

AGRITOURISM BIOSECURITY TIP SHEET



Agritourism can provide exciting attractions, public education, and added income to farms and ranches. Animals can be a fun part of the tour. Keeping your animals and visitors healthy can happen with some simple biosecurity actions.



Girl petting a duck.
Source: City of Greeley; Flickr, public domain

HEALTH RISKS TO ANIMALS

Visitors to your operation can come from various locations. Those coming from areas without poultry or livestock will be low risk to your animals. Of greater concern are guests that come from other animal operations or who have travelled internationally. Minimize visitor contact with animals. But given the goal of their visit, some precautions that can be taken include:

- Place hand sanitizers at the entrance for visitors to use before entering.
- Place signs at the entrance and in visiting areas. Signs should tell visitors to minimize contact with animals, and to follow any posted instructions.
- Provide a guest sign-in sheet to log all visitors.
- Visitors should have clearly marked tour routes or be led by your staff. Areas that are not open to the public should also be clearly marked with signs.
- With the exception of service animals, guests should not bring their own pets to the property. This protects your farm/ranch pets, livestock, and poultry from illness and injury.

HEALTH RISKS TO PEOPLE

While you work to maintain the health of your animals, it is important to remember there can be health risks to your guests. Zoonotic diseases are caused by germs that come from animals and can make people sick. Examples include *Campylobacter*, *E. coli*, and *Salmonella*. Age, immune status, and certain health conditions put some people at greater risks for illness from animal germs. People at increased risk include:

- Children, especially under the age of 5
- People with chronic health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, cancer, etc.
- Adults age 65 and older
- Pregnant women



WELCOME TO OUR FARM!

**PLEASE FOLLOW ALL POSTED SIGNS AND INSTRUCTIONS
FOR YOUR SAFETY AND THE HEALTH OF OUR ANIMALS.**

- No pets are allowed on the property (with the exception of service animals).
- Use hand sanitizer before entering animal areas.
- Only visit animals on display in marked areas.
- Children must be watched by parents/guardians in all animal areas.
- Leave all personnel belongings (e.g., strollers, bags, pacifiers, cups, toys, bottles) outside of animal areas.
- Do not feed the animals unless food is provided by our farm.
- Wash your hands after contact with animals.

YOUR COOPERATION IS APPRECIATED!



Source: CFSPH, Iowa State University



The Center for Food
Security & Public Health

cfsph.iastate.edu/biosecurity
Agritourism Tip Sheet · 2021 · Page 1

PUBLIC INTERACTION WITH ANIMALS

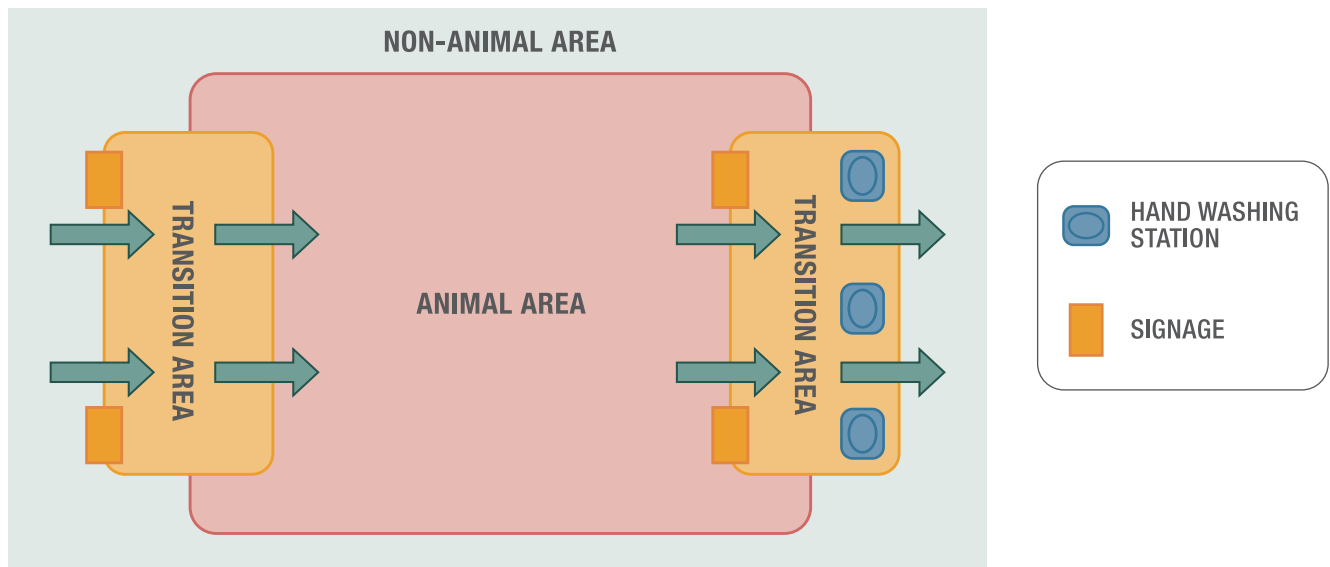
Animals should be observed daily before guests arrive. If any animals appear to be sick, remove them from public areas and isolate them from other animals.

