview Show</b>                                                    | <b>Saturday, February 21, 2026</b>                    | <b>MTSU Tennessee Livestock Center</b><br><i>Murfreesboro, TN</i> | <b>Dr. Jessica Carter</b>                     |
| <b>Tennessee Beef Agribition</b><br><i>No Showmanship</i>                           | <b>Sunday, March 15, 2026</b>                         | <b>James E. Ward Agricultural Center</b><br><i>Lebanon, TN</i>    | <b>Sonya Wright</b><br><b>Jamie Nicholson</b> |
| <b>West TN Spring Klassic</b>                                                       | <b>Saturday, March 21, 2026</b>                       | <b>Obion County Fairgrounds</b><br><i>Union City, TN</i>          | <b>William Pitts</b>                          |
| <b>UTM AGR Sickie and Sheaf Showdown</b>                                            | <b>Sunday, March 22, 2026</b>                         | <b>Obion County Fairgrounds</b><br><i>Union City, TN</i>          | <b>Chas Rowlett</b>                           |
| <b>Cumberland Mountain Showdown</b>                                                 | <b>Saturday, April 11, 2026</b>                       | <b>Bledsoe County Fairgrounds</b><br><i>Pikeville, TN</i>         | <b>Brian Wyatt</b>                            |
| <b>Bristol Show</b>                                                                 | <b>Friday, May 1, 2026</b>                            | <b>Appalachian, Fairgrounds</b><br><i>Gray, TN</i>                | <b>Chris Mackey</b>                           |
| <b>Knoxville Spring Junior Cattle Expo</b>                                          | <b>Friday, May 1, 2026, AND Saturday, May 2, 2026</b> | <b>Appalachian Fairgrounds</b><br><i>Gray, TN</i>                 | <b>Aaron Fisher</b>                           |
| <b>Eiffel Tower Classic Cattle Show</b>                                             | <b>Saturday, May 9, 2026</b>                          | <b>Henry County Fairgrounds</b><br><i>Paris, TN</i>               | <b>Angela Wilson</b>                          |
| <b>Shelbyville Showdown Cattle Show</b>                                             | <b>Saturday, May 16, 2026</b>                         | <b>Bedford County Fairgrounds</b><br><i>Shelbyville, TN</i>       | <b>Julie Phillips</b>                         |
| <b>Tennessee Junior Beef Expo</b>                                                   | <b>Thursday, July 9 – Saturday, July 11, 2026</b>     | <b>James E. Ward Agricultural Center</b><br><i>Lebanon, TN</i>    | <b>Aaron Fisher</b>                           |
| <b>Wilson Co - Tennessee State Fair</b><br><i>No Showmanship &amp; Heifers Only</i> | <b>August 13-22, 2026</b>                             | <b>James E. Ward Agricultural Center</b><br><i>Lebanon, TN</i>    | <b>Sonya Wright</b><br><b>Jamie Nicholson</b> |

## **5. Show Your Own Animal for TTT Points**

To receive points, animals must be shown by their owner. An exception is made if the TTT participant (1) owns two or more animals that are in the same class or (2) has two different animals that are both showing simultaneously in adjacent rings. In these two scenarios, another junior, who is eligible for participation at the show, may exhibit the second animal and the participant would still receive TTT points for both animals. When the class conflict is over and for championship drives, the actual TTT participant must return to showing their own animal to retain the points earned. Additionally, for showmanship purposes, the exhibitor must show their own animal or a sibling's animal to receive points.

TTT exhibitors who are physically unable to show their animal may ask another TTT exhibitor or have a family member who meets the age requirements for the TTT program to show their animal, but the unable TTT participant must be present at the show to earn TTT points. The TTT exhibitor must seek prior approval from show officials first and the Tennessee Cattlemen's Association second.

## 6. Breed/Class Qualifications

**6a.** Exhibitors must have original registration papers at the time of check-in. Registration papers must meet national breed eligibility requirements to be accepted. No copies will be accepted. Original registration certificates must be in the name of the junior exhibitor exhibiting the animal.

**6b.** Steers and commercial heifers must have a legible tattoo that corresponds with the tattoo on their TTT nomination form and be tagged with an EID tag. Registered heifers must also have a legible tattoo that corresponds with the tattoo on their TTT nomination form and breed registration papers and be tagged with an EID tag.

**6c.** Cattle are subject to having their registration papers, tattoos, and EID tags checked at any point during TTT sanctioned shows, by shows officials and/or TTT/TCA officials. If the animal's information does not correspond with the information on file and/or the tattoo is illegible and/or the EID tag appears to be altered or incorrect, no points will be given and show officials may prohibit the animal from showing.

