



Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

COVID-19 Considerations for Animal Activities at Fairs, Shows, and Other Events

Updated July 6, 2020

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Summary of Recent Changes

Revisions were made on July 6, 2020 to reflect the following:




- Updates were made to clarify precautions for susceptible animals.
- Updates were made to provide more detailed precautions for livestock shows.

What you need to know

- Events that bring together people and animals, such as fairs and agricultural shows, can increase the spread of COVID-19 among people and animals.
- The risk of animal-to-person spread is considered to be low.
- However, fair and agricultural show organizers should consider the potential for spread from person-to-person, person-to-animal, and possibly animal-to-animal.
- If people will be interacting with animals at an event, take precautions to prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

Fairs and agricultural shows pose unique [One Health](#) risks because they bring together crowds of people and animals with opportunities for close contact among them and mixing of different animals from different places. Events like these can contribute to the spread of SARS-CoV-2 from person to person but may also pose a risk of infection to certain types of animals.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, show organizers should follow CDC's [Considerations for Events and Gatherings](#) when deciding whether to hold, postpone, or cancel a fair, agricultural show, or other event where animals may be exhibited. Planners should also act in accordance with state and local jurisdictional guidance with regards to continuing operations at fair grounds or agricultural shows.



For general disease prevention when interacting with animals, follow advice in the [Compendium of Measures to Prevent Disease Associated with Animals in Public Settings](#)  , which provides standard recommendations on reducing the risk of disease related to animal contact in public settings for public health officials, veterinarians, animal venue operators, animal exhibitors (e.g., 4-H programs), visitors to animal venues and exhibits, teachers, camp operators, and others. Additional information and a checklist on biosecurity measures to prevent zoonotic diseases from spreading at fairs and animal exhibitions may be found in the [NASPHV's Resources on Zoonotic Influenza](#) .

Fair and agricultural show organizers should consider the potential for COVID-19 to spread from person to person, person to animal, and possibly from animal to animal. The risk of animal-to-person spread is considered low. However, it appears that people can spread the virus to animals in some situations, usually during close contact. Event organizers should take precautions to [minimize transmission](#) of all zoonotic diseases between people and animals.

Some [animals](#) have been reported to be infected with SARS-CoV-2 worldwide, including pet cats and dogs in the United States. **To date, there have been no reports of horses, cows, pigs, chickens, or ducks testing positive for SARS-COV-2.** More studies are needed to understand if and how different animals could be affected by COVID-19.

Precautions for animals

Although there have been no reports of livestock being infected with SARS-CoV-2, other types of animals have been infected. We are still learning about this virus and how it might affect different animals. Take precautions to prevent the potential spread of the virus among animals at your event.

- Implement additional precautions to maintain at least 6 feet separation between any species shown to be susceptible to SARS-CoV-2, including cats and other felids; dogs; small mammals such as mink, ferrets, and rabbits; and [other animals](#)  shown to be susceptible to this virus.
 - Prohibit susceptible animals from fairgrounds if they are not involved in fair or show activities.
 - Prevent direct contact and institute policies to ensure at least 6 feet separation is maintained between these susceptible animals and other animals and between these animals and people. The number of exhibitors and animals that can safely fit in a show ring or exhibit area may limit the number of animals that can be shown at one time.
- Follow good [biosecurity](#)  practices to prevent the spread of pathogens between the fair and the farm. These include management practices on the farm, in transit, and at the destination. Biosecurity applies to both people and animals and includes these practices:
 - Use good [hand hygiene](#).
 - Keep visitors on the farm to a minimum.
 - Clean and disinfect all equipment, tools, and other items between uses.
 - Wear proper attire and PPE when coming in to contact with animals or where they live.
 - Monitor animals for signs of illness.
- Do not allow admission of any animals that are sick. Animals infected with SARS-CoV-2 may have a range of

[clinical signs](#) including fever, coughing, difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, lethargy, sneezing, runny nose, eye discharge, vomiting, or diarrhea.

