



## **2026 BBQ COMPETITION RULES AND GUIDELINES**

The Kansas Veterans Festival BBQ Competition will be held on June 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup>, 2026, at Veterans Point, Shady Creek Camping Area, El Dorado Lake & State Park, KS. The BBQ Team Area and Cooking Spaces will be inside of the Kansas Veterans Festival Event Area.

Each vehicle is required by State Park rules to have the annual or daily permit displayed on the vehicle while in the El Dorado Lake & State Park. Daily permits can be purchased at the El Dorado Lake Park Office near the Shady Creek Camping Area. The Kansas Veterans Festival is prohibited from selling or providing any vehicle daily permits.

As part of the BBQ Team Entry Fee, each cook will be provided a wristband at check-in and they must be worn inside of the Kansas Veterans Festival Event Area. Family, friends and guests may purchase wristbands for \$5 each and they are good for the duration of the Kansas Veterans Festival, June 19-20, 2026. For children 12 and under, a wristband is free.

**CHECK-IN IS 8:00am – 5:00pm, JUNE 19<sup>TH</sup>.** Late arrival and check-in will be allowed if the BBQ Team coordinates a late arrival in advance. BBQ Teams are permitted to arrive early, after 4:00pm on Thursday, June 18<sup>th</sup>. Please coordinate an early arrival in advance, however, the BBQ Team will not be checked-in until 8:00am on June 19<sup>th</sup>.

Each team will enter through the west gate of the Kansas Veterans Festival Event Area and will be escorted and parked into a cooking space at the BBQ Team Area.

Each team will be assigned a 20'x30' cooking space. Teams wanting to be next to each other should arrive at the same time or coordinate the request with the Kansas Veterans Festival BBQ Competition Coordinator in advance.

After a team has parked and finished unloading, all vehicles will be required to be parked in the designated parking area. If any cook needs to leave during the event, please park the vehicle in the public parking area. Vehicle traffic inside the Kansas Veterans Festival Event Area is highly restricted.

**MEAT HANDOUT** will be conducted after a team has been checked-in and has parked in their assigned cooking space. Two racks of ribs and two whole chickens will be provided by the competition. Once the competition meat has been handed out, it shall not leave the contest site. Only the competition meat provided will be turned-in for judging. Competition meat not meeting these qualifications shall be disqualified, not allowed to be turned in, will not be judged, and will receive no score.

**WHOLE CHICKENS:** A minimum of 6 samples will be required to be turned in, in the provided box. Samples may include slices of chicken breasts, whole chicken breast, thighs, wings, or the legs. Garnish is optional, but is highly recommended.

**PORK RIBS:** A minimum of 6 samples will be required to be turned in, in the provided box. Samples must include the bone. Garnish is optional, but is highly recommended.

**Anything Side Dish Ancillary** is completely optional, side dish will be the cook's choice and each team may turn in more than one side dish entry. A minimum of 6 samples will be required to be turned in, in the provided box. Garnish and any foreign objects are prohibited.

**MANDATORY COOKS MEETING** will be at 5:30pm, at the Kids Tent, located near the BBQ Team Area. Each team will be provided their numbered turn-in containers for the chicken, pork ribs and side dish categories at the cooks meeting.

**TURN-IN TIMES: CHICKEN 11:00am PORK RIBS 11:30am on Saturday, June 20<sup>th</sup>.**

The allowable turn-in time will be five (5) minutes before to five (5) minutes after the posted time with no tolerance. A late turn-in will not be accepted and will receive a 0 (zero) in all criteria.

**ANYTHING SIDE DISH will be turned in from 12pm – 12:30pm and will be judged after on Saturday, June 20<sup>th</sup>.**

**AWARDS CEREMONY** will be at 3:00pm on Saturday, June 20<sup>th</sup>, at the small stage. Teams that choose to leave following the awards ceremony will leave through the west gate only. Any team that stays for the Saturday night entertainment and events, must leave no later than 3:00pm on Sunday, June 21<sup>st</sup>.

