

# EXHIBITOR MEETINGS TO PREVENT ANIMAL DISEASE OUTBREAKS: A CHECKLIST FOR BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE MEETING

Michigan State University Extension would like to remind fairs and exhibitions to mitigate the risk of animal disease outbreaks at events by implementing extra precautions and biosecurity practices to protect exhibitors, the public and animals. We suggest species project leaders and superintendents hold a meeting at fairs and exhibitions to remind exhibitors of the need to practice proper biosecurity practices and hygiene. The following can be used as a guideline to help you have a healthy fair week.

## Before the Meeting

- Visit the [MSU Extension Fair and Exhibition Animal Health](#) resource page to access animal health and good hygiene signage for your event.
  - Print the signs you would like to use.
  - Work with volunteers to hang signs up around fairgrounds and focus on proper signage in barn areas.
- Meet with fair personnel to discuss potential animal health concerns that may affect exhibition and your plans for implementing prevention strategies.
- Create an animal inventory and stalling chart so that you have an accurate count of the number of animals in the barn and names of exhibitors in case follow up is needed.
- Determine an adequate isolation area if any animals should become sick.
  - If needed, the isolation area should be away from other animals of that species where the animal cannot have nose-to-nose contact with other animals.
  - Proper ventilation (fans) should be provided to help keep the animals cool, however air movement should not flow from sick animals to healthy animals.
  - Access to the isolation area should be limited, with only a few designated people interacting with the symptomatic animals.
  - Fair visitors should not have access to the isolation area.

- Determine options for modifying the show or sale if needed (i.e. disease outbreak or extreme weather).
  - Reduce stress for the animals at the exhibitions by using alternatives.
  - Consider auctioning animals without running them through the sale ring.
    - Some sale alternatives include:
      - Project a photo of the animal and have the youth walk into the arena.
      - Have the youth walk through the ring holding their ribbons and awards.
      - Broadcast videos from the barn that showcase the animals being auctioned.
    - Inform buyers that the change is being made to protect the health of the animals and to reduce stress on the animals during times of extreme heat.
- Purchase cleaning and disinfecting products for use during and after the fair. Visit the MSU Extension Fair and Exhibition Animal Health [site](#) for recommendations on products and practices.
- Select a group of core volunteers that will help implement biosecurity strategies.
  - Be sure to include your fair veterinarian in these conversations.
- Promote the exhibitor meeting to parents and youth.
  - Consider including auction personnel, a member of the livestock committee, fair management and livestock superintendents (large and small) in the meeting.
  - Arrange to have the point person for the fair and the fair veterinarian in attendance at the meeting.
- Confirm that fair management knows how to contact the county health department if an outbreak should occur, including an emergency contact number for nights and weekends.
  - Determine who should be the media spokesperson if an outbreak should occur. Give direction that all media inquiries be filtered through the designated person.
    - Usually this is the responsibility of the fair manager or a member of the fair board. When needed, the fair can request a knowledgeable person also provide information (fair veterinarian, MSU Extension personnel, etc.).

# Exhibitor Meeting Basic Agenda

- Hello and welcome.
- Discuss the priorities of animal health, exhibitor health, and health and safety of fair visitors.
- Review the extra precautions that will be implemented during the event.
- If a disease outbreak is occurring, be transparent about the current health situation
  - Share details about the number and location of confirmed cases in the area/state, if known.
  - Share the signs of the disease in animals and encourage exhibitors to monitor their animals for these signs.
    - Signs of illness include:
      - Decrease in feed/water consumption
        - When animals are off feed or depressed, it may be a sign that they are becoming ill.
      - Abnormal body posture, indicating a sign of discomfort
      - Nasal discharge
      - Eye discharge
      - High respiration or heart rate
      - Sneezing
      - Coughing or abnormal vocalizations
      - Abnormal temperatures (species specific ranges)
    - Communicate how exhibitors should contact the species superintendent if they have a concern about their animal.
    - Explain the extra precautions that should be taken and why these are necessary.
- Explain if there is a risk to human health.
  - Some diseases are zoonotic, which means humans exposed to sick animals may become sick.
  - Share the signs of the disease in humans.
- It will be helpful to have a knowledgeable person present at the meeting to discuss the specifics of the disease,
  - Diseases vary in severity depending on the pathogen and the affected species. For example, Swine Influenza is common in pigs and runs its course quickly. Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) is always fatal in poultry animals, but HPAI infected dairy cows recover quickly. Disease impacts both

youth animal projects and animals in the commercial industry; regulatory agencies have protocol for responding to disease outbreaks.

