



# Fair and Exhibition Animal Health Planning Guide

Keeping animals, exhibitors and the public healthy



## Acknowledgements

The Fair and Exhibition Animal Health Planning Guide was originally created in 2009 by the Michigan State University (MSU) Extension Emergency Management Team. This document was revised in 2017 and MSU Extension would like to thank the following people for their leadership and expertise in helping to develop and revise the guide:

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Beth Stuever, MSU Extension  
Mindy Tape, MSU Extension  
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In addition, MSU Extension would like to thank the following individuals for serving on the document review committee:

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## SITUATION

Protecting animal and human health is a main priority for Michigan fairs and exhibitions. Over the past few years, attention to animal health and well-being at fairs and exhibitions has been a focal point. With diseases such as avian influenza and swine influenza threatening animal and human populations, it is imperative that all associated parties do their due diligence in protecting both animal and human health.

Several pieces of Michigan legislation outline regulations that require the protection of both animal and human health by law. Under Michigan Act 466, it is the responsibility of exhibition hosts (county fair, show committees, etc.) to protect animals intended to be part of the food chain. Furthermore, the Communicable Health Code applies when there is a situation that is zoonotic, meaning that pathogens are able to be passed from animals to humans. Exposure at fairs and exhibitions to various pathogens is a possibility. Local county health departments are key partners in helping protect community health.

To ensure that legal requirements are followed and fairs and exhibitions are prepared in the event of an animal health situation, creating an animal health plan in advance is an important preventive step that will increase the likelihood of a positive response. Additionally, it ensures that animal, exhibitor and attendee safety remains a top priority.

The Fair and Exhibition Animal Health Planning Guide provides an outline for the planning process, specific questions to address at each of the planning sessions and suggested text for a plan (suggested text is written in *italic*). All of these resources are designed to make it easier for you to create an animal health response emergency plan for your fair or exhibition.

Throughout this document, you will see the term “animals.” For the context of this plan, “animals” include beef, sheep, swine, dairy cattle, goats, poultry, horses, rabbits, cavies, pocket pets, llamas/alpacas, companion animals, and/or any other animals that are part of an exhibition.

## CREATING THE COMMITTEE

To begin the process, create an all-encompassing committee to develop a plan that outlines specific animal health protocols to mitigate risk and respond to potential animal disease situations. The committee will involve a wide variety of people who may be on the grounds during the event and those who may be local resources. It is suggested that a core decision-making team be established to serve as the primary responders to any situation that may occur.

As you develop the plan, it is recommended to consider having two tiers of committees: one set of individuals who will be part of an active working group and another group of individuals who will serve as part of a review committee. Your review committee is likely to include people who have a specialization, such as insurance agents or attorneys. Though it is important for these individuals to provide consultation on applicable portions of the overall animal health plan, they may have less input during the development stages, and you may want to consider limiting their interactions during the early stages to reduce costs.



Suggested committee member expertise and backgrounds:

Tier 1

- Veterinarians
- Livestock industry representatives (local producers, commodity group representatives, etc.)
- Superintendents
- Fair board and staff members
- MSU Extension staff members
- 4-H leaders, parents and youth exhibitors
- Local health department officials
- Local processors
- Livestock transporters

Tier 2 (Tier 1 plus the following)

- Emergency management personnel
- Law enforcement officers
- County animal control officers
- Insurance agents
- Local government officials
- Attorneys
- Others

To recognize their contributions to the plan, be sure to list everyone's name and the group(s) he/she represents on the committee in the final document. This is a great way to confirm that you involved the necessary expertise required in your plan development.

Sample invitation letter

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

*The Spartan County Fair recognizes the need to be proactive in planning for animal health situations that may arise at fair and exhibitions. As a result, we are working to create an animal health plan that will increase awareness of animal health through education, establish preventive action steps and designate appropriate responses in the event of an animal health emergency. To ensure the safety of everyone at the Spartan County Fair/Exhibition, the plan will provide an organized, detailed system to allocate and implement proper resources to mitigate animal, exhibitor and attendee health risks, and guide decision making in the event of an animal health situation.*

*Our ultimate goal is to encourage all event participants to be proactive in assuring the well-being of animals exhibited on our fairgrounds and to ensure animal health situations are handled in the most effective way possible. We believe your experience and expertise would be beneficial to the creation of our plan. A member of our fair board will be contacting you later this week to discuss your participation in this project in greater detail.*

*\*continue the letter with your meeting details plus important contact information*





## TAKING THE FIRST STEP

At the first meeting, ask each committee member to introduce him/herself to the group and identify the various areas of expertise and experience he/she brings to this group process. If someone seems unsure why he/she was asked, you may need to state the reasons for that person's involvement.