There will be a water point, teams need to bring their own water jugs

Electricity will not be provided to the BBQ Teams. Generators are permitted, however, **ONLY INVERTOR GENERATORS OR GENERATORS THAT ARE RATED SUPER QUIET WILL BE ALLOWED.**

Hot ash and grease barrels will be provided near the BBQ Team Area.

Quiet hours will be from 11:00pm until 6:00am

Each team must have a head cook and may have up to 3 assistant cooks. Maximum 4 cooks per team. It is the responsibility of the teams to see that their assigned cooking space is clean and orderly during and following the event. It is imperative that clean-up be thorough. Any team's assigned cooking space left in disarray or with loose trash, other than at trash containers, may disqualify the team from future participation

Each cook must follow good sanitation and food handling practices. Sanitizing of work areas should be implemented and each cook shall use gloves when handling food. Prior to cooking, meat must be maintained at 40° F or less. After cooking, all meat must be held at 140° F or above. Meat that is cooked, properly cooled, and later reheated for hot holding and serving shall be reheated so that all parts of the food reach a temperature of at least 165° F for a minimum of 15 seconds.

Fires shall be of wood, wood pellets, or charcoal. Gas and electric heat sources will not be permitted for cooking or holding. Propane or electric is permitted as fire starters, provided that the competition meat is not in/on the cooking device. Electrical accessories such as spits, augers, or forced draft are permitted. **Yes, pellet grills/smokers are permitted.**

Parboiling, Sous-vide, and/or deep-frying of the competition meat is not allowed. If any of the banned processes are discovered before the team turns in, the team will receive zeros. If discovered after turn-in, the team will receive (1) ones in all criteria for that entry.

Meat shall not be sculptured, branded or presented in a way to make it identifiable. Meat slices of the chicken only is permitted. Violations of this rule will be scored a one (1) on all criteria by all six judges.

Garnish is optional, but is highly recommended. Garnish is limited to chopped, sliced, shredded or whole leaves of fresh green lettuce, curly parsley, flat leaf parsley, curly green kale and/or cilantro. No garnish or foreign objects are permitted for the Anything Side Dish category.

Sauce is optional. If used, it shall be applied directly to the meat and not be pooled or puddled in the container. No side sauce containers will be permitted in the turn-in container.

Entries will be submitted in only the numbered container provided. The number must be on top of the container at turn-in. The container shall not be marked in any way to make the container unique or identifiable. ONLY the acceptable meat for the category being judged and legal garnish may be in the turn-in container. All turn-in containers will be re-numbered at turn-in to achieve "double blind judging".

Aluminum foil, toothpicks, skewers, foreign material, and/or stuffing are prohibited in the container. If the object is attached to a sample that is removed, only the judge receiving that sample scores the penalty for foreign object. This can be applied to multiple judges' scores if objects are found on multiple samples. Marked entries or containers with the above listed material will receive a one (1) in all criteria from all Judges and disqualified.

Each turn-in container must contain at least six (6) portions of meat in the containers. Chicken may be submitted chopped, pulled, sliced, or diced as the cook sees fit, as long as there is enough for six (6) judges. Ribs shall be turned in bone-in. If there is not enough meat for each judge to sample, the shorted judge(s) will score a one (1) on all criteria, and the judges having samples will change the Appearance score to one (1) as a penalty.

The KCBS scoring formula will be used for the chicken and pork rib categories. The judging criteria will be APPEARANCE, TENDERNESS and TASTE, and will be scored 1 – 9 in each category. There will be one judge for each team entered. A KCBS Certified BBQ Judge will lead the judging.

