CECA COOK-OFF RULES

Cooking Teams:

Cooking teams may have their own coolers and alcoholic beverages – HOWEVER, there will be no distribution to public.

No Fighting!

Please bring your own garden hose and extension cord(s) if needed

Props, trailers, vehicles, tent coverings, or any other part of the contestants' equipment must not exceed the boundaries of the assigned cooking space unless approved by the special events coordinator.

Holes or dug pits are not permitted.

Any equipment or devices that may damage the surface area of the contest site in any way are prohibited.

All meats will be cooked onsite.

Cooking teams will provide small samples of barbeque for the public.

Do not serve anyone without a ticket.

Clean up your own area; do not leave any trash lying around.

Remember to invite everyone to vote for the crowd's favorite.

Load-In & Setup:

Teams must deliver their equipment, supplies and other paraphernalia between 12:00pm - 5:00pm March 13th, 2026

All equipment, cookers, etc. should be delivered and set up by 5:00 pm. (Unless other arrangements are made)

We expect all cooking devices to be in working order and any cooking devices that may be found to be faulty or dangerous could be disqualified for use in the event.

No stakes are allowed for canopy structures. Only 5-gallon bucket filled with sand or gravel for each canopy pole.

Meat Categories:

The festival will provide meat for all cooking teams so that all cookers/smokers are using products from the same source.

Meat Inspection:

All meat must be maintained at a maximum temperature of 40 degrees F prior to inspection.

Prior to cooking, all meat that is resting in preparation for cooking must be always covered.

All meats must be cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 145 degrees F.

After cooking, all meat must be maintained at a minimum temperature of 140 degrees F in a covered container.

Each cooking team is required to keep all equipment including cooker, canopy, etc. contained within assigned space.

Judging:

Entries will be submitted in the containers supplied by the event organizer at check-in. One container per judge (4)

Lettuce will be the only garnish allowed.

Only the entry to be judged is allowed in the container.

Each entry will be judged on APPEARANCE, TASTE/FLAVOR, TENDERNESS and TEXTURE.

A minimum of four (4) separate and identifiable portions per category in containers supplied to the cooking team at check-in must be submitted for judging.

Scoring:

Each entry will be scored by four (4) judges in the areas of APPEARANCE, TASTE/FLAVOR, TENDERNESS and TEXTURE.

Scoring ranges from a low of 2 to a high of 9 in increments of 1 point for each category.

Any entry that is disqualified (see below Disqualification) will receive a score of zero for all four categories from all judges at the table.

Judging Procedure:

Each team head cook will bring their entry to the event organizer table to be judged.

He/She will open each container and checks for rule violations as stated below.

The containers will be passed around to the judges for sampling.

The event organizer makes sure that all scores for the containers are recorded in the proper place. This procedure is repeated for all containers.

CECA Provided Supplies:

CECA will provide space, water, power, trash bags, small sampling cups and containers for judging will be provided by CECA.

Sanitation:

Cooking teams are expected to maintain their cooking sites in an orderly and clean manner and to use good sanitary practices during the preparation, cooking and judging process.

Cooking conditions are subject to inspection by the judging committee and DHEC.

Infractions identified by the judging committee should be immediately corrected or the cooking team will be subject to disqualification.

The use of sanitary gloves is always required while handling food.

Failure to use sanitary gloves may result in disqualification.

A sanitation/water supply will be provided for all teams use during this event.

Teams must provide their own cleaning area for wash, rinse, and sanitization.

Disqualification:

CECA event representative (judges) is the only person that can disqualify an entry. An entry may be disqualified for any of the following reasons:

Evidence of marking or sculpting. Marking is defined as: any handwritten or mechanically made mark inside or outside the turn-in box that identifies the submitting team to any judge. Sculpting is defined as: carving, decorating, forming, or shaping of a meat entry, contained in a turn-in box, that identifies the submitting team to any judge.

Foreign material in the box besides the meat.

Less than 4 separate and identifiable samples.

Evidence of blood such that the meat is prepared below State Health Department's (DHEC) safe consumption guidelines.

Entry is turned in after the officially designated time.

Not cooking pork as a single piece of meat.

Not cooking the meat that was inspected.

Not having a team representative present for the entire cook.

BBQ Cook-Off Behavior Rules:

The Head Cook will be responsible for the conduct of his team and guests.

Excessive use of alcoholic beverages, profane or abusive language, or loud music will be grounds for disqualification.

Under no circumstances are alcoholic beverages to be distributed (given away or sold) to the public by teams.

The BBQ Committee requests and requires that good taste be used, not only in your barbeque but in your behavior as well.

Contestants may not give or sell any food to the public but are encouraged to reward the staff workers with generous supplies

Violation of the Rules and Regulations may result in disqualification, expulsion from the event or future participation.

By signing this I understand and agree to follow all the rules and regulations set forth by the CECA BBQ Committee.

_____ (Signature) _____ (Print) _____ (Date)