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Livestock Show Biosecurity



Biosecurity refers to those measures taken to keep disease agents out of populations, herds, or groups of animals. Infectious diseases can be devastating to livestock show projects. They also have the potential to threaten national security. Minimizing the risk of contracting and spreading infectious diseases as well as being alert to possible foreign animal diseases, such as foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) is an important responsibility of exhibitors.

The Louisiana Department of Agriculture and other state animal health agencies have rules and regulations about livestock movement and testing for certain diseases. Examples of diseases that are of particular concern to states include brucellosis, tuberculosis, and pseudorabies. Exhibitors should talk to their veterinarian about state requirements and requirements specific to a shows well in advance of the show so necessary testing and health certificates can be acquired.

During statewide validations, show personnel should adhere to the following procedures to reduce the risk of cross contamination:

- Hold exhibitors and parents responsible for tagging and pulling hair samples to eliminate the need for Ag Center personnel to enter exhibitor's trailer/animal transport.
- Sterilize all equipment used (ex. tagging pliers and hair pulling pliers) after each exhibitor's animals are processed.
- Utilize appropriate foot baths, wash hands/change gloves, and change clothing if access to multiple trailers/transports is necessary.
- Show personnel having contact with animals during validations will sterilize hands and/or change disposable gloves after completing each validation.

When animals leave the farm and get exposed to other animals, there is the possibility that they may bring back new germs that could spread to the other animals on your farm. This is common with viruses and bacteria that cause respiratory diseases in cattle, sheep, goats and swine.

Recommended procedures for exhibitors to enhance biosecurity and reduce livestock disease risks from terrorism or other sources in the youth livestock program, validations and livestock shows.:

- Do not bring sick or diseased animals to livestock shows or validation sites.
- Isolate all purchased animals for a minimum of four weeks. Isolate animals returning home from a show for at least two weeks.
- Make sure equipment used to haul animals is clean and recently disinfected.
- Avoid sharing of grooming equipment and feed and water containers.
- Discourage show visitors from petting or feeding your animals except at designated petting exhibits.
- Practice good personal hygiene.

- Be cautious regarding who has contact with your livestock. Limit visitors to your farm or project location.
- Immediately report any suspicious symptoms to show officials, your veterinarian, or the Louisiana Department of Agriculture.

Exhibiting livestock is an enjoyable and educational experience. Following a few simple guidelines to keep livestock healthy during show season can pay big dividends.

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