Pennsylvania
Department of Agriculture
Bureau of Animal Health and Diagnostic Services

Keeping your show animals healthy – Biosecurity Guidelines for Exhibitors 2026

A show can be stressful for your animals. Transportation, unfamiliar housing, new sources of water, new noises, being around different animals, etc. can all cause stress. Stress causes physical changes in their bodies, and their immune systems can be affected, making them more susceptible to becoming sick and spreading disease to other animals. You need to be proactive to protect your animals. The following guidelines can be used to help you do this.

BEFORE THE SHOW

Keep your animals healthy:

- Have your animals checked on at least an annual basis by a veterinarian, and contact your veterinarian anytime you think an animal is acting "off". You know your animals better than anyone else does.
- Check the animal health requirements and recommendations of the show so you are prepared.
- Follow your veterinarian's recommendations for vaccinations for each animal. Vaccinate far enough in advance so your animals are protected before the show and maintain records of any vaccinations and testing done prior to the show.

Biosecurity is critical:

- Biosecurity is defined as procedures intended to protect animals or people against disease.
- If your animals are showing signs of illness, or have been exposed to sick animals, keep them home and call your veterinarian.
- If you raise multiple species of poultry, it is recommended that waterfowl are kept separate and apart from other poultry in a biosecure manner.
- Before the show, make sure the truck and trailer are visibly clean and sanitary.
- Before packing up for the show, make sure your tack box and any equipment has been cleaned and disinfected.
- Take only clean tack and equipment to the show.

DURING THE SHOW

- Keep your animals' stalls or pens clean and dry, and dispose of manure in the proper location.
- Monitor your animals closely for any signs of illness and report any concerns to the show manager or veterinarian.
- Keep your animals cool to avoid overheating.
- Maintain good ventilation in the stall or pen—use fans placed outside of the animals' reach if necessary and if allowed by the show management.
- Avoid nose-to-nose contact between your animals and other exhibitors' animals.
- Don't share equipment, feed or water buckets, or tack with other exhibitors.
- Don't use shared equipment in a wash area or milking area, and try to keep your animals from touching walls or tie chains that other animals have touched.
- Always keep clean, fresh water available to your animals.
- Keep dust to a minimum.
- Prevent the public and other exhibitors from touching or feeding your animals.
- Wash or sanitize your hands frequently, to protect your animals and for your own safety.
- Avoid eating or drinking in the animal area.

AFTER THE SHOW

- Isolate any animals that were at the show from the rest of your animals at home for at least 2 weeks for livestock and 3 weeks for poultry, and watch them carefully for any signs of illness.
- Care for the animals that were at the show after you care for the other animals, and always wear clean clothing and shoes or boots to care for the other animals.
- Don't share equipment between the animal groups during the isolation period.