- All animals should receive a screening examination from a veterinarian, veterinary technician, or experienced animal care and handling specialist before being allowed on the premises.
- Agricultural fairs may require a health certificate from a licensed veterinarian for each animal brought to fair grounds.
- Animals should be examined daily for signs of illness.
- Exhibitors should report sick animals to the fair veterinarian or designee immediately.
- Prevent contact between pens of animals from different farms or households to prevent unnecessary interactions. Prevention may be accomplished by spacing out pens, staggering animals with an empty pen in between, or making other arrangements based on the facility.
- Place pens and stalls in a manner that keeps the public at least 6 feet away from the animal.
- Clean and disinfect animal areas frequently, including between uses for different animal species.
- Use facilities that provide adequate ventilation for animals and people.
- Limit interactions and maintain a distance of at least 6 feet between animals and people and between people, including fair staff, judges, and the public who are not from the same farm or household as the animal or its caretaker.
- Do not put cloth face coverings on animals. Covering an animal's face can harm it.
- Do not wipe or bathe animals with chemical disinfectants, alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, or any other products not approved for animal use.

Maintaining healthy environments in animal interaction areas

If the event will have a petting zoo or other animal interaction area, take precautions in addition to normal infectious disease prevention methods to protect animals and people from infection with SARS-CoV-2.

- Do not permit animals that are at higher risk for infection with SARS-CoV-2 in petting zoos or other animal interaction areas. This includes cats and other felids, small mammals like mink, ferrets and rabbits, and dogs.
- Include hand hygiene stations at the entrance and exit to petting zoos and other exhibits where people will be interacting with animals. Visitors should [wash their hands](#) before and after entering the area, even if they didn't touch animals.
 - Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs in most situations. If soap and water are not readily available, provide hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
 - If possible, staff should be assigned at the exit to actively encourage hand washing.
- Visitors to animal areas should wear a [cloth face covering](#) inside the animal area, if able. Cloth face coverings are not recommended for children under 2 years or anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the covering without assistance.
- Do not use common feed dispensers and other shared surfaces that cannot be cleaned and disinfected between uses.
- Increase distance and limit the duration of contact (no more than 15 minutes) between visitors and between visitors and workers:
 - People should maintain at least 6 feet of distance between each other. Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to ensure that individuals remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times (e.g., guides for creating one-way routes).
 - Eliminate lines or queues if possible or encourage people to stay at least 6 feet apart by providing [signs](#) or other visual cues such as tape or chalk marks

- When designing petting zoo and other animal interaction areas, allow for [social distancing](#) and avoid high densities of people.
- Provide separate entry and exit points for visitors so they do not need to pass close together while coming into and going out of the petting zoo.
- Limit items allowed in the animal area. Do not allow strollers, food, backpacks, or other items in the animal area.
- Do not allow visitors to share their food with animals.
- Discourage visitors from kissing or snuggling with animals or sitting on the ground in animal areas.
- Use [EPA-approved disinfectants](#) [↗](#) against COVID-19 to clean and disinfect **frequently touched surfaces** such as door handles/gates and shared objects in petting zoos and animal interaction areas.

Livestock and horse shows

To maintain social distancing, consider the following steps:


- Split classes to limit the number of animals in the show ring.
- Cattle, horse, sheep, and goat shows naturally lend to social distancing when on the walk; adapt spacing to maintain distance between participants.
- Limit the number of people and/or animals in a ring to ensure that at least 6 feet is kept between an animal and its handler and other people and animals including judges. The number of exhibitors and animals that can safely fit in a show ring or exhibit area may limit the number of animals that can be shown at one time.
- Provide separate entry and exit points for visitors so they do not need to pass close together while coming into and going out of the ring.
- Stagger activities in washing and grooming areas, or other shared spaces, so that animals from different farms or households do not interact unnecessarily and so that people can maintain a distance of at least 6 feet apart from each other.
- Stagger animal move-in/move-out times to reduce contact between people and animals.
- Consider a “show-and-go” with animals stalled at a trailer and leaving immediately after the show if this will not compromise animal welfare, for example, because of weather conditions such as high temperature and humidity.

For more information on equestrian facilities, see “How can I run my equestrian facility safely” in the [Frequently Asked Questions on COVID-19 and Animals](#).

Maintaining healthy operations




For information on maintaining healthy operations, see CDC’s [Guidance for Businesses and Employers and Considerations for Events and Gatherings](#).