**6d.** A heifer may only receive points in one division, either in her breed or as a commercial. Once an animal is nominated in a breed division or as a commercial, said animal may only earn points as originally nominated. For example, a heifer nominated in the Limousin division must show as a Limousin for the entire Top Tier Season year. In the event the Exhibitor should elect to no longer show the heifer in the Limousin division, the heifer cannot be nominated as a commercial and earn Top Tier points. Their points will be counted for the declared breed as originally nominated on their TTT nomination form.

**6e.** In the event that a TTT sanctioned show does not have enough head to create a breed show for your animal, you must show in the All-Other Breeds category to still be eligible for breed points. IF a breed category for your animal is offered, you MUST show in your respective breed. Failure to do so will result in no points being earned.

**6f.** All cattle showing in a TTT sanctioned show MUST be tagged with an EID ear tag before arriving at their first TTT show. The primary method of identification for all cattle exhibiting in the state of Tennessee is their EID tag. This will also serve as the TTT program nominated cattle's TTT number throughout the season. The secondary method of identification will be tattoo, and for registered animals their breed registration number.

## 7. Points System

**7a. Point totals will be kept for each individual animal.**

**7b. TTT participants will receive points for ALL of their animals that are nominated in the TTT program at each show.**

**7c.** If a TTT nominated animal is sold during the show season, the points are not transferable. Animals may be re-nominated under the new owner.

**7d.** If the animal(s) and/or person(s) that place above you are not eligible for TTT points, you will still receive the points for the placing that you received.

**7e.** Points will be awarded as follows:

### A. Showmanship

| Division    | Age                                       |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Explorer    | 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade                     |
| Junior      | 5 <sup>th</sup> - 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade   |
| Junior-High | 7 <sup>th</sup> - 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade   |
| Senior I    | 9 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup> Grade   |
| Senior II   | 11 <sup>th</sup> - 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade |

### Showmanship point values in 2026

| Placing       | Point Value |
|---------------|-------------|
| 1             | 15 points   |
| 2             | 13 points   |
| 3             | 11 points   |
| 4             | 9 points    |
| 5             | 7 points    |
| Participation | 6 points    |

### B. Heifer & Steer

#### Class Points

| Placing       | Point Value |
|---------------|-------------|
| 1             | 5 points    |
| 2             | 4 points    |
| 3             | 3 points    |
| 4             | 2 points    |
| 5             | 1 point     |
|               |             |
| Participation | 5 points    |

#### Top 5 Overall Points

| Placing                 | Point Value |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Supreme                 | 30 points   |
| Res. Supreme            | 25 points   |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Overall | 20 points   |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Overall | 15 points   |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> Overall | 10 points   |

#### Breed Champion Points

| Placing  | Point Value |
|----------|-------------|
| Champion | 15 points   |
| Reserve  | 10 points   |

## 8. Minimum & Maximum Point Accumulation

Minimum: To be eligible for year end points awards, the TCA member must exhibit at **THREE** or more sanctioned point shows.

Maximum: The total number of shows calculated in the year-end point totals will vary based on the division (steers, heifers, showmanship). Each exhibitor's/animal's **lowest FOUR (4) shows** will be dropped per division. See the breakdown below for the number of shows that will count per division. As an exhibitor, you may attend more than the number of shows being counted for points, however, only your best sets of points will count. The purpose of counting a maximum number of shows per division (or dropping shows) is to account for an "off day" that an exhibitor might have had in the show ring, or account for when an exhibitor must miss a show due to a parent working, a school event, sports game, family event, sickness, injury, etc.

### *Maximum Number of Shows Counted per division:*

Total number of Heifer Shows = 12, Count each exhibitor's best 7

Total number of Steer Shows = 11, Count each exhibitor's best 6

Total number of Showmanship Shows = 10, Count each exhibitor's best 5

### **Tie-Breaking Procedure:**

In the event of a tie, the tie shall be broken by including the results from one additional sanctioned show. Should a tie still remain, further procedures as determined by the show committee shall apply.

