



ANIMAL CARE & WELL-BEING GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

This resource was created to assist those who manage or participate in public events involving animals. The resource includes three main areas: 1) guidelines for ensuring appropriate care of animals in a public setting, 2) suggestions for educating the public about animals and animal agriculture, and 3) recommendations for responding if demonstrations or animal-activist activity is present at your event.

GUIDELINES FOR ENSURING APPROPRIATE CARE OF ANIMALS IN A PUBLIC SETTING

This document is intended for individuals managing animal events. Exhibitors participating in any event where animals are present (for example, fairs, livestock shows, horse shows, rodeos, community education days and other events) have the opportunity to practice responsible behavior while taking care of their animals and themselves. Exhibitors need to work cooperatively to provide an environment that meets the needs of exhibit animals and that is conducive to encouraging the public to view and learn from the exhibits.

BEFORE THE ANIMAL EVENT

Event staff should:

1. Involve exhibitors, fair board members and county animal show superintendents in an annual review of their local situation, including housing, facilities and animal care in a public setting.
2. Communicate with exhibitors and their families about responsible animal-handling approaches based on educational materials. This is an educational opportunity.
3. Use guidelines reflecting accepted science-based standards for animal care. Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practices (GAAMPS), found at http://michigan.gov/mdard/0,4610,7-125-1599_1605---,00.html provide an example of such guidelines.
4. Provide the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Exhibition Requirements for Livestock Exhibited in Michigan (http://www.michigan.gov/mdard/0,4610,7-125-1571_7075-300958--,00.html) to animal show exhibitors. This includes information about withdrawal periods and penalties associated with off-label use of drugs.
5. Arrange for a veterinarian to be present or on call, and work with animal show superintendents on procedures for immediate contact with a veterinarian in case of an animal-care emergency.
6. Provide the local and state anticruelty laws ([http://www.legislature.mi.gov/\(S\(ic02m1ivjadels455atcha45\)\)/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-328-1931-ix.pdf](http://www.legislature.mi.gov/(S(ic02m1ivjadels455atcha45))/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-328-1931-ix.pdf)) to fair board members, volunteer animal show superintendents and Extension staff members.
7. Develop a strategy with animal show superintendents to ensure a high level of care for exhibit animals during the event (see “General Animal Care Guidelines and Checklist”). Ensure that you have local contact information and procedures to follow if animal-cruelty laws are violated since laws vary across counties. A good starting point is local law enforcement or animal control.
8. Talk to local law enforcement officials about concerns related to animal activism at fairs. Ask for advice on how to respond to individuals or group protests about animal activities or conditions at the fair.

9. Designate one person as the spokesperson for your event about the issue of animal care. Ask all exhibitors and staff to refer inquiries to this person. The spokesperson should relate facts as provided in educational materials or policies adopted by the fair board.



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DURING THE ANIMAL EVENT

1. Consider having a meeting at the beginning of the event to review animal care responsibilities and guidelines, suggestions for dealing with questions and other issues. Remind people to act professionally at all times.
2. Provide these references at the event office:
 - » Name of the designated spokesperson
 - » Educational materials referred to in this publication
 - » Local and state anticruelty laws
 - » Strategy to ensure a high level of care for exhibit animals during the event
 - » Animal-care guidelines
 - » Withdrawal periods and penalties associated with off-label use of drugs
 - » Procedures for immediate contact with a veterinarian in case of emergency, including name and phone number

3. If an exhibitor is asked numerous questions about the animal's care or feels uncomfortable responding, have the exhibitor refer the person to the designated spokesperson for more information about animal care.
4. If an exhibitor thinks the person asking the questions is being disruptive, the exhibitor should ask the person to visit with the designated spokesperson.
5. If a person disagrees with practices observed at the event, the spokesperson should not argue or overreact. Refer the person to the factual material. Offer the person the opportunity to write the event board with his or her opinions. Provide the address for the event board president.