Review the committee's purpose:

*The Spartan County Fair recognizes the need to be proactive in planning for animal health situations that may arise at fair and exhibitions. As a result, we are working to create an animal health plan that will increase awareness of animal health through education, establish preventive action steps and designate appropriate responses in the event of an animal health emergency. To ensure the safety of everyone at the Spartan County Fair/Exhibition, the plan will provide an organized, detailed system to allocate and implement proper resources to mitigate animal, exhibitor and attendee health risks, and guide decision making in the event of an animal health situation.*

Review your goal: to encourage all event participants to be proactive in assuring the health and well-being of animals exhibited on our fairgrounds. The plan is designed to increase awareness of animal health issues through education; establish preventive action steps; identify appropriate responses for exhibitors, fair participants and staff members; and ensure suitable response steps.

The plan encompasses four phases that may or may not occur, depending on if there is detection of a potential animal health situation:

**PLAN:** Creating procedures aimed at avoiding and/or limiting an animal health event. Planning includes educating exhibitors before the fair or exhibition, creating a check-in procedure to ensure that all animals that enter the event are healthy, and establishing procedures that will increase public awareness about zoonotic disease and how fair/exhibition visitors can limit their exposure.

**PREPARE:** Determining policies and guidelines to ensure an effective action plan designed to minimize an animal health event's impact. These policies and procedures will help fairs and exhibition staff members deal with an animal health situation efficiently and positively.

**RESPOND:** Establishing action steps necessary for the fair or exhibition to respond to an animal health event quickly and proactively and with as little disruption to the event as possible.

**RECOVER:** After the exhibition is complete, a thorough and complete debrief occurs to assess lessons learned whether an animal health issue occurred or not.

To begin the planning process, have the committee brainstorm animal health situations that could possibly occur during your event, and talk to representatives from other exhibitions that have experienced animal and/or public health situations. This sets the stage for further discussions to



identify strategies needed to address all of these animal-related events. Animal health situations in the past include avian influenza (all poultry shows were cancelled), infectious laryngotracheitis (ILT), equine herpes virus (EHV) and swine influenza. However, a confirmed diagnosis is not necessary; response to animal health situations can be initialized when significant numbers of animals have exhibited symptoms of illness. Decisions about what constitutes an animal health situation should be made locally by the emergency animal health committee.

In preparation for the next meeting, determine whom you might turn to for help and assistance in a real animal health situation. Encourage committee members to explore the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's (MDARD) website "[Resources for Exhibitions.](#)"

## DETERMINING LEGAL AND FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

The impact of any animal health event will depend on some key factors: the nature and sequence of the animal health issue, the time lapse between onset of the animal health issue and diagnosis and response, the source of the animal health issue, the protective measures taken by animal owners, the number of potentially susceptible animals/people, and the density of the animals in the holding areas.

Take the time now as a committee to understand your legal obligations and determine who will be financially responsible for the costs involved in an animal health event. This is time well-spent!

To begin understanding your legal obligations, start by reviewing the document "[2017 Exhibition Requirements](#)" from MDARD. For other regulations related to the proper disposal of animals, refer to information on the MDARD [Transporting and Disposal of Dead Animals](#) website or [MSU Extension's Mortality Management webpage](#). Additionally, many other state laws, as well as federal laws and regulations, concern the care and handling of animals. For additional guidance, the committee is encouraged to contact MDARD at 800-292-3939 and your local health department.

As you consider these requirements, with your committee determine who will have the authority to contact others on the fair or exhibition's behalf, and have this information cited in several places in the plan for quick reference. We recommend that the attending veterinarian be the person designated to contact regulatory authorities. Because of the significant role that the veterinarian will play in ensuring animal and public health, the fair or exhibition should select the attending veterinarian well in advance. A general recommendation is that the veterinarian be selected a minimum of six months in advance of the event to provide time for the veterinarian's role and responsibilities to be established.

With your local veterinarian, your MDARD field veterinarian and local health department officials, determine at what point MDARD and/or Michigan Department of Health and Human Services staff members should be contacted. Remember, MDARD staff members would rather be notified and not needed than not be notified and have a situation get out of control. Being proactive and contacting MDARD, the local health department and others earlier rather than later in an animal health event is wise because these organizations may be able to provide needed resources that otherwise may be cost-prohibitive to your organization.

As you consider legal obligations, it's important to remember that in the event of a communicable disease situation (i.e., a zoonotic disease outbreak), fair and 4-H staff members are legally required



to release exhibitors' personal contact information to local health departments if it is requested.