**ONLY THE CHICKEN & PORK RIB CATEGORIES WILL COUNT TOWARDS GRAND CHAMPION AND RESERVE GRAND CHAMPION. TEAMS MUST SUBMIT ENTRIES FOR BOTH CATEGORIES FOR GRAND CHAMPION ELGIBILITY.**

#### **CHICKEN, PORK RIB PAYOUTS:**

1<sup>st</sup> Place - \$200 + Plaque

2<sup>nd</sup> Place - \$150 + Plaque

3<sup>rd</sup> Place - \$100 + Plaque

4<sup>th</sup> Place - \$50

## **GRAND CHAMPION AND RESEVERE GRAND CHAMPION PAYOUTS:**

Grand Champion - \$300 + Plaque

Reserve Grand Champion - \$150 + Plaque

## **ANYTHING SIDE DISH PAYOUT:**

Champion - \$100 + Plaque

2<sup>nd</sup> Place - \$75 + Plaque

3<sup>rd</sup> Place - \$50 + Plaque

**CAUSES FOR DISQUALIFICATION & EVICTION** of a team, its members and/or guests: A cook team is responsible jointly and severally for its head cook, its team members and its guests. Excessive or continued complaints from teams on any of the above rule infractions shall be considered grounds for immediate disqualification from the contest by the Kansas Veterans Festival Organizers. In addition, all complaints of disturbance or violation of quiet time, public intoxication with a disturbance, serving alcoholic beverages to the general public, use of illegal controlled substances, foul, abusive, or unacceptable language or any language causing a disturbance, excessive noise including noise generated from speakers and equipment, fighting and/or disorderly conduct, theft, dishonesty, cheating, use of prohibited meats, or any act involving moral turpitude and the use of gas or other auxiliary heat sources inside the cooking device.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

The Kansas Veterans Festival is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization working for the betterment of all Veterans; provide service to all Veterans; serve our community, state and nation; promote & coordinate the annual Kansas Veterans Festival at El Dorado Lake. It originated in 1988 as the Kansas Vietnam Veterans Family Reunion, in 2008, it became the Kansas Veterans & Family Reunion and in 2023 it officially was renamed the Kansas Veterans Festival.

Breakfast will be provided for each cook by Doghouse Concessions (food truck). It will be biscuits and gravy, and sausage patties, starting at 6:00am on Saturday, June 20<sup>th</sup>.

There will also be a coffee tent with donuts west of the main stage starting at 6:00am, Friday, June 19<sup>th</sup> thru Sunday, June 21<sup>st</sup>.

Although there are food trucks, teams are permitted to bring their own food and beverages. Alcoholic beverages are permitted and must be in-accordance within the Rules and Regulations of the El Dorado Lake and State Park. Please no glass containers.

All firearms and weapons must be maintained and stored in-accordance within the Rules and Regulations of the El Dorado Lake and State Park. No open or concealed carry is permitted inside the Kansas Veterans Festival Event Area,

There is a shower house on the event site and near the BBQ Team Area.

The main stage sound system will go live at 6:00am Friday thru Sunday starting with the bugle call "Reveille", followed by playing the Good Morning Vietnam Soundtrack, and will end each day with the bugle call "Taps" at 11:00pm.

We encourage each team to stay Saturday night for our Saturday Night's Entertainment and Activities. Please visit [www.kansasveteransfestival.org](http://www.kansasveteransfestival.org) for a complete list of our daily schedule of events.

The Kansas Veterans Festival and all in attendance must comply with all local, state and federal laws, including all rules and regulations of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, and the El Dorado Lake and State Park.

The Kansas Veterans Festival BBQ Coordinator is Todd Landers. For any special requests or inquiries, please email them to [richmcd@sbcglobal.net](mailto:richmcd@sbcglobal.net) ,

Each BBQ Team and its team members will understand and agree to all Rules & Guidelines, and Responsibilities & Liabilities. By entering the Kansas Veterans Festival BBQ Competition, all team members agree to waive all claims and do release the Kansas Veterans Festival, Inc. and all their agents of all liability resulting from injury, death, or loss of equipment prior to, during the process of, or following the Kansas Veterans Festival and the Kansas Veterans Festival BBQ Competition