AFTER THE ANIMAL EVENT

1. Document with the event board all contact between exhibitors and groups concerned with the treatment of animals.
2. Meet with exhibitors, event board members and county livestock superintendents to evaluate the exhibit experience. Use the evaluation session to plan future exhibit experiences that make a significant contribution to your event.

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GENERAL ANIMAL CARE GUIDELINES AND CHECKLIST

The exhibition environment provides temporary housing and provisions for a variety of animals. Under these conditions, animals should be carefully managed, monitored and maintained to optimize care during the fair or show. Before moving animals into the housing environment, exhibitors should inspect the pen, stall or tie-up area to be sure it is clean and free of objects, protrusions or obstacles that may cause injury. If animals are housed in a group, consideration should be given to stocking the pen so all animals may rest comfortably at the same time. Feed and water must be provisioned and readily accessible to all animals. Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practices (GAAMPS), animal-specific recommendations, are available at http://michigan.gov/mdard/0,4610,7-125-1599_1605---,00.html. This checklist includes the basic care guidelines that exhibitors should follow at the animal event. If used on a daily basis, this checklist can assist you in providing proper oversight and care of your animal(s).

- Have clean, fresh water available for all animals.
- Provide adequate animal-washing, preparation, exercise and showing areas.
- Dispose of manure and waste properly.
- Provide feed appropriate to animal type and function.
- Make sure housing area is free of objects and obstacles that could cause injury.
- Have a veterinarian on call or on the premises to respond to animal-health issues or emergencies. Have contact information readily available from superintendents and fair management, and post in each barn.
- House each animal with adequate space to rest comfortably.
- Provide adequate ventilation and protection from severe weather for all animals.
- Follow approved treatment withdrawal protocols.
- Provide adequate hand-washing or disinfection facilities for all attendees.
- Provide safe, clean transportation to and from the fair or event.
- Provide adequate, clean bedding for each animal based on current thermal conditions.

Animal project resource materials may also provide additional guidance for animal care. The attention given to animal care during the fair or show can make a significant contribution to how an animal reacts and adapts to the fair or show environment. Responsible and professional behavior toward animals, other exhibitors and the public will make the fair or show experience a positive one.

(Adapted from the Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Service)

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EDUCATING THE PUBLIC ABOUT ANIMAL AGRICULTURE: SHARING YOUR STORY

Less than 2 percent of the United States population lives or works on a modern farm. This creates a great disconnect between consumers, farmers and farming operations. Animal events open to the public are opportunities to educate those not involved in agriculture about how animals are actually raised and cared for. Visitors may have many questions ranging from the very simple topics to the more challenging issues of agriculture. Either way, this presents the perfect opportunity to help educate the public about animal agriculture and, specifically, about animals and project experiences. Most visitors who ask questions are seeking information because they want to learn and understand what exhibitors are doing and why. Exhibitors provide the best care for their animals and promote their well-being; they should be proud to share that information!

The following are suggestions for event managers or superintendents, parents and volunteers, and youth to use for communicating with the public about animal agriculture.

FOR EVENT MANAGERS OR SUPERINTENDENTS

1. Have display or exhibit areas set up around the event with animal facts as well as names of people or organizations to contact for more information.
2. Pick an educational theme for the event (for example, animal care, food production, food safety, farmers caring for the environment and related subjects) to narrow the focus to one memorable take-home message. Change the theme every year or event, and update information as needed.
3. Have an “Ask Me!” location where visitors can learn more information about animal agriculture in Michigan and the U.S. Have printed information available. Recruit volunteers to answer questions and share their agricultural stories and project experiences.
4. Create event T-shirts with facts on the back about the event, a particular species of animal (for example, beef cattle, swine, dairy cattle or other animals, or project areas) or a positive agricultural message.

5. Encourage youth to visit with the public, and to find unique ways to share their stories and their experiences with animals and animal agriculture. Be creative in developing activities or contests to support youth in talking about animal agriculture.