- Some animals may only be for visible display. Do not allow guests to enter animal pens or touch these animals. Keeping a distance of at least 10 feet is recommended. This is to protect both animals and guests.
- Young animals have weak immune systems and fragile bodies. Do not allow guests to handle newborn and young animals. This helps prevent injuries and illness in animals, and protects humans from germs spread by young animals.
- In areas where guests can touch animals, staff should be present to ensure animals are handled safely. Post signs reminding adults to supervise children and that animals carry germs. The safest option is to only allow contact through barriers such as fences.
- Keep all exhibited animals current on vaccines and have your veterinarian confirm they are healthy. If an animal appears ill, it should be isolated right away. If dogs and cats are part of the operation's experience for guests, make sure they are also healthy. Keep them current on vaccines, and on a parasite prevention program.
- Regularly clean and disinfect animal areas. This prevents build-up of manure and potential disease-causing germs.
- If the operation has a petting zoo where animals can be fed by guests, only allow animals to be given feed that you provide. Feed should be appropriate for the types of animals eating it. Encourage hand washing immediately after touching the feed and animals.
- Do not allow personal belongings into animal areas. This includes strollers, bags, pacifiers, cups, toys, bottles, etc. They can become contaminated with germs from animals. Animals could also be at risk if they try to eat these items. Provide an area designated for strollers and other items that cannot enter animal areas. Post signs explaining that it is for the safety of both people and animals.
- If possible, groups visiting animal areas should move in one direction only, from entry to exit. This is to avoid spreading germs from non-animal areas into animal areas.
- When moving waste or other material out of animal areas, avoid public areas where guests walk. Also, clean contact surfaces in public areas daily to prevent germs from spreading (e.g., railings, gates, door handles).



Girl interacting with goats behind a fence.
Source: Romrodphoto, Shutterstock

SAMPLE VISITOR MOVEMENT BETWEEN ANIMAL AND NON-ANIMAL AREAS



HAND WASHING STATIONS

Signs should be posted to remind all guests to wash their hands. This is especially important after touching animals.

- Make sure soap, hand towels and sanitizers are adequately stocked and replaced. Also check that sinks/faucets are working properly.
- Post signs on proper hand washing procedures (e.g., scrub for 20 seconds).

CONCESSIONS/FOOD SALES

If food or beverages are provided for guests, they should be prepared, served, and eaten in areas that are separate from where animals are kept.

- Hand washing stations or hand cleaners/sanitizers should be available in concession areas. This is especially important if “finger foods” will be served to guests.
- All food should be handled, prepared, and stored according to state and local health department guidelines.



A handwash station with appropriate signage for visitors.

Source: Michael Warwick, Shutterstock

ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Use the following checklist to determine areas where you are doing well and others that need to improve.

YES	NO	After answering, pick one or two “No” answers and make an improvement plan with the resources below.
		Do you have barriers in place to limit contact between animals and visitors?
		Do you provide gloves or a hand washing station with running water, soap, and towels for visitors?
		Do you have signs posted that promote handwashing before and after animal contact?
		Is human food not allowed in animal areas?

MORE RESOURCES:

[Agritourism Safety](#). Integrating Safety into Agritourism.

[