What are your financial liability guidelines going to include? Identify who pays to cover the costs of feeding, watering, manure removal, follow-up veterinarian visits, disinfectant products, equipment, animal depopulation, etc., during an incident. Does the county fair/event have insurance to cover a situation like this? Be sure to check with your insurance agent and review your policy coverage.

Consider your financial options. You could decide to withhold the checks from the exhibitors to cover the costs, have the junior livestock association purchase animal insurance, have the fair cover the cost, have the animal owners cover the cost, or use a combination of these options.

In the plan, clearly spell out the criteria for identifying sick animals and protocol for reporting, communicating, and implementing an emergency animal health plan. It is strongly recommended that you list specific details about roles and responsibilities in your plan and in the rules for exhibitors.

Sample draft language:

*The incidental costs of maintaining and operating the fair fall to the fair board, but the risk of exhibiting livestock falls to the exhibitors/owners. In the case of a disease outbreak and/or quarantine, the premiums and/or sale proceeds may be held. The exhibitors involved in the situation will be responsible for the costs involved, such as veterinary care, medications, feed, bedding, etc., and the fair will have the right to withhold appropriate expenses from premiums or sale proceeds.*

*Authority is given to \_\_\_\_\_ to contact MDARD to determine what must be done with any dead animals, contaminated feed, bedding and/or manure. Depending on the emergency or disease, these materials may need to be composted, burned, buried or even hauled to a landfill. The cost to handle these items properly will be paid for by \_\_\_\_\_.*

*All labor is considered voluntary and not a reimbursable expense unless stipulated in writing.*

*If an animal has been sold through auction and a quarantine is put in place, \_\_\_\_\_ assumes the responsibility for care and costs that are incurred during the duration of the quarantine.*

*If an animal becomes ill and dies after it has been auctioned and before it has been harvested, the \_\_\_\_\_ will properly dispose of the carcass and inform the buyer. The buyer and seller will agree on a solution that is acceptable for both parties.*

*If animals have been found to be symptomatic before the auction, the \_\_\_\_\_ will disclose potential risks to potential buyers in writing before the sale of the species.*

*If animals are found to be dead on arrival to the processor or their carcasses are condemned at slaughter, \_\_\_\_\_ will be responsible for all costs related to shipping, disposal, etc.*

The fair board should always vote on these operational guidelines and include the results of the vote



in their meeting minutes. Each year, these operational rulings should be reviewed, renewed and distributed to all event participants. It may be necessary to engage members from the local sale committees and come to an agreement on how to handle situations that may arise with animals intended to be auctioned during the fair or exhibition.

The plan should outline how to identify housing and shelter for animals, establish communication with internal and external audiences, procure necessary supplies/staffing, release/return animals to their owners, and properly dispose of deceased animals and animal byproducts.

A large-scale animal health situation at a fair may warrant an immediate response from state and local personnel, agencies and organizations. Emergency situations may also require activation of additional specialized agencies through mutual aid agreements. It is much easier to work together if mutual aid agreements are already in place before an animal health event occurs rather than having to be created during an animal health emergency. It is recommended to have a list available of emergency and after-hours contact information for local responding agencies such as the local health department. This is time well-spent!

## GENERAL OPERATIONS

### Animal Population Verification

Determining and verifying the number and type(s) of animals at your fair or exhibition is an important component of planning for an animal health emergency. Stipulating what animal species are on the grounds, how many of each species are on the grounds and identifying the needs of each species are crucial for appropriate resource planning and plan implementation. When doing an inventory, identify all animals that are on the grounds at any given time during the event. This could include market animals, non-terminal animals, Miracle of Life animals, petting zoo animals, pony rides equines, circus animals, etc.

What procedure do you have in place to accomplish this important task of animal population verification? This procedure should be described in the planning section and listed again in the response section of the plan so people know how to access this important information.

### Attending Veterinarian

The attending veterinarian should be identified at least six months before the fair or exhibition. At this time, the fair or exhibition should outline clearly what the expectations of the attending veterinarian are, for example:

- Veterinarian will be on call for the duration of the event.
- Veterinarian will evaluate animal health on the event grounds at least once per day.
- Veterinarian will be responsible for training all species check-in volunteers on how to identify health and well-being concerns.
- Veterinarian will be the main decision maker if an animal health situation should occur.
- Veterinarian will be compensated monetarily for this event.
- Veterinarian will be allowed to assemble a team of other veterinarians to help cover the event.
- Any other local considerations.