FOR PARENTS AND VOLUNTEERS

1. Help youth create informational displays, exhibit areas or interactive activities to answer questions. Design displays to ask the public questions and direct them to the correct barn to find the answer, or to talk to an older young person about the topic. One suggestion for an activity would be for youth to create a scavenger hunt in which event visitors would (a) find answers to common questions or misconceptions about animal agriculture, and (b) learn the truth about where their food comes from. Once the hunt is completed, participants would speak with youth to hear the correct answers and would then be entered into a drawing for a prize.
2. Work with youth to help find or compile a fact sheet – that meets the event’s education theme and is about the animal species they exhibit or Michigan animal agriculture – they could use to talk with visitors.
3. Assist in coordinating a schedule so youth can be at the “Ask Me!” location. Try to have several youth representing multiple species present to answer questions. Practice with the youth so they are

comfortable speaking about their animal projects. Ask them common questions they may receive; talk about misconceptions they may encounter and ways to address them; and provide them with informational resources to share with the public.

4. Organize a contest for youth to design an agricultural-fact T-shirt participants can wear. This will not only promote a positive message but will also help the public know to whom to turn for information.
5. Be supportive of youth speaking with the public and be an additional resource to answer questions. Consider awarding prizes (for example, fun-size candy bars) for people who ask them questions. Allow youth to take the lead, but be ready to answer questions for which they may not have the answers or about which they are uncomfortable speaking. Partner with youth to make it a learning experience for everyone.



Photo: ANR Communications

FOR YOUTH EXHIBITORS

1. Create signs, dioramas and exhibits with species-specific information and fun facts. Place them in areas where the public can easily find them to learn more about animal care, well-being and the project. Have printed information available for visitors to take home. Present questions for the public to think about and let them know to whom to talk for – or where to find – the answers.
2. Develop a fun, positive slogan that is a memorable message for the public about animal agriculture. One could be developed from the educational theme, for the entire event or for each species in the event.
3. Be present, excited and open to talk with people at an “Ask Me!” table. Set up in an area that is easy for the public to find.

4. Have a contest with other clubs to design a T-shirt for the event. Pick a theme and use words and images to tell your agricultural story. Designate days for different clubs to wear the shirts so each group can be the “expert” for a day in answering questions from the public.
5. Engage with visitors and be enthusiastic about your project! Share your stories and talk about why animal agriculture is so important. Listen to questions and the public’s views. By knowing what others think about a subject, you can see different sides, learn something new and know better how to talk with people who are unfamiliar with agriculture.

For additional information or resources on agricultural literacy, go to http://www.breakfastonthefarm.com/agriculture_literacy_resources.



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IF A DEMONSTRATION OR ANIMAL-ACTIVIST ACTIVITY OCCURS AT AN EVENT

WHAT EVENT MANAGERS OR SUPERINTENDENTS CAN DO

1. Accomplish the following:
 - » Use guidelines or recommendations for the care and well-being of animals. This demonstrates a responsibility to promote best practices. (See “General Animal Care Guidelines and Checklist.”)
 - » Inform local police of potential issues about animal exhibits and shows so, if they are called, they have a better understanding about how to respond.
 - » Become familiar with the local “permit to demonstrate” process, rules and criteria. Check before the event to determine if a permit has been issued.
 - » Check the “permit to demonstrate” of any group or individual that attempts or desires to picket or demonstrate within property boundaries or public areas adjacent to the fairgrounds.
 - » Ensure that groups with legal permits adhere to the rules.
 - » Hold a general meeting before the fair to discuss animal-care issues and protocol for addressing situations if they arise.
2. Do not overreact. Becoming defensive does not facilitate a constructive conversation and may imply you are trying to hide something from the public. If activists are demonstrating, they will get media attention even if you do nothing. They may receive more publicity, and possibly sympathy, if you overreact.
3. Do not argue. Appoint a designated, trained spokesperson to handle necessary responses about animal well-being questions. If you are put in a situation where you must answer questions



Photo courtesy of the Kennedy Family.

