



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
LANSING

DON KOIVISTO
DIRECTOR

May 15, 2009

Dear Farm Animal Caregiver:

The current Influenza A H1N1 outbreak has raised questions about farm animals in public settings. Individuals have asked for information and reassurance that it is safe to come into contact with farm animals on exhibit or in petting zoo situations.

To assist you in responding to concerns from visitors to your farm, fair, or livestock exhibition and to help keep their experience safe, the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) has developed several informational pieces for you to post or distribute at your facility. The information was developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, with messages and recommendations tailored for farm animal facilities that feature animals in public settings.

The information enclosed includes:

- Recommendations for Managing Public-Animal Contact (background information)
- Hand-washing recommendations to reduce disease transmission from animals in public settings (hand-out)
- Information for your customers on how to be safe around animals in the form of a "KNOW" poster (please post in your animal exhibit area)
- A "Directions for Washing Hands" poster (please post near all hand-washing stations)
- Information on Influenza A (H1N1) - "swine flu" - an illness that affects pigs as well as people

In situations where the public comes into contact with animals, the CDC recommends measures be taken to reduce the potential for injuries or disease transmission. To ensure the health and well-being of farm animals, be sure that sick people do not come into contact with farm animals and that strict bio-security measures are followed. Certain illnesses are reportable to the State Veterinarian's Office, and in the event of a reportable disease in animals, measures will be taken to protect public and animal health.

Animal caregivers should:

- Watch for illness such as diarrhea, coughing, sneezing, lethargy, or aggression
- Remove sick animals from a public setting
- Contact a private practice veterinarian for treatment of sick animals

Thank you for your concerns regarding human-animal contact. Remember that after coming into contact with animals, good hand-washing practices will alleviate most risks for humans. Incidents or problems should be responded to, documented, and reported to Michigan's State Veterinarian's Office at (517) 373-1077. For additional information please visit the Emerging Diseases Web site at: www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven Halstead".

Steven Halstead, DVM, MS
State Veterinarian and Division Director
Animal Industry Division



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Recommendations for Managing Public-Animal Contact

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has tailored recommendations for farm animal facilities that feature animals in public settings. In cases where the public comes into contact with animals, the CDC recommends the following measures to reduce the potential for injuries or disease transmission. Incidents or problems should be responded to, documented, and reported to Michigan's State Veterinarian at (517) 373-1077.

Transition Areas between Non-animal and Animal Areas:

Establishing transition areas through which visitors pass when entering and exiting animal areas is critical. A one-way flow of visitors is preferred, with separate entrance and exit points. The transition areas should be designated as clearly as possible, even if they are conceptual rather than physical.

Entrance transition areas should be designed to facilitate education:

- Post the enclosed sign to notify visitors that they are entering an animal area and that risks are associated with animal contact.
- Instruct visitors not to eat, drink, smoke, place their hands in their mouth, or use bottles or pacifiers while in the animal area.
- Do not allow strollers and related items, for e.g., wagons and diaper bags, in areas where direct animal contact is encouraged. Establish storage or holding areas for these items.
- Control visitor traffic to prevent overcrowding.
- Post the enclosed sign to instruct visitors to wash their hands when leaving the animal area.
- Provide accessible hand-washing stations for all visitors, including children and persons with disabilities.
- Position venue staff members near exits to encourage compliance with hand washing.
- Prohibit admission to visitors demonstrating signs of illness.

Animal Areas:

