



GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZING A 4-H PETTING ZOO

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Source: *Guidelines for Reducing the Risk of Disease at Petting Zoos, Animal Exhibits or Other Areas where the Public may have contact with Farm Animals*, California Department of Health Services Institutions Program

The following guidelines are based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Use of these precautions will reduce the risk of E. Coli or other infectious diseases in areas where the public may have contact with animals and their environment. A 4-H community club or county-wide committee planning a petting zoo for an event needs to organize the activity according to the following recommendations.

Hand Washing Stations

- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has advised that hand washing is the best method to prevent the transmission of E. Coli and other enteric pathogens.
- Hand washing stations should be located in the following areas:
 - ◆ All animal-visiting areas (animal exhibits and petting zoos) so that animal handlers and visitors can wash their hands. Hand washing stations should be conveniently located.
 - ◆ Adjacent to all food concessions located in livestock areas such as 4-H food booths. Consideration should be given to posting signs reminding patrons to wash hands before consuming food and beverages. Hand washing signs are available for downloading at the following web site:
<http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/fe/HandwashSigns.htm>
 - ◆ Areas with high visibility. Signs can be used to direct visitors to the hand wash locations.
- Hand washing stations can be rented from portable toilet companies.
- Dispensers for soap and paper towels should be available at hand washing stations. If the hand washing stations are supplied with only cold water a soap that emulsifies more easily in cold water should be provided.
- Hand washing facilities should be accessible, sufficient for the maximum anticipated attendance, and configured for use by children and adults. Children ages <5 years should wash their hands with adult supervision.
- Communal basins do not constitute adequate hand washing facilities.
- If designing a hand washing station, the design of the unit should leave the hands free for hand washing.

Hand Sanitizers

- At this time, hand sanitizers have not been demonstrated to be as effective as hand washing. CDC has advised that hand washing is the best method. However, hand sanitizers can be used in conjunction with hand washing to provide an additional hygienic measure. Therefore, **hand sanitizers should only be used in conjunction with hand washing stations.**

Public Education

- Signs should be posted at several locations in animal exhibit and contact areas advising of appropriate methods and behaviors to reduce the risk of disease transmission including:
 - ◆ Wash hands with soap and water after touching animals, their enclosures or food containers; being licked or spat on by animals and when having any contact with animal bedding or feces.
 - ◆ Do not eat or drink in animal areas.
 - ◆ Always wash hands before drinking, eating, smoking, or preparing foods.
 - ◆ Restrict children from climbing on corrals, pens, and animal enclosures.
 - ◆ The public should not kiss the animals, put their hands into the animals' mouths, or taste the animals' food.
 - ◆ Toys, pacifiers, blanket, and other personal items can become contaminated – keep them away from animal areas. Wash contaminated items before returning to children.
 - ◆ Young children need assistance in washing hands.
- Signs should be provided in animal exhibit and exit areas that direct visitors and animal handlers to the location of adjacent hand wash stations.
- Hand washing signs should be posted at the hand washing stations and at restroom lavatories to ensure proper hand washing practices. The placement of hand washing reminder signs at food concession areas is recommended.

Maintaining Animal Areas

- Remove and dispose of animal manure appropriately (several times a day).
- Replace animal bedding daily.
- Clean visible fecal material from any surface with soap and water.
- Do not display ill animals or those known to be positive for infectious agents.
- Prevent contact with manure, water troughs, and animals that should not be touched by providing barriers and controlling access to areas where visitors should not go.

Other Practices

- Locate eating areas away from animal areas.
- Exclude all animals from eating areas.
- Keep eating areas clean.
- Children aged <5 years should be supervised closely by adults, with precautions strictly enforced.
- Other people at high risk for serious infections are the elderly, pregnant women, and immunocompromised persons (e.g., those with HIV/AIDS).
- Do not serve unpasteurized milk or milk products to visitors.