## Facility Identification

This step includes determining the fairground facilities that are included in the plan. Facilities to consider include:

- All barns, tents and temporary shelter for all animals.
- Show ring.
- Sale ring.
- Show and barn equipment.
- Bedding, chutes, wash stalls, scales, gates, pens, brooms, shovels, buckets, etc.
- Isolation facilities/area.
- Check-in/check-out areas (trailer check-in and vet check-in).
- Restrooms and hand washing stations.
- Parking lots.
- Campgrounds (dogs, exotic animals).
- Entertainment animal areas.
- Miracle of Life area.
- Support animals.
- Petting zoos.
- Circuses.
- Tie-outs.
- Animal trailer parking.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Chain of Command

Identify who is ultimately responsible for the event. Is it the fair board, the show committee? Who is the spokesperson acting on behalf of this entity?

Establish who has the authority and when and for what instances he/she can act on your organization's behalf during an animal health incident. To ensure that exhibitors, fair board members, MSU Extension staff members, fair staff members, MDARD staff members, local health department staff members and others know whom to contact in an emergency, add pictures to lists of names and contact information. It is highly recommended to have after-hours or emergency contact information for local agencies. At least once a year or before an event, double-check each person's contact information for accuracy.

It is recommended that each person approve the distribution of his/her personal contact information before posting. Determine the location(s) where one would be able to access this information. Consider creating in advance audience distribution lists, such as exhibitors, fair board members, Extension and fair staff members, and regulatory agencies.

Sample language:

*On animal issues, our fair veterinarian, [Name], in cooperation with the fair manager and superintendents, will make the final animal health decision(s).*

*Any exhibitors who have an animal health issue or who observe any potential indications of*



*animal health issues should contact the superintendent of their department. The superintendent should then contact the fair veterinarian and discuss the animal health issue.*

Who is the back-up to the point person if the point person is not available?

Sample language:

*If the superintendent of that department is not available and no other superintendents are available to assist, the fair manager should be contacted for assistance and guidance.*

*In the event that a veterinarian is contacted before the superintendent, it becomes the veterinarian's responsibility to contact the superintendent.*

*Parent/animal owners shall be consulted by fair superintendents and fair staff members regarding the health of any animal(s). The veterinarian working with the owner of the affected animal may be consulted for advice by the owner.*

*If an animal health problem arises, the superintendent will review the animal health concern with the animal owners. If a member of the family is not available, a representative from the fair board will be contacted.*

*The on-call veterinarian and superintendent will decide if the animal requires medical attention and/or needs to go home.*

*The superintendent and on-call veterinarian are to contact the fair board officials and the chairperson of the animal committee.*

*If the on-call veterinarian determines that the situation is a serious problem, he/she will contact the state veterinarian and the proper authorities. The state veterinarian office number is 800-292-3939. After hours, the phone number is 517-373-0440.*

### **Notification and Communications**

Detail what qualifies as an emergency that will require the implementation of the animal health response plan, and provide information on the call-down notification system.

Who will draft communications related to the animal health issue? If you do not have anyone with a communications background, ask for assistance from MSU Extension in creating frequently asked questions (FAQs), writing media releases, interacting with the press and responding to potential social media messages.

Sample language:

*It is extremely important that everyone receive the same information from the same source to prevent misinformation. Consistent information will be prepared ahead of time, edited and approved by \_\_\_\_\_. The appointed spokespeople for both internal and external communications will be \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.*



Your communication plan should include details for both internal and external audiences applicable to your organization.

Internal audiences could include fair board members, MSU Extension staff members, 4-H families, 4-H leaders, animal owners and exhibitors. External audiences include the media, event attendees and the general public. If you need help identifying media lists, MSU Extension can help you with regional media contacts.

Sample language:

*The plan and its procedures will be activated in the event of an emergency that results in a significant need for animal and/or public health protection. Spartan County Fair management will determine when these procedures will be implemented and notify the appropriate agencies. Spartan County management will maintain a call-down notification system.*

*Communications among the fair management, MSU Extension staff members, youth exhibitors, parents and support agencies will occur primarily by (insert name of spokesperson). Official communications will be via:*

- *Signage in barns.*
- *Social media.*
- *Telephone (calls or text).*
- *Email list.*
- *Exhibitor meetings.*
- *Other: \_\_\_\_\_*

*Updates will be provided as the response team deems necessary.*

*In the case of public notification, the Spartan County Fair management will maintain a list of newspapers, radio and TV stations. Public information statements will be issued to all media outlets. This information will be kept on record by the Spartan County Fair for at least \_\_\_\_\_ years.*

*During the response phase, the fair management will provide continued updates on the animal health situation efforts to both internal and external audiences. Updates will include general information as well as any special instructions for the public and animal owners, as applicable.*

## Internal communication

Sample language:

*The superintendent, in cooperation with the fair veterinarian and fair manager will designate a person to keep the exhibitors and families informed of the situation. Every attempt will be made to provide regular updates to exhibitors, parents and leaders about daily events. Information will be shared by (list the forms of communication). In the event that market animals are quarantined, additional communication will be established with buyers, packers, processors and truckers by the superintendent.*



What do you tell fair volunteers and the owners, including youth exhibitors, to protect their health?