- or discuss animal projects, stick with facts. If you are unsure of yourself or are being overwhelmed, politely end the discussion and refer the person to the trained spokesperson.
4. It is not the correct approach to immediately call the police if someone demonstrates. First, ask to see the permit to demonstrate. If a permit is provided, make sure all rules are followed. If a permit was not obtained, notify the individuals about the legal requirements.
 5. Communicate with exhibitors about this situation. Emphasize numbers 2 and 3.
 6. Ensure the proper care of animals at all times. Remember, the best examples of animal well-being can come from the farmers, 4-H'ers and FFA members who provide the best possible care for their animals.

7. Be polite and courteous to demonstrators. They may be trained in confrontation techniques, such as trying to excite a situation and they may have “canned” answers to questions. Remain calm and do not let them incite unnecessary emotion. When in doubt, follow numbers 2 and 3.
8. Use common sense and be professional and polite at all times.

WHAT PARENTS AND VOLUNTEERS CAN DO

1. Ensure the proper care of animals at all times since part of the 4-H or FFA experience is to learn how to properly care for animals. Remember the best examples of animal well-being are actually the farmers, 4-H’ers and FFA members who provide the best possible care for their animals.
2. Work with your local fair board to use guidelines or recommendations for the care and well-being of animals. This demonstrates a responsibility to promote best practices.
3. Your organization or fair board should have a designated, trained spokesperson to handle necessary responses about animal well-being questions. If you are put in a situation where you must answer questions or discuss animal projects, stick with facts. If you are unsure of yourself or are being overwhelmed, politely end the discussion and refer the person to the trained spokesperson.
4. Do not overreact. Becoming defensive does not facilitate a constructive conversation and may imply you are trying to hide something from the public. If activists are demonstrating, they will get media attention even if you do nothing. They may receive more publicity, and possibly sympathy, if you overreact.
5. Do not argue. Appoint a designated, trained spokesperson to handle necessary responses about animal well-being questions. If you are put in a situation where you must answer questions or discuss animal projects, stick with facts. If you are unsure of yourself or are being overwhelmed, politely end the discussion and refer the person to the trained spokesperson.
6. It is not the correct approach to immediately call the police if someone demonstrates. If proper pre-event preparation occurs, the superintendent and trained spokesperson should know if a permit to demonstrate was issued. First, contact the superintendent or trained spokesperson.



Photo: ©iStock.com/felin2

7. Be polite and courteous to demonstrators; set a good example for youth. Demonstrators may be trained in confrontation techniques, such as trying to excite a situation and they may have “canned” answers to questions. Remain calm and do not let them incite unnecessary emotion. When in doubt, follow numbers 4 and 5.
8. Use common sense and be professional and polite at all times.

WHAT YOUTH EXHIBITORS CAN DO

1. If your animals are well taken care of and well treated, there is no reason to be intimidated by animal activists. Stay calm and seek help from an adult volunteer or superintendent.
2. Always properly care for your animals. Make sure they have adequate feed, water and bedding, and make sure your animals’ pens or cages are kept clean. Use safe and correct handling methods, never excessive force, while working your animals.
3. It is very important to be aware that most people are just being curious and friendly and mean no harm to you or your animals.
4. If approached by a person asking questions about the management practices used to raise your animal, for example, what you are doing and why you are doing it, and if you feel uncomfortable, excuse yourself and walk away. Tell the person to direct specific questions to the designated spokesperson or superintendent.

5. Tell your fair superintendent, spokesperson, parent or leader of any interaction with persons you think are animal activists. This could include people who accuse you of being cruel to your animals because they are to be used for food or those who claim you are exploiting the animals by showing them in competition.
6. Never argue or try to defend your use of animals. This can create a scene that the person is attempting to use to get media attention. In addition, the person may try to get you to say something he or she can use against you or youth animal programs.
7. Use your common sense and be professional and polite at all times.

Questions regarding this resource can be directed to:
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As previously noted, the “General Animal Care Guidelines and Checklist” was adapted from the Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Service. Other content was informed from Extension publications from Iowa State University, Pennsylvania State University, the University of Maryland, the University of Massachusetts Amherst and the University of Minnesota.



Photo: Melissa Elischer

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