RECOMMENDED HANDLING AND HYGIENE PRACTICES FOR FARM ANIMAL EXHIBITORS AND VISITORS

The Department of Agriculture reminds anyone who holds or visits a farm animal exhibition to take precautions to prevent the potential spread of disease from animals to people.

Fairs, shows and farm tours that allow visitors to interact with farm animals have many benefits, including educating the public about how animal-derived food and fiber is produced.

It is critically important, however, that visitors understand that all animals, including pets, can carry a variety of diseases that may be transmitted to humans.

Animals can carry and shed disease organisms at any time, often without showing clinical signs of disease that can spread to people and cause illness.

Everyone involved in showing and handling farm animals in a public setting must be constantly vigilant about taking steps to prevent any potential incident of disease being spread.

The Dept. of Agriculture’s goal is to make sure farm animals being exhibited are treated well and have received the proper veterinary care and day-to-day handling practices that will reduce that potential.

Much of the risk to people can be mitigated by following these simple safe-hygiene practices around animals:

- Exhibition organizers should provide hand-washing stations equipped with soap and warm water, and encourage visitors to use them after handling farm animals. Stations should be clearly marked, convenient to use and maintained so as not contribute to the risk.
- Visitors should be discouraged from eating food while in the company of farm animals or in animal-housing areas.
- Parents should supervise their children when they are in contact with farm animals and ensure that they wash their hands thoroughly afterwards.
- Anyone who sells animals should educate their customers on safe handling and proper hygiene practices, along with proper care and feeding of the animal.
- Those who purchase animals at an exhibition, farm or sale should be prepared prior to receiving the animals to provide a clean, dry and secure place for animal housing outside the home appropriate for the type of animal.
- Keep animal food, feeding bottles, dishes and other equipment away from household food, utensils, and food-preparation areas and store them in a dedicated area outside the daily living area and away from young children. The animals, feeding bottles and other equipment should not be kept in the home.
- Thoroughly wash animal feeding equipment such as utensils, bottles and nipples prior to disinfecting. Organic matter on surfaces can reduce the effectiveness of disinfectants. Follow label directions when using any disinfectant.
- Wear dedicated clothing such as gloves, coveralls and boots while handling and working around animals. After use, launder the clothes in hot water and dry on the highest heat setting. Boots should be cleaned of organic matter and disinfected after use. Leave boots outside of the home. Or use disposable, single-use products that are commercially available.
For those seeking more information, the federal Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has an excellent resource available at: [http://www.cdc.gov/features/animalexhibits/](http://www.cdc.gov/features/animalexhibits/)

For exhibitors, it includes printable posters encouraging good hygiene and recommendations for how to set traffic flow through a farm or exhibit to minimize the risk to the public.

Connecticut law also mandates standards regarding the control of rabies in a public setting involving the exhibition of animals:

- No animal for which there is a licensed rabies vaccine may be in a public setting without being currently vaccinated for rabies. With respect to livestock species, available rabies vaccines are licensed for use in only cattle, sheep and horses but not licensed for use in other species including goats, swine and camels. Consult your veterinarian for rabies vaccination recommendations.
- For animals not currently vaccinated, written records must be kept by the owner, keeper, or handler of any animal that is present in a public setting in a controlled situation. The records must include contact information for all people having direct physical contact with the animal, including the visitors’ names, addresses and telephone numbers.
- Any animal not currently vaccinated for rabies that is present in a public setting in an uncontrolled situation shall be separated from the public by sufficient means to avoid direct contact between people and animals.
- Barriers such as a double fence, plexiglas, or other device to avoid direct contact between people and animals or a conspicuous sign must be posted near the animal enclosure stating: **CONNECTICUT RABIES ADVISORY NOTICE – DO NOT FEED OR TOUCH THE ANIMALS.**
- All poultry being exhibited at agricultural fairs must be identified and test negative for Salmonella pullorum within 12 months of the show date. Poultry must also be certified as having originated from flocks free of avian influenza, or be tested for the virus within 30 days of entry at the fair.
- All cages, crates and vehicles used for housing and transporting poultry must be cleaned and disinfected before and after each show. Doves, pigeons and waterfowl are exempt from testing requirements, but must be identified by leg bands or wing tags.