Sample language:

*If an animal disease incident occurs, the fair management staff will gather all exhibitors involved or potentially involved as soon as possible for a discussion with the veterinarian and superintendents. This discussion will serve to educate exhibitors on the situation and to outline all of the appropriate emergency plan responses.*

*Communication with fair staff members, volunteers and exhibitors will include information on the suspected animal health emergency, potential human health issues, and ways to reduce risk of human and animal health concerns.*

### External communication and spokespeople

Determine who the spokesperson is. Take the time now to identify a back-up person for the spokesperson, in the event that he/she is unavailable.

Sample language:

*The Spartan County Fair spokesperson for media contacts is \_\_\_\_\_. In conjunction with MSU Extension staff members, he/she will be responsible for coordinating all media activities and media releases associated with the protection of people and animals. In the event \_\_\_\_\_ is unavailable, \_\_\_\_\_ will serve as the spokesperson.*

Determine the contact information for your spokespeople and their schedule for media availability. Include this information in each media release. Some fairs have a scheduled daily morning media interview during the fair. This would be a perfect time to discuss the animal health situation and provide the most recent details. You could then limit other inquiries throughout the day.

Numbering your media releases makes it much easier to determine what information needs clarification or which set of statements a media representative is referencing. All media should receive the same information.

Sample language:

*Before each media release and/or briefing, the spokesperson's statements shall be approved and authorized by the \_\_\_\_\_. Before information is released to the media representatives, etc., each set of statements will be printed, signed and dated by those approving the statement(s). Each media release shall include the date, time and media release number. A hard copy will be filed for future reference.*

*All media releases will be sent by email to ensure that they reach the media in a timely fashion. When citing the source for any information, the spokesperson will verify the information with the source in advance of the communication and discuss options for interviews/questions, etc.*

Spokesperson(s) can work with MSU Extension staff members to develop FAQs and fact sheets



related to an animal health situation for media callers and for exhibitors.

Sample language:

*A Q & A fact sheet with accurate, clear, concise responses/answers will be developed in cooperation with appropriate agencies to address both the human and animal health side of the issue.*

*A fact sheet that outlines specific, accurate and up-to-date information will be provided to exhibitors, fair staff members and volunteers.*

*It is important for all involved in the emergency to remain proactive and ready to handle the situation. Please be positive, timely and truthful.*

*A record will be made of each media interaction.*

Create a record sheet where you can note the time and date of each phone call and/or interview, cite which reporter asked the questions, who spoke with the reporter and a brief summary of the information shared. If there is a need for a follow-up call, remember to note the date and time and the person to contact. The ability to retrieve this information quickly during an emergency is priceless.

Emphasize with everyone the importance of having only designated staff members sharing information with the media. Be sure to have someone escort the media representatives to and from the fair office where the spokesperson will answer their questions, give interviews, etc.

*All media representatives should be directed to the fair office when they enter the gate. Remember to limit discussion with media representatives-- \_\_\_\_\_ is our official spokesperson.*

## EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

Who needs to be educated? EVERYONE! That includes fair management, administration, superintendents, exhibitors, animal owners, 4-H families, fair visitors and the general public. To ensure that the appropriate information is covered and in as much depth as you would like, we suggest you create a discussion outline for everyone to follow. How will you communicate this new requirement to all superintendents? How will you know if each superintendent completes this requirement? What will you do if they do not complete the requirement?

Sample language:

*Superintendents will follow the discussion outline to review animal health issues and the animal health emergency response plan with all animal exhibitors/owners to ensure awareness, understanding and compliance with our policies and procedures.*

Where will fair participants find this information?



Sample language:

*Health/emergency policies will be posted online for fair participants to review. Copies of the policies are also available at the Spartan County Fair office.*

Other options include educational programs for exhibitors conducted just before or in the early weeks of the project. These programs may be conducted in conjunction with species-specific programming. It is also recommended that you include the requirement(s) and suggested timeline for this training in your fair book.

How will people be educated? Determine the appropriate levels of education needed and develop and implement species-specific appropriate animal health management educational programs for youth and adult exhibitors. These should be offered in a year-round planning, organizing and implementation cycle.

