



Animal Biosecurity Guidance for CSU Extension

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Maximizing the health and welfare of animals raised and shown by 4-H members is part of the mission of Extension's livestock youth program. Participants need to understand and practice biosecurity strategies that decrease the risk of disease in their animals while at home and away from home at fairs/shows, meetings and weigh-ins. Teaching and instituting livestock biosecurity practices involves the whole 4-H family: the youth participant, their family, the local club leaders, the county agents, and the state office. Below is an overview of the principles and responsibilities.

Biosecurity Practices at Home: The steps listed below cover the basic areas of husbandry that promote animal health and welfare.

- Appropriate safe turnout and exercise opportunities should be available for every animal.
- Animals should have shelter from inclement weather.
- Animals should have ample fresh clean water and consistent, appropriate feed. Each bale of hay or bag of feed should be checked. Moldy or weedy hay and contaminated feed discarded.
- Each animal should have its own grooming equipment, tack, feed and water buckets.
- Consult with your veterinarian to develop vaccination and deworming protocols appropriate for your animal (species, age) and location (risks based on general geographic and specific housing configurations).
- Animals showing signs of discomfort, illness or injury should be attended to.

Biosecurity Practices Away from Home (fairs/shows, meetings and weigh-ins):

Animals that travel to shows and competitions can become stressed by unfamiliar surroundings. They also mix with animals from other locations and are exposed to new pathogens (virus, bacteria or microorganism causing disease). Thus, the animal caretaker needs to be ever more conscientious about using biosecurity practices. Both exhibitors and event staff should take steps during events to help prevent the spread of disease among animals and between people and animals. Away from home:

- Animal caretakers should maintain a regular feeding schedule, and make sure that the animals have clean water available. Watch your animals eat and prevent feed spilling between pens.
- Animal caretakers should bring their own feed/water buckets, brushes and tack to be used exclusively on their own animals.
- Heat stress is common in the stabling areas. Monitor your animals and bring a fan.

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- If an ill or injured animal is observed, the appropriate livestock superintendent should be notified, who then can insure that the pre-planned intervention program is followed.
- Exhibitors should clean up after animal when utilizing the wash areas or exercise areas.
- Do not enter the pens or stalls of animals other than your own and without permission.
- Make sure to wash your hands frequently while at the fair, particularly prior to eating, drinking, and between handling animals.

It is important to take precautions after an event because you don't want to bring disease back to your home herd.

- Keep animals that have been away from home isolated from home herds. Colorado Department of Agriculture State Veterinarian recommends this separation be 2 to 4 weeks depending on the disease to which your animals may have been exposed. Show animals that are exposed to other animals and travel extensively should not share the home herd group water trough.
- Any animal showing symptoms during this time should be seen by a DVM and the event organizer informed if the DVM deems necessary.
- Events should keep an exhibitor list that includes animal identification, as well as exhibitor address and phone number for at least 2 years following a show in order to facilitate trace back of exposed animals.
- Facilities should be properly cleaned and disinfected to prevent the spread of disease between shows or events.

Livestock Event Disease Prevention Protocols: Event Staff and Facility Responsibilities

Every livestock event is unique due to the types of competitors, location, risks and resources available. Some events feel no necessity to institute biosecurity protocols following the "enter at your own risk" philosophy, while others do. Although there is always some risk of disease transmission among exhibitors' animals, some years there is a specific disease circulating in the community/state that warrants extra precautions. Extension professionals can be confused by the tension involved in determining what steps need to be taken and what resources are available to support their programs. Following are some key considerations.

1. Who makes the decisions: Each county fair is different, from their facilities, to who makes the decisions, to the amount of disease risk; thus, making each situation unique. It is wisest to make biosecurity protocol changes a team decision among the fair board/manager, Extension personnel, livestock committees, county commissioners and the local or fair DVM. It is important that everyone has the same information on the disease, and agrees with the final decisions. An accredited DVM should have the final ruling on any suspect animals in order to do required mandatory testing and reporting. Recommendations should be made based on current data about location of the disease and resources available in the county. The Office of the State Veterinarian at the Colorado Department of Agriculture is happy to provide the latest information on the prevalence (# of disease cases in a population at a given time) of the disease in the county and discuss biosecurity strategies with you and your decision making team.

Animal Health Division: <https://www.colorado.gov/aganimals>

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2. Know what you are dealing with: Reportable livestock diseases are listed on the CDA website in this infographic:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B0EYa0BRU2X0NHfME5Ba05uNnhzeXZDYUFndTJDQUIZaVBR/view>

Detail information about each disease are found on the list of Foreign Animal Diseases also on the CDA website <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/aganimals/livestock-health> These website pages explain the disease, the animals affected, clinical signs, modes of transmission, and biosecurity steps that will limit transmission.

3. Pre-event communication and education: It is important to educate the event team and participants about the risks associated with attending a fair or show and to remind all involved of the biosecurity steps to lower the risk of spreading disease. The following are some basic universal practices to prevent infectious disease:

- Remind exhibitors, if animals appear sick prior to the fair, do not bring them to the fair. Contact their veterinarian for advice.
- Discuss with fairground staff, specific actions to reduce disease spread:
 - Best practices for controlling insects before, during and post fair.
 - Increase manure removal frequency and clean stalls between exhibitors if possible.
 - Remove access to group water troughs.
 - Provide proper drainage of water in wash rack, alley ways and any free standing pools.
 - Perform daily surveillance of all animals to identify disease but also isolate suspect animals immediately for disease of concern.
 - Develop isolation areas for suspect animals. (distance from other exhibitors, monitoring, access to area, etc.)
 - Always include signs for general public about proper hygiene like hand washing and elimination of human food consumption in the animal areas.
 - Are there adequate hand washing opportunities on the fair ground?

4. Allowing animals on the event grounds:

- Timed Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (CVI). TCVI's are required for Colorado State Fair because they allow thorough examination of each animal by a veterinarian in the relaxed atmosphere of the animal's home facility. Due to limitations on time, veterinary availability, and costs to members, this may not be possible for many county fairs.
- Inspection at entry. This strategy requires decisions on many issues beforehand, additional trained people at the gate and the possibility of creating lines of waiting trailers.
 - What animals to inspect? Depends on the disease.
 - Who should inspect? Livestock Committee, DVM, DVM tech, livestock agent? It may be necessary to have someone trained to inspect livestock supported by a DVM to look at animals in question.
 - Where to inspect?? It is best to inspect animals prior to allowing them access to the grounds and definitely the stalling/show area.

- How to inspect animal well enough without spreading disease? It is important that personnel use proper protective equipment, such as disposable gloves and boot covers. Needs to be in an area where animals can be inspected safely and personnel are safe as well. Avoid animals mixing at entry gate, especially nose to nose.
 - Will just show animals be inspected? Many fairs have rodeos or other events included where animals come and go at a variety of hours. Do all animals need to be inspected, or is a definite line of separation enough to prevent the disease in question?
 - What happens if an animal is suspect? Will the animal be returned home, isolated or will the entire trailer of animals be asked to leave? Who makes the final decision?
5. Disease surveillance during the event/fair: Animal owner, superintendents, 4-H leaders should walk through the stables and by the trailers multiple times a day looking for animals that are showing signs of disease. The owner, and, if the animal's condition is sufficiently serious, fair veterinarians, should be alerted. The animal should be removed to a quiet, isolated area. There are far too many diseases of each species to discuss diagnosis and treatment in this discussion.