Pennsylvania
Department of Agriculture
Bureau of Animal Health and Diagnostic Services

Biosecurity Guidelines for Exhibition Managers 2026

Many diseases of animals can be spread easily through direct contact between animals, through sharing of equipment, and through the air. People can also spread disease on their hands, clothing, and footwear. According to the CDC, about 60% of known infectious diseases in people can be spread from animals, about 75% new or emerging infectious diseases in people come from animals.

There are four important goals of an effective biosecurity plan:

1. Protect animals from disease,
2. Protect exhibitors from disease, and
3. Protect the public from disease.
4. Allow the show to continue with minimal interruption due to animal disease.

Animal exhibitions/shows can lead to an increased risk of disease spread between animals, for several reasons—animals from multiple places congregate at these locations; animals are often stressed from being transported and from all the unusual sights and sounds at the show; and they may be exposed to animals with inapparent health issues.

For this reason, all show managers and exhibitors should have standard biosecurity protocols in place, to include:

Show Managers—At the Show:

Animals:

1. Make arrangements with a veterinarian in advance to oversee animal health for the event, and to be on call to respond to any concerns, including animal health emergencies.
2. Ensure the Animal Health requirements are publicized and clearly stated. Requirements should be as stringent as possible.
3. Ensure that all animals meet the requirements before entry. Require that animals arrive only during specified check-in times with appropriately trained inspectors there to check paperwork.
4. Have appropriately trained inspectors monitor the health of the animals throughout the event (this includes swine health monitors).
5. Contact the show veterinarian with any animal health concerns. The Department of Agriculture should be contacted if an inspector or veterinarian suspects a reportable disease. Designated caretakers should be assigned to these animals until it is determined that they may be moved back to the farm of origin.
6. Waterfowl for exhibit should be kept separate and apart from other poultry in a bio secure manner.

Animal Barns:

1. Clean and disinfect animal buildings and pens, and allow them to dry, before moving animals onto the grounds. Follow label directions and safety instructions for mixing and using disinfectants.
2. Manage the number of animals in each pen or coop to avoid overcrowding and overheating.
3. Minimize animal stress by ensuring animals are housed so that they have good ventilation and access to fresh, clean water, feed, and bedding.
4. Identify an isolation area before animals arrive, and move sick animals to this area as soon as they are identified.
5. Keep dust to a minimum.
6. Maintain rodent and insect control programs in the barns which are safe for exhibitors, visitors, and exhibit animals.
7. Manage water run-off and avoid allowing standing water in the barns.

Exhibitors and General Public:

1. Encourage exhibitors to practice good biosecurity at the event and when returning home with their animals.
2. Provide every exhibitor with a show manager's cell phone number to report concerns throughout the event.
3. Maintain handwashing stations and signage (as required by the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, Title 3, Chapter 25 "Animal Exhibition Sanitation") for exhibitors and the public, and encourage frequent handwashing, especially after handling animals and before eating.
4. Discourage eating and drinking in the animal areas.
5. Discourage the general public and exhibitors from bringing any other animals with the exception of service animals into the exhibition animal areas.

Judging areas:

1. Clean and disinfect judging areas, and allow them to dry, before judging begins.
2. Remove animal manure between groups and store it properly in the designated manure area.
3. Keep dust to a minimum.

4. Manage water run-off and avoid having any standing water in the judging area. If using water to control dust, the water applicator, whether it be a water truck, sprinkler, or hose, must be properly adjusted to apply an appropriate amount of water to ensure standing water is not an issue.
5. Set up the judging area, including the waiting area, to avoid nose-to-nose contact between animals.

Animal Weight Scales:

Clean and disinfect scales used for weighing market animals as needed.

Wash areas:

1. Clean and disinfect designated wash areas, and allow them to dry, before the animals arrive.
2. Maintain sufficient water drainage to avoid having standing water in the wash area.
3. Ensure that animal manure is removed promptly and stored properly in the designated manure area.

Unloading areas:

1. Clean and disinfect the docks used for unloading, and allow them to dry, before the animals arrive.
2. Maintain sufficient water drainage to avoid having standing water in the unloading areas.
3. Ensure that animal manure is removed promptly and stored properly in the designated manure area.

Trailers and Trailer Parking areas:

Ensure that animal manure and bedding which falls out of the trailers is removed promptly after unloading and is stored properly in the designated manure area..

Manure Management:

Ensure that animal manure is stored properly in the designated manure area, which is in an area not used by visitors, easily accessible to exhibitors, and in an area with no liquid run-off. Fly and rodent control should be in place.