Sample language:

*Educate participants by having youth develop posters about proper biosecurity and display the posters at the fair.*

*Present information at the animal advisory meetings and to each exhibitor before the fair.*

*Place information in the 4-H, FFA and/or fair newsletter.*

*Post information on the fair or exhibitions website.*

*Add guidelines to the fair book.*

*Conduct a meeting with exhibitors on their first day of the fair or exhibition, and remind them to monitor the health of their animals closely. Inform them of whom to contact if they are not sure about the health of their animals and steps to take if there is a problem.*

*Signage on barns: Place easy-to-read signage that asks the public always to wash their hands after touching the animals in one barn and before entering another barn, after they are completely done interacting with the animals, and before consuming any food or beverage.*

*Handouts.*

*Mailings to leaders/advisers and exhibitors.*

*Social media messages (SnapChat, Facebook messages, etc.)*

Here is a list of information that should be included in the training:

- Recommended or mandated vaccinations for each species. The [MDARD Exhibition webpage](#) is a reliable source for this specific information.
- Appropriate biosecurity practices to start at home:



- **Keep your distance:** It's important to restrict animal access to visitors, wildlife and other domestic animals that could potentially be carrying disease.
- **Keep it clean:** Washing your hands thoroughly and changing your clothes and footwear before and after working with animals and regularly cleaning and disinfecting your equipment are essential to the prevention of disease on any farm.
- **Don't bring in disease:** It's important to think twice before sharing equipment or supplies with neighbors. If you decide to share equipment with others, always clean and disinfect equipment before and after sharing. It's also important to disinfect boots, vehicle and other items after returning from another farm.
- **Recognize a sick animal:** Early detection of unhealthy animals can help prevent the spread of the disease among your animals and in your community. Learn what the signs of illness are in your animal and be on the lookout. It is always wise to consult with your local licensed veterinarian.
- **Separate newly acquired animals and animals that have been taken off the farm:** It is important to separate animals that are new to your farm or that have been off the farm from animals that were already there. New or traveling animals may bring new diseases onto your farm. To prevent the spread of disease to your entire herd or flock, separate new and traveling animals from the rest. Make sure to take care of animals that have always been on the farm first to help stop the spread of disease.

Once animals and exhibitors are at the fair, biosecurity is equally important! Exhibitors should:

- Not eat or drink in the barn areas.
- Wash their hands after handling their animals.
- Avoid sharing supplies and equipment such as brushes, buckets and feed pans between animals without disinfecting them.
- Regularly disinfect common areas such as scales, wash racks and sorting boards.
- Notify the appropriate person if animals are showing symptoms.

Standardize your check-in or arrival procedures and provide an educational session for those volunteers assisting with check-in. Define what "acceptable health and general well-being" means for each species. What factors determine that an animal is not healthy or acceptable to be on public display? A checklist with appropriate indicators documenting this assessment or a process to consult with the attending fair veterinarian would be useful, especially if the determination is questioned.

Sample language:

*Veterinarians, superintendents or designated volunteers will inspect all animals to evaluate the health and general well-being of each animal before the animal is allowed to enter the barn.*

If a question about any animal's health is raised, consider the following:

- Whom do you want the exhibitor or animal owner to discuss this concern with before the animal enters a barn? The fair superintendent, attending fair veterinarian or fair manager?
- If it is determined that the animal is not healthy, who has the authority to send the animal home?



- What would be the process if the animal owner questions the decision or refuses to take the animal home?
- What if other animals have also been transported with this animal -- what happens to those animals?

Sample language:

*If the superintendent is concerned about an animal's health, the animal shall not be allowed into the barn until cleared by the veterinarian.*

What happens if an animal requires medical treatment after it has been cleared to enter the barn? Do you need permission from the owners to treat the animal? Absolutely -- it is their property.

What documentation will be kept and by whom if an animal is diagnosed and treated by a veterinarian? Now is the time to create this form and indicate where the form would be found and where completed forms should be filed. An example treatment form can be found in the appendix.

Sample language:

*No animal shall be treated without the knowledge of the superintendent of that department. When necessary, the superintendent can rely on the expertise of the fair veterinarian. Approval from the superintendent must occur first even if the animal owner/exhibitor plans to use his/her veterinarian. In the case of conflicting advice, the fair veterinarian will have the final say.*

*Treatment of an animal shall be by the veterinarian or under the direction of a veterinarian or the owner of said animal and verified with written documentation.*

*All market animals are to be treated only after the approval of the fair veterinarian. If an animal requires treatment, the treatment shall be documented on a form or record of activity and presented to the superintendent and kept on file.*

*The fair veterinarian has the authority to send an animal home. A superintendent and/or fair manager has the authority to send an animal home after consulting with the fair veterinarian.*

Cleaning and disinfecting is an important and often forgotten step that should be performed before and after animals are in animal housing areas. Provide specific instructions on what constitutes appropriate cleaning and/or disinfecting. Determine who has the final say about whether the area has been sufficiently cleaned and/or disinfected.

