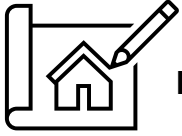


Preventing Zoonotic Diseases at Fairs and Animal Exhibits: Best Practices for Fair Management and Animal Exhibitors

Zoonotic diseases are infectious diseases shared between animals and people, and outbreaks of zoonotic diseases have occurred among fair attendees. County, regional, and state fairs often feature numerous opportunities for fair visitors to interact with animals, such as livestock exhibits, shows and auctions, races and rides, educational displays, and petting zoos. Thoughtfully planned events, facility design, and staff and visitor education can help reduce the transmission of zoonotic pathogens from animals on exhibit to visitors at the fair. The following is a list of best practices—in accordance with recommendations of the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians (NASPHV)—that can be implemented prior to the opening of any animal exhibit or petting zoo. These measures specifically address prevention of zoonotic disease transmission and should be considered in concert with, and supplementary to, existing rules and requirements from regulatory agencies and other authoritative bodies including the [California Department of Food and Agriculture](#) (CDFA).

Adopting the measures described below will minimize risks of zoonotic disease infection for fair staff and the visiting public. These recommended actions will enable animal exhibitors, fair management, and fairground operators to help protect public health while allowing for a safe and enjoyable experience for all fair participants.





I. Facility/Exhibit Design

1. Design animal exhibit areas so there is ideally only one designated entrance and one exit for visitors. This traffic control can limit the number of people in the facility at any given time and better allow for the strategic placement of safety signage (at entrance) and handwashing stations (at exit).
2. Establish a place immediately outside the entrance of animal areas where visitors can temporarily store non-essential items while they are inside the exhibit area.
 - a. Position signs at the entrance of the exhibit area to instruct individuals not to take food, drinks, strollers, toys, baby bottles, and pacifiers into the exhibit area.
 - b. It is highly recommended and encouraged that all strollers and mobility devices (canes, scooters, etc.) that are not completely necessary to visitors should be left outside to prevent their contamination. Assigning staff to this area for security purposes may increase compliance with this recommendation.
3. Place and maintain handwashing stations at the exit of—and, to the extent possible, within—the exhibit area.
 - a. Place enough handwashing stations to accommodate the anticipated number of visitors to the exhibit at any given time.
 - b. Handwashing stations should have running water, liquid soap, and paper towel dispensers. Place trash receptacles near the stations for disposal of used paper towels.
 - c. Handwashing stations should be accessible to all visitors (including children, adults, and people with mobility limitations) and should accommodate different heights, sizes, and personal assistance devices that may require additional space.
 - d. Develop a schedule and maintain an inspection log to regularly document that the handwashing stations have functional water supply, and soap and paper towels are stocked.
4. If soap-and-water handwashing stations are not feasible within the exhibit area, hand sanitizing stations may be placed. Hand sanitizing stations are **NOT** a substitute for soap-and-water handwashing stations at the exit of the exhibit area.
 - a. Develop a schedule and inspection log to regularly document that the sanitizer stations are stocked and functional.
5. Do not allow food for human consumption to be sold or served inside animal exhibit areas.





II. Visitor Education

1. Inform visitors about zoonotic disease risks and key preventive measures by placing signs at the entrance of exhibit areas in different languages, if possible. Some key messages that emphasize the health and safety of visitors and the animals on display could include:
 - *Animals can carry germs that can make people sick.*
 - *Children under 5 years old, adults 65 years and older, pregnant women, and people with chronic health conditions or weakened immune systems are more likely to get sick from animal germs and may become severely ill if infected. These groups should consider avoiding animal areas completely.*
 - *For the safety of the animals, do not enter the animal exhibit if you or someone you are with is feeling sick, or has symptoms of coughing, sneezing, or fever.*
 - *For your safety, do not take food, drinks, toys, pacifiers, cups, baby bottles and other drink containers, or strollers into animal areas.*
 - *For your safety, hand-to-mouth activities such as drinking, eating, smoking, or chewing gum are **NOT** allowed while visiting animal areas.*
 - *For their safety, children under 5 years old should be monitored at all times to prevent hand-to-mouth activity while in animal areas.*
2. Post signs/infographics that reiterate or complement educational messages throughout animal areas. Note: Replicating the messages in other media (e.g., video loops, recorded messages, stickers, etc.) can broaden the opportunity to engage visitors while underscoring the information in posted signs.