- Review basic biosecurity practices such as cleaning and disinfecting equipment, common spaces and tools used in between animals.
- Remind everyone that good hygiene practices are important. Animal diseases cannot be spread by eating properly cooked meat/dairy products; the commercial food supply remains safe due to both federal animal health and pasteurization requirements.
- Encourage exhibitors taking animals home to isolate them in an area away from other animals for at least 14 days.
- Provide time to answer questions from exhibitors and parents.

## Biosecurity Practices at Fair or Exhibitions

Communicate the need for all fair exhibitors and families to use proper hygiene and practice good biosecurity to protect the health of their animals and themselves. This can be done by sharing the practices listed below.

- If space allows, avoid nose-to-nose contact between animals from different families by using an open space or solid penning.
- It is important that fairs have a plan to [clean and disinfect areas and equipment](#) where animals are comingled.
  - On arrival and to reduce the spread of disease among other exhibition animals at check-in, spray the front plate of scales with accelerated hydrogen peroxide (disinfectant with short contact time requirements) between groups of animals that are not housed together.
  - Wash areas should be disinfected and allowed to dry at least once per day. To make sure there is time to thoroughly dry after being disinfected, this should take place at night, when all animal movement is complete.
  - Handling equipment used during shows, weigh-ins or auctions should be routinely cleaned and disinfected.
  - High animal traffic areas, such as alleyways and wash racks, should be cleaned and disinfected daily.
  - Livestock trailers and animal pens should also be cleaned and disinfected.
- Detergents and soaps are an important first step to destroying pathogens.
- Disinfectants can be applied using a hand sprayer that has been properly labeled.
- [Disinfection and contact time are important](#). Contact time is the time required for the disinfectant to kill the virus. Suggested disinfectants include:

- Accelerated hydrogen peroxide (AHP), commonly known as Accel or Rescue, which can be sourced online and used at a rate of one cup product to one gallon of water. Contact time = 30 seconds to one minute. Common household bleach can also be used at a rate of one-half cup of bleach to one gallon water. Contact time = 10 – 60 minutes.
- Detergents can be used to help break down organic matter and biofilm that may harbor disease. These can be used prior to applying disinfectant or added to the disinfectant/water mixture. Do not add ammonia or ammonia containing products to bleach mixtures.
- Remember that bleach and other disinfectants should always be used under the direction of an adult.
- Additional information is available in the resource, [Cleaning and disinfecting for HPAI](#).
- Remember, humans can hasten the spread of disease. Allowing the public to touch animals (head area) and move from animal to animal can spread disease quickly throughout the barn. Consider ways you can limit access to these areas.

## After the Meeting

- Determine what efforts will be made to disinfect equipment and maintain prevention methods during the show and identify volunteers to assist.
- Create a schedule for volunteers that lists when to clean and disinfect identified areas.
- If ANY animal(s) become ill or febrile, work with fair staff to report it to MDARD at 800-292-3939.

## After the Fair

- Provide exhibitors with an area and materials to clean and disinfect equipment prior to going home.
- Clean and disinfect the animal barns thoroughly.
- Follow-up with exhibitors and volunteers to applaud efforts to prevent the spread of disease.
- Follow-up with exhibitors and volunteers if any health issues arise.

- If any health issues arise, be prepared to work with local and state health agencies, as well as MDARD to work through the disease outbreak. Information that may be requested by the agencies include:
  - Exhibitor list (name, birthdate or age, phone and address of all exhibitors for that specie(s))
  - Number of head within that species and exhibitors at the show.
  - Destinations of all animals following the fair.
  - Contact numbers and information for all animal destinations.
  - Results of any testing or diagnostic work that has been completed.
- Be prepared to communicate with your animal exhibitors if a health issue does arise. Typically, a hard copy mailing or email will suffice.