Sample language:

*Cleaning and disinfecting will be conducted at the direction of the local veterinarian.*

*The animal facilities will be disinfected before the fair and after any other animal activity that occurred on the grounds.*

*Show and barn equipment (chutes, wash stalls, scales, gates, brooms, shovels, show/sale*



area, etc.) will also be disinfected, and a procedure to disinfect during usage will be outlined for each species.

All exhibitors are encouraged to clean and disinfect their equipment before bringing any of these items onto the fairgrounds and again when they return home.

Signs with contact information for the superintendent, fair veterinarian and fair office will be posted.

How will you educate event attendees about the need for good biosecurity when visiting the fair or exhibition? What tools will you provide to ensure that visitors can practice good hygiene?

Sample language:

Hand washing stations will be located by barn entrances and the petting zoo areas. Signs will be posted reminding all to wash their hands after touching animals and before eating.

Abundant signage will be placed in visible areas to remind the public to follow good hygiene practices while visiting the fair.

## PREPARING FOR AN ANIMAL HEALTH SITUATION

Begin with your facilities. If there is an animal health emergency, do you have adequate facilities available to isolate and, if necessary, quarantine animals? Can you separate animals within and across species? Do you have the ability to make the facilities inaccessible to the general public, if necessary?

Quarantine procedures should include where you would quarantine, if you can move the animals, and/or what you would do in each barn if the animals could not be moved. Other items to consider would be security, the care of the animals (feeding, water, bedding and waste removal), isolation pens, the treatment and disposal of animals and their bedding/waste, and the process/procedures to release the animals to their owners.

Sample language:

The individual isolation/quarantine area will be stock trailers positioned as near the \_\_\_\_\_ as possible. An attempt will be made to avoid same species use of trailers.

In the event that a barn is closed, an assessment will be made by the fair animal health committee to determine who will be allowed in the barn to care for animals.

In some cases, it will be important to limit access to those who need to provide for the care and follow-up of the animals in isolation or quarantine. How will you determine and provide access? Who will ultimately have access onto the grounds and into the building(s)? Someone has to be in charge. It is imperative that the person in charge have experience and expertise in the animal field. He/she also needs to have access to animal health officials so that additional sick animals can be treated. The



actual selection of this person may be dependent on the species, quarantine details outlined by MDARD, the veterinarian and your local health department.

If there is a potential risk to human health, do you continue to let the public in the barn? If the animal health issue could be zoonotic, do you allow exhibitors in the barns? Coordinate with the veterinarian, local health department and, as needed, MDARD to determine your next steps. Each animal health situation will have specific answers to these questions. The answers may depend on the probability of spreading the disease from animal to animal or animal to human.

Regarding treatment, what do you do with the sick animals? What do you do with the animals surrounding or next to the sick animals? Provide a plan for continued observation of healthy animals and establish a documentation procedure for all animals, whether they are healthy or not.

During this time, it is also important to monitor all fair attendees for any signs of human illness and to encourage exhibitors to be vigilant in following hygiene practices such as hand washing.

If animals are allowed to go home, what steps will be taken to ensure that exhibitors are aware of signs of illness and proper steps to take?

Sample language:

*When the veterinarian determines that an infectious disease is occurring, the sick animals should be separated from those animals not displaying any symptoms.*

*As a precaution, animals that have been exposed but are currently symptom-free should also be isolated from any other animals.*

*To reduce any additional transmission, immediately implement biosecurity measures such as minimizing human traffic in and out of the affected areas.*

*If animals are allowed to go home, exhibitors and owners should be cautioned about the risk of exposing animals at home to the returning animal and informed about proper home quarantine protocols, regardless of whether animals appear sick or healthy.*

*Encourage owners to be vigilant in monitoring their animals and specify the timeframe for monitoring and reporting animal conditions to whom, how often and for how long.*

*Disinfect the area of the barn where the sick animal was and the areas surrounding it.*

*Move adjacent animals to prohibit nose-to-nose contact.*

*Remove and isolate the animal(s).*

Who takes care of the animals? Determine a plan for both short-term and long-term animal care. Determine who needs to be responsible. Biosecurity protocol should also be taken into consideration so as to not infect or expose animals in other locations.



The specific type of incident and length of time will affect the plan. You may need to designate or assign a group of individuals such as parents, exhibitors or volunteers to provide animal care, or you may find it necessary to assign only the fair manager, fair board members or specialized trained personnel because of established MDARD guidelines.

Discuss possible auction alternatives. If the quarantine is put into place before your auction, how will you handle the auction? Creating an alternate plan is much easier now than in the middle of an animal health situation.