- **Require or encourage pre-registration** to reduce in-person interaction on site.
- **Advise all staff and anyone visiting the event, including exhibitors, visitors, judges, and veterinarians, to stay home if they are sick.**
 - Conduct daily health checks (e.g., temperature screening and/or symptom checking) of staff. If feasible, also check health status of attendees, in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations.
- **Increase distance and limit the duration of contact (no more than 15 minutes) between exhibitors, visitors, judges, veterinarians, staff, and anyone else visiting the event.**
 - When designing exhibits and layout of the grounds, allow for [social distancing](#) and avoid high densities of people, including in employee-only areas such as break rooms, locker rooms, and time clocks.

- Examples of areas where congregation should be limited include in- and out-gates, warm-up rings, prep or grooming areas, petting zoos and other animal interaction areas, restrooms, and food service areas.
- **Limit the number of people entering the facility.**
 - Stagger visiting times and decrease high-traffic areas by limiting areas open to visitors/exhibitors or staggering use of common areas such as bathrooms, concession areas, bleachers, or animal viewing areas.
 - Use a perimeter fence to control the number of people entering or exiting.
- **Use cloth face coverings for visitors, exhibitors, judges, veterinarians, and staff**, especially where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.
 - Cloth face coverings are not a substitute for personal protective equipment (PPE), which should be worn when performing procedures on animals or when using cleaning and disinfecting chemicals.
 - Cloth face coverings are not recommended for children under 2 years or anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the covering without assistance.
- **Move entertainment scheduled for indoors** (or in tented space) outside in an open-air setting, weather permitting.
- **Use markings and signs** to remind staff, exhibitors, and visitors to practice social distancing, wear cloth face coverings in public spaces, especially when maintaining at least 6 feet apart may be difficult, wash their hands, and follow other safety measures. Consider adding signs that illustrate the capacity limit of buildings, including bathrooms, and take steps to control the number of people entering and exiting facilities.
- **Encourage hand hygiene by setting up hand hygiene stations** at the entrance and within the premises so that staff and visitors can [clean their hands](#), including before and after interacting with animals or entering/exiting animal areas
 - Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs in most situations. If soap and water are not readily available, provide hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- **Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces** such as door handles/gates (including those to stall doors and bathrooms), and shared objects such as hoses, buckets, brooms, and pitchforks daily or more frequently based on the level of use.
 - [Use EPA-approved disinfectants](#)  against COVID-19.
 - Encourage participants to clean and disinfect items from home (halters, pitchforks, etc.) before bringing them to the event and again before they take them back home.
 - When possible, discourage the sharing of items (halters, brushes, clippers, etc.) that are difficult to disinfect between competitors, barns on the premises, and farms.
 - Clean and disinfect animal areas between shows or events.
 - Develop a schedule for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection of animal areas and other shared areas like bathrooms.
 - Ensure [safe and correct use](#) and storage of cleaners and disinfectants to avoid harm to employees and other individuals. Always read and follow label instructions for each product, and store products securely away from children.
- Cleaning products should not be used near children. Staff should ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products to prevent attendees or themselves from inhaling toxic vapors.
- **Implement strategies to maintain safe concession areas** and promote behaviors that reduce the spread:
 - Encourage [frequent hand washing](#), by setting up hand hygiene stations near food concession areas.
 - Eliminate communal high-touch items (e.g., condiments, reach-in coolers, straw dispensers, some types of trash containers, etc.).
 - Take social distancing into consideration when designing these areas so that people can maintain 6 feet of distance between each other while waiting in lines or seating.

- Refer to CDC's [considerations for restaurants and bars](#) for more information on safety precautions to reduce the spread of COVID-19
- **Mount pedestal fans or hard mounted fans with water misters** high up so that they blow towards the ground, avoiding blowing between different people. Water misters that spray directly onto people should use only potable water. Develop a Water Management Plan (WMP) and monitor the disinfectant and temperature of the water to ensure that water is not sitting in the line for an extended period of time.
 - Avoid blowing air directly over one person towards another.
 - Avoid creating air movement that distributes dust, which may contain contaminants.

More information

- [Get Your Mass Gatherings or Large Community Events Ready](#)
- [Worker Safety and Support](#)
- [Compendium of Measures to Prevent Disease Associated with Animals in Public Settings, 2017](#) 
- [Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#)  
- [COVID-19 General Business Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers Responding to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\), May 2020](#)
- [Event Planning and COVID-19: Questions and Answers](#)

For more information on COVID-19 and Animals

See [COVID-19 and Animals](#) and [COVID-19 and Animals Frequently Asked Questions](#).

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