## 9. Year-End Awards

End of the year awards will be presented during the TCA Youth Awards Banquet. Award recipients will be notified in advance with banquet details, including location, date/time, etc. Awards will be presented for the following:

- a. Top 5 showmanship in each division
- b. Top 5 overall heifers
- c. Top 5 overall steers
- d. Top 2 heifers in each of the following breeds: Angus, Charolais, Chi/ChiAngus, Hereford, Limousin, Red Angus, Shorthorn, ShorthornPlus, Simmental, % Simmental, and Commercial
- e. Top 5 Tennessee Bred Heifers (*\*\*\*To be eligible for the Top 5 Tennessee Bred Heifers the breed registration papers submitted with your nomination must demonstrate that your heifer was solely raised by a Tennessee breeder. Commercial heifers and steers are not eligible.*)

## 10. Exhibitor Code of Conduct

All Tennessee's Top Tier exhibitors, their family members, and others acting on behalf of the exhibitor must display good sportsmanship and act courteously at all sanctioned shows. TTT exhibitors are encouraged to exhibit their animals in collared shirts to promote professionalism and uphold the integrity of the show ring environment. Unsportsmanlike conduct will be referred to the TCA Committee for appropriate action, if the committee deems it necessary. Unsportsmanlike conduct may include but is not limited to physical actions, threats, or outbursts of profanity. Committee action is not limited to the following but may result in the exhibitor found in violation to lose points for a show, lose multiple show points, and/or being banned from current or future participation in the program. By signing the TTT nomination form, exhibitors, parents, and others acting on behalf of the exhibitor agree to abide by all TTT rules, including the Exhibitor Code of Conduct. The decision of the Committee regarding unsportsmanlike conduct shall be final. It is important to remember that TCA is not responsible for the individual shows on the TTT circuit. If you have an issue while at a TTT show, you should consult show management directly.

## **11. Complaint/ Protest Procedure**

Any individual who seeks to file a complaint or protest regarding a perceived infraction of a TTT rule must submit a fee of **\$250** to the Tennessee Cattlemen's Association. The fee must be submitted at the time the protest is filed. It is the responsibility of the individual filing the protest to provide **ALL** evidence in support of their protest. TCA will not release the name of the individual filing the protest. The fee shall be refunded if the

Protest is sustained by TCA. Should other parties be found in violation of the rules, TCA will take appropriate action regarding the situation. Action is not limited to the following but may result in exhibitor found in violation to lose points for the animal in violation, lose points for a show, lose multiple show points, and/or be barred from receiving show challenge points. Following an exhibitor's 2<sup>nd</sup> infraction, the exhibitor will be disqualified from the TTT program for the remainder of the program year. The decision of TCA regarding the protest shall be final. TCA also reserves the right to review any potential rule violation without a **\$250** complaint filing.

### **12. Point Disputes**

After TCA show point files are posted to the Tennessee Cattlemen's Association website, members have five business days to dispute the report. At the end of five business days (5:00 p.m. CST), the points for that reporting period become final. All disputes must be submitted in writing via email to [sally@tncattle.org](mailto:sally@tncattle.org).

### **13. TCA Website/ Social Media**

During the 2025-2026 show season, current point standings will be posted on the Tennessee Cattlemen's Association website, [www.tncattle.org](http://www.tncattle.org). This site will include information and rules on the Tennessee Top Tier program. It will also provide information and a link to each sanctioned show, including entry information. Additionally, when points have been posted, an announcement will be made on the official TCYA social media outlets. Other updates regarding early entry deadlines, nomination reminders, etc. will also be posted on TCYA social media. If the exhibitors email address is on file, they will receive a TTT update email periodically with program updates and reminders.

### **14. TCA Youth Committee**

The TTT program is planned and governed by the TCA Youth Committee, however, all decisions are subject to approval by the TCA board of directors. The TCA President will appoint the committee chairman and committee members.

### **15. Committee Decisions**

DNA is subject to being pulled should there be any discrepancy related to animal identification, age, ownership, etc. The decisions of the TCA Youth Committee and Officials, subject to the approval of Tennessee Cattlemen's Association board of directors, on all issues pertaining to the TTT program shall be final. The Tennessee Cattlemen's Association, Tennessee Cattlemen's Youth Association, Tennessee's Top Tier program, Merck Animal Health, and other program sponsors are not responsible for accidents or sickness.

***Questions? Contact Sally Wingler, Tennessee Cattlemen's Association  
[sally@tncattle.org](mailto:sally@tncattle.org) OR (615) 896-2333***

***The Tennessee Cattlemen's Association reserves the right to alter, amend, update, or otherwise adjust rules of the Tennessee Top Tier Program as necessary. Every effort will be made to remain consistent and fair to all individuals participating in the program. The Tennessee Cattlemen's Association and all sponsors of the program are not liable for any injury or loss which may occur by exhibitors participating in these events.***