



ONTARIO'S FINEST **BUTCHER**

COMPETITION

2026 OFFICIAL COMPETITION RULES

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2026 OFFICIAL COMPETITION RULES

ELIGIBILITY:

Maximum two (2) competitors per company.

Entrants must be available for the elimination round on September 14, 2026, at Handtmann Canada, Waterloo ON and the finals on October 3, 2026 at the Meat Industry Expo at the International Centre in Mississauga Ontario.

REGISTRATION:

A **non-refundable** entry fee of \$175+HST per entry for member company or \$350+HST per entry for non-member company or individual must be submitted with the completed registration form **by 4:30pm (EST) August 21, 2026**. Entries will be registered on date payment received. If for any reason the competition is cancelled the entry fee will be returned. **Substitutions will be accepted (for the elimination round only).**

A confirmation will be sent upon the closing of registration and participants will be provided with more detailed information on the competition.

ONTARIO'S FINEST BUTCHER TITLE:

An individual can enter the competition as often as they would like however, can only win the title of Ontario's Finest Butcher a maximum three (3) times. The winning butcher may be asked to participate as a judge in future competitions assuming no conflict of interest.

WINNER RECOGNITION:

- a) Ontario's Finest Butcher will be presented with a personalized award at the awards banquet on October 3 at the Awards Gala in Mississauga, ON.
- b) Both the individual and the member company may use Ontario's Finest Butcher title and logo.
- c) MPO will promote the winner via:
 - A press release distributed province-wide to food, lifestyle, business, trade and agricultural media
 - A local release targeted directly to media in their region
 - Recognition on meatpoultryon.ca, BLOCKtalk and Word on the BLOCK
 - Social media announcements on Facebook and Twitter
- d) YouTube videos from the past year's competitions may be found at www.youtube.com/user/OntMeatPoultry.



ELIMINATION ROUND:

The first stage of the competition will take place on **Monday, September 14, 2026** at **Handtmann Canada, located at 654 Colby Dr, Waterloo, ON N2V 1A2.**

The judging criteria for the elimination round is as follows. Please read carefully.

Competitors will now be judged on specific core competencies in addition to professionalism and workmanship. The Identified Competencies are as follows:

- 1) Seaming
- 2) Frenching
- 3) Tying
- 4) Slicing
- 5) Saw Skills
- 6) Boning/Trimming

Each competitor will be given 30 minutes to break down a pork bone-in leg (rind on), bone-in shoulder butt, and bone-in loin. If for religious or cultural reasons pork is not an option, competitors will be given the option to use veal. Please notify us when registering.

Competitors are required to produce the following:

Loin

- 4 Frenched Chops - external fat trimmed to an acceptable depth
- 6 Boneless Centre Cut Loin Chop, Fast Fry,

Leg

- 1 boneless, tied roast from the outside round, includes eye of the round
- Scallopine from inside round – Slice the whole muscle, each piece no more than 1/8" thick

Butt

- Capicola Roast

The degree of boning and the choice of retail cuts from the remaining materials will be the competitor's choice.

Judging in the elimination round is based on the **competitor's individual skills** and not against others.

All waste is to be kept including chine bone so that judges can evaluate boning, trimming and saw work.

- *Yields and margins will no longer be calculated in the final scoring*

Competitors must bring their own knives, tools and personal protective equipment. A saw will be available for use but shared with other competitors. **The use of a mesh glove is mandatory (except on the saw).**

The three competitors moving on to the finals will be announced the following day via Instagram Live.

NEW FOR 2026 - FINAL ROUND – RULES & GUIDELINES

The top three butchers with the highest score from the elimination round will proceed to the finals. The finals will take place on October 3, 2026 at the Meat Industry Expo at the International Centre in Mississauga Ontario.

1. Advance Cut Disclosure

- Upon being announced as finalists, competitors will be provided with the names of the cuts they will be working with in the final round.
 - Finalists will have the period between the finalist announcement and the final competition to conceptualize, design, and develop their display concept.
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2. Display Concept & Theme

- Each finalist must create and execute their own unique display theme.
 - The final display must:
 - Clearly reflect the chosen theme
 - Demonstrate creativity, technical skill, merchandising strategy, and storytelling
 - Finalists must be prepared to articulate and defend their concept by explaining:
 - Their theme choice
 - Product selection rationale
 - Merchandising strategy
 - Consumer appeal considerations
 - Competitors must be able to clearly communicate their decision-making process to both judges and the audience.
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3. Pantry Items & Budget

- Finalists are responsible for purchasing their own pantry items using the provided gift card.
- All pantry purchases (excluding merchandising aids) must:
 - Stay within the allocated budget

- Be documented as required by competition organizers
 - No additional external funding or personal purchases may be used beyond the provided gift card.
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4. Spices & Marinades (*Exclusive Supply Rule*)

- All spices will be supplied by Malabar Ingredients.
 - Finalists will be provided with an approved list of available spices and marinades.
 - Finalists must:
 - Select required spices and marinades from the approved list
 - Submit their spice and marinade requests no later than 7 days prior to the finals
 - Competitors may not purchase or use external spices or marinades, unless a specific item is not available through Malabar Ingredients and written approval is granted in advance.
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5. Merchandising Aids & Display Materials

- MPO will provide a standard set of merchandising aids, including Trays, Skewers, Butcher paper, etc. (*Full list to be provided separately*)
 - Finalists may supply additional merchandising aids at their discretion.
 - All external display materials must:
 - Be food-safe
 - Meet venue and safety requirements
 - Not interfere with other competitors' space or displays
 - Be able to fit on the 8-foot table provided
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6. Competitor Responsibilities

Each finalist is fully responsible for:

- Display concept development
- Theme creation and execution
- Pantry item sourcing (within budget)
- Merchandising design
- Visual presentation
- Product storytelling
- Communication of their concept and decisions to judges and audience

LIABILITY:

While MPO will be undertaking measures to ensure the safety of all competitors, MPO does not assume any responsibility for the protection and safeguarding of any persons for health or any other reasons. Competitors will be required to sign a waiver.

PUBLICITY RELEASE:

By entering the Competition, and in consideration of being allowed to participate and possibly win, the entrant:

- a) agrees to the Competition rules,
- b) agrees to the use, without compensation, of images of themselves (including any and all photographic images or recordings taken of them), name and city of business operation in all publicity campaigns, whether or not related to the Competition, including in all advertising, media material and on the MPO websites, and
- c) gives and grants to MPO and MPO's respective licensees, agents, successors and assigns in perpetuity the right to reproduce, use, publish, broadcast, exhibit, distribute, transmit and/or otherwise exploit, as applicable, in all forms of advertising and promotion of MPO's goods, services and/or business including in any and all media now or hereafter known including without limitation by means of newspaper advertising, magazine advertising, television advertising, direct mail advertising, video, electronic mediums including electronic networks such as the "Internet", merchandise, the following (the following being collectively referred to as the "Subject Matter"); photographs submitted or taken as part of the Competition, a description, biography and photo of the entrant and the company with which he/she is affiliated with and any photographs taken at any stage of the Competition and after the Competition (the copyright in all such photographs shall be and remain exclusively that of MPO, and if any copyright is deemed to be assigned to MPO pursuant to the paragraph then all moral rights relating to such works will be deemed to have been waived by the assignor).

COMPETITION RULE CHANGES:

At the sole discretion of MPO, and without any prior notice, these rules may be modified if, in the sole opinion of MPO, it is necessary or desirable to ensure that the Competition is conducted fairly.



CONTACT: Daphne Nuys-Hall, MPO Technical Director

(519) 763-4558 Ext 222# | technical@meatpoultryon.ca