Alternate auction plans to consider include selling the animals without bringing them into the ring; having the exhibitor display a photo of the animal; having the exhibitor come into the ring without the animal; postponing or eliminating the auction; or restricting quarantined animals from participating in the auction. Consider how you will communicate with auction buyers who may be affected if an issue with animal health occurs.

Are other animals on the fairgrounds affected? What is your plan to handle other species?

Some diseases spread between species. What protocols do you implement to prevent the spread between species, barns, etc.? For example, if the disease outbreak was with beef cattle and the beef and dairy cattle are housed together, chances are it will affect the dairy cattle as well. If dairy cattle return home to the herd, they could infect the entire herd.

Some diseases spread between animals and humans. The human population is more mobile, and therefore it may be difficult to monitor human health in the same ways we are able to monitor animal health. Consideration should be given to how human health will be monitored. The committee should think through the following:

- How will human health be monitored?
- Who will exhibitors report illness to?
- How will exhibitors be notified to report any human illnesses? What if the human becomes symptomatic after the fair or exhibition?

In most cases, the local health department will take the lead in communicating any human health concerns.

Sample language:

*Closely observe other species and surrounding animals.*

*When exhibitors take fair animals home, the fair board will remind them to keep their fair animal(s) isolated until it is verified that the animal(s) are not incubating or shedding the disease virus or bacteria.*

*If the animal health issue is zoonotic, exhibitors will be advised by the species superintendent of symptoms to be on the alert for and what precautions to take.*

In the event of an animal health outbreak, it may be wise to consider shortening the exhibition time,



sending animals home early and/or shipping terminal animals out ahead of the normal timeframe. In the event this needs to occur, give consideration to:

- How will auctions take place?
- Who will make arrangements for terminal animals?
- What happens if the packer cannot take them early?
- How will trucking logistics be arranged? Can the trucks get on the grounds in the normal way? Will members of the public be on the grounds watching?
- How will members of the public be educated about the reason for empty barns?

Cleaning and disinfecting are critical steps in the response process. Do you need to take special precautions for cleaning and disinfecting the facility? How do you find out? Facilities will need to be cleaned; a variety of products can be used. Check the MDARD website for approved products.

What do you do with the barn? The barn will need to be disinfected. If animals remain in a location where the infectious agent is active on the walls, the animals could become reinfected and the cycle continues.

Similarly, if healthy animals are moved into the infected barn without proper cleaning or disinfection of the area, the animals may become ill. Identify who is in charge of following the MDARD disinfection protocol, instructing others on these proper clean-up methods and documenting the protocol(s) that was followed.

Sample language:

*Consult with animal and human health officials regarding clean-up procedures.*

*Action steps will be implemented to prevent cross-contamination, including disinfecting and cleaning the barns and equipment.*

Determine appropriate methods for disposal of bedding, water, feed and animal waste. Remember to address animal waste in both barns and manure pits. How will you ensure that people followed the clean-up protocol? You don't want a repeat of this incident the following year. Proper cleaning is critical! Work with MDARD on its recommendations.

Sample language:

*Disinfect no matter what! Remember, disinfecting is first cleaning dirt, bedding and other organic matter off and then using a product to remove the germs/bacteria/viruses to create a clean environment.*

The next step to plan for is the disposal process. Review MDARD guidelines on disposal of dead animals as well as bedding and manure. Depending on the disease, they may need to be composted, burned, buried or hauled to a landfill.

What is the timeframe for this activity to happen? With whom does the owner coordinate the activity?



Sample language:

*For an isolated incident involving a cause of death that has been determined not to fall under MDARD jurisdiction, it shall be the responsibility of the owner of the animal(s) to dispose of the animal carcass(es) properly.*

## RECOVERY

What is the impact for next year? What can you do to prevent this from happening then? How do you rebuild confidence in your fair among the public, exhibitors and buyers? Now that you have experienced an animal health emergency and have implemented your plan, you need to review the plan, look at what worked well and what did not, and make necessary changes.

You will find that the structure and layout of your facility is an important factor in helping to limit or eliminate outbreaks. Remember that ventilation and hand washing are KEY! If ventilation and lack of hand washing stations is a problem, determine a remedy now.

Review your buildings and their design. Identify areas for improvement/change. Print procedures ahead of time. Review procedures with everyone. Provide more education where needed.

Even if you do not have an animal health situation or disease outbreak, you should be reviewing the plan every year to see if any changes are needed.

Sample language:

*On a regular basis, this plan will be reviewed and updated as appropriate by the Spartan County Fair management staff and other partner organizations.*

*In addition, the plan will be periodically tested by an appropriate exercise method.*

Effective date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Next review date: \_\_\_\_\_