- Assign trained staff members to encourage appropriate human-animal interactions, to identify and remove potential risks for patrons, e.g., by promptly removing sick animals and cleaning up wastes, and process reports of injuries and exposures.
- Do not allow food and beverages in animal areas.
- Do not allow toys, pacifiers, spill-proof cups, baby bottles, or strollers in animal areas.
- Prohibit smoking in animal areas.
- Supervise children closely to discourage hand-to-mouth activities, e.g., nail-biting and thumb-sucking, contact with manure, and contact with soiled bedding. Children should not be allowed to sit or play on the ground in animal areas. If hands become soiled, supervise hand washing.
- Ensure that animal feed and water are not accessible to the public.
- Allow feeding only when contact with animals is controlled, e.g., with barriers.
- Do not provide animal feed in containers that can be eaten by humans, e.g., ice cream cones, to decrease the risk for children eating food that has come into contact with animals.
- Promptly remove manure and soiled animal bedding from animal areas.
- Store animal waste and specific tools for waste removal, e.g., shovels and pitchforks, in designated areas that are restricted from public access.
- Avoid transporting manure and soiled bedding through non-animal areas or transition areas. If this is unavoidable, take precautions to prevent spillage.
- Where feasible, disinfect animal areas, e.g., flooring and railings, at least once daily.
- Provide adequate ventilation both for animals and humans.
- Minimize the use of animal areas for public (non-animal) activities. Zoonotic pathogens can contaminate the environment for substantial periods. If animal areas must be used for public events, e.g., weddings and dances, the areas should be cleaned and disinfected, particularly if food and beverages are served. Materials with smooth, impervious surfaces, e.g., steel, plastic, and sealed concrete, are easier to clean than other materials, e.g., wood or dirt floors. Remove organic material, e.g., bedding, feed, and manure, before using disinfectants.
- For birds in bird encounter exhibits, refer to the psittacosis compendium on Michigan's Emerging Diseases Web site at www.michigan.gov/emergingdisease for recommendations regarding disease screening.
- Visitors to aquatic touch tank exhibits who have open wounds should be advised not to participate. Hand washing stations should be provided.
- When using animals or non-food animal products, e.g., animal pelts, animal waste, and owl pellets, for educational purposes, only use them in designated animal areas. Animals and non-food animal products should not be brought into school cafeterias and other food-consumption areas.
- When animals are in school classrooms, specific areas must be designated for animal contact. Designated animal areas must be thoroughly cleaned after use. Parents should be informed of the benefits and potential risks associated with animals in school classrooms.

Hand-Washing Recommendations to Reduce Disease Transmission From Animals in Public Settings

Hand washing is the single most important prevention step for reducing disease transmission. Hands should always be washed upon exiting animal areas and before eating or drinking. Venue staff should encourage hand washing as persons exit animal areas.

How to Wash Hands

- Wet hands with running water; place soap in palms; rub together to make a lather; scrub hands vigorously for 20 seconds; rinse soap off hands.
- If possible, turn off the faucet by using a disposable paper towel.
- Dry hands with a disposable paper towel. Do not dry hands on clothing.
- Assist young children with washing their hands.

Hand-Washing Facilities or Stations

- Hand-washing facilities should be accessible and sufficient for the maximum anticipated attendance and configured for use by children (low enough for them to reach or equipped with a stool), adults, and those with disabilities.
- Hand-washing stations should be conveniently located in transition areas between animal and non animal areas and in the non animal food concession areas.
- Maintenance should include routine cleaning and restocking to ensure adequate supply of paper towels and soap.
- Running water should be of sufficient volume and pressure to remove soil from hands. Volume and pressure might be substantially reduced if the water supply is furnished from a holding tank. Therefore, a permanent pressured water supply is preferable.
- The hand-washing station should be designed so that both hands are free for hand washing by having operation with a foot pedal or water that stays on after turning on hand faucets.
- Hot water is preferable, but if the hand-washing stations are supplied with only cold water, a soap that emulsifies easily in cold water should be provided.

- Communal basins, where water is used by more than one person, do not constitute adequate hand-washing facilities.

Hand-Washing Agents

- Liquid soap dispensed by a hand or foot pump is recommended.
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can be used if soap and water cannot be made available and are effective against multiple common disease agents (e.g., shiga toxin-producing E. coli, Salmonella, and Campylobacter). However, they are ineffective against certain organisms (e.g., bacterial spores, Cryptosporidium, and certain viruses).
- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recommends using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with a concentration of 60% or higher to be effective against common disease agents.
- Hand sanitizers are less effective if hands are visibly soiled. Therefore, visible contamination and dirt should be removed to the extent possible before using hand sanitizers.

Hand-Washing Signs

- At venues where human-animal contact occurs, signs regarding proper hand-washing practices are critical to reduce disease transmission.
- Signs that are reminders to wash hands should be posted at exits from animal areas (exit transition areas) and in non animal areas where food is served and consumed.
- Signs should be present to direct all visitors to hand-washing stations upon exiting animal areas.
- Signs with proper hand-washing instructions should be posted at hand-washing stations and rest rooms to encourage proper practices.
- Depending on the setting, hand washing signs might need to be available in different languages.

You Are Entering An Animal Exhibit Area

Know that animals carry germs that can make people sick

Never eat, drink, or put things into your mouth in animal areas

Older adults, pregnant women, and young children should be extra careful around animals

Wash your hands with soap and water right after visiting the animal area



How to be Safe Around Animals!



Directions for Washing Hands

HOW

-  Wet hands with running water
-  Place soap into palms
-  Rub together to make a lather
-  Scrub hands vigorously for 20 seconds
-  Rinse soap off hands
-  Dry hands with disposable paper towels, not on clothing



WHEN

- After going to the toilet 
- Upon exiting animal areas 
- Before eating 
- Before preparing foods 
- After removing soiled clothes or shoes 