Messaging applicable to all animal exhibits:

- *Hand-to-mouth activities are NOT allowed in animal areas (e.g., no drinking, eating, bottles, pacifiers, smoking, chewing gum).*
- *Do not let children sit or play on the ground in animal areas.*
- *Children who cannot walk should be carried.*
- *Avoid touching or grabbing railings, fences, hay or bedding, and other objects and structures in or near the animal stalls.*

Additional messaging applicable to petting zoos:

- *Do not kiss or try to kiss animals.*

3. Place signs about handwashing at the exit of exhibit areas. Key messages should include:
 - *Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after visiting animal areas (even if you didn't touch any animals).*
 - *Help children thoroughly wash their hands with soap and water.*



Sample signage and public educational materials are available:

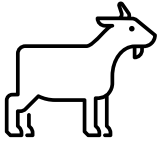
- CDPH Reduce Your Risk Around Animals Posters – [English](#) | [Spanish](#)
- [CDFA Animal Exhibit Signage / Handwashing Signs](#)
- [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) Handwashing Posters](#)
- [NASPHV Animal Contact Compendium \(see “Signs” sections\)](#)



III. Animal Care and Management

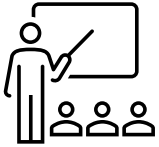
1. Animals must have access to shelter, food, and water.
 - a. House animals in a way that minimizes stress and overcrowding (this will decrease the amount of pathogen shedding in their feces).
 - b. Provide animals with potable water. If hoses or other water dispensers used for animals are in a public place, label them “Not for human consumption”.
2. Per [CDFA State Rules for California Fairs](#), animals with any evidence of active illness or communicable disease are not to be admitted or allowed to remain on the fairgrounds.
3. Immediately isolate sick or injured animal(s), especially those with diarrhea, from areas accessible by the public and away from other animals until such time that the animal can be removed from the fairgrounds. A veterinarian should be called to examine the animal, provide a diagnosis, and treat the animal.
 - a. Identify veterinarian(s) to call in case of sick or injured animals.
4. Ensure that animals (mammals) that have direct interaction with people are currently vaccinated against rabies.
 - a. Those species for which there is an approved rabies vaccine (e.g., dogs, cats, cattle, horses, sheep, etc.) should be vaccinated by a veterinarian.
5. Remove manure and soiled bedding from animal areas at least once a day.
 - a. In petting zoos, manure should be removed continuously or as frequently as possible while the exhibit is open to the public.
 - b. If manure and soiled bedding must be transported through public areas for disposal, limit visitor contact during transportation by restricting walkways and by sweeping up walkways before reopening walkways.
6. Use a [soap and water solution](#) to clean animal area surfaces daily, especially pen railings and other obvious surfaces where the public might touch.





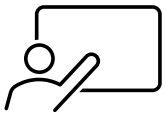
IV. Animal Interaction

1. Except in petting zoos or other exhibit areas where close interaction with animals is intended, visitors should **NOT** be allowed inside pens.
2. Any animal feed that is provided to the public as part of an interactive feeding experience with the animals should be in containers (paper or plastic cups) that will not be confused as human food (e.g., do not use ice cream cones).
3. Establish a written procedure for responding to and reporting animal bites. The appropriate local authority to notify may be city or county Animal Control, Sheriff, Police Department, or the local health department.



V. Fair Staff Education

1. Provide staff working in or around livestock barns, petting zoos, and other animal areas with basic information about zoonotic disease risks and prevention steps. See [Fact Sheet for Fair Staff](#).



VI. Exhibitor Education

1. Provide all exhibitors with basic information about reducing the risk of transmission of zoonotic pathogens at animal exhibits. See [Health and Safety Tips for Animal Exhibitors](#).



VII. Communication with the Media and Public

1. Promotional messages (for news releases, social media, newsletters, etc.) that announce upcoming fair events, especially animal exhibits or animal interaction experiences at the fair, should highlight the health and safety practices in place that help ensure a healthy and safe experience for all visitors.
 - a. Sample messaging:
 - *The [Fair Name] is dedicated to the health and safety of its visitors and the animals on display. Handwashing stations and hand sanitizer is available throughout the fair so you can keep your hands clean and stay healthy at the fair!*
 - *For your health and safety, handwashing stations and hand sanitizer are available throughout the fairgrounds, especially in animal exhibit areas.*

