



Tips for Purchasing and Bringing Home Livestock

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Acquiring new stock is exciting whether you are building your herd or flock, or purchasing your annual 4-H project. Making sure that you know the questions to ask before the purchase and the preparations required to bring new livestock home is key to managing their health and safety. Here are some tips to help guide you through the process.



ASSESSING ANIMAL HEALTH AND TREATMENT DOCUMENTATION

When purchasing animals, you should know their history. Answering the following questions will help you make an informed purchase:

- When was the animal born?
- What specific vaccinations has the animal been given and when were they given?
- If necessary, was the animal properly castrated and what method was used?
- Have any other treatments been administered to the animal? Examples include deworming, delouse, antibiotics, or other treatments. If so, what is the slaughter withdrawal for the drugs given?
- Have any of the animals on the farm been ill or shown symptoms of illness?
- If acquiring a market animal, what is the approximate weight?

ACQUIRING NEW LIVESTOCK: CONSIDERATIONS AS YOU BRING ANIMALS HOME

From trailering your new animal home, to unloading it, to monitoring its health closely, there are many considerations to make once you decide to purchase new animals.

- 1) Transporting
 - ✓ Secure a trailer. If you do not own a trailer, you may need to make arrangements with the breeder or someone else who can transport animals for you.
 - As a courtesy, you should be prepared to pay someone to provide transportation; consider the transporter's time, equipment and the price of fuel.

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2) Unloading

- ✓ Make sure that your facility is ready to house your new animals before they arrive.
- ✓ Have a pen identified for new animals to go into that is set up with fresh water and appropriate feed. (Feed should be similar to their previous diet, and changing to a new diet should be done over a period of time.)
- ✓ Have a clear and direct path to the animals' new pen from the trailer.
- ✓ To avoid animals getting loose or going somewhere in the barn that they should not go, make sure that all gates are open or closed, as appropriate, and secured.

3) Settling in

- ✓ Quarantine, or separate, new animals for a minimum of 21 days.
 - The more physical space you can put in between animals the better. At minimum, try to avoid nose-to-nose contact, and comingling feeding and watering. Use separate buckets and feed pans.
 - Minimize stress on new animals during the quarantine period.
- ✓ Observe the animals for any signs of stress or illness during the quarantine. If after 21 days, the newly acquired animals have not shown any symptoms of illness, it should be safe to comingling them into your existing herd or flock.

4) Comingling and training

- ✓ Since each species has a social hierarchy, observe animals during comingling and separate if there is risk of injury. Over the course of a day, the herd or flock should settle into a routine that includes the new animals.
- ✓ Training should begin once the animals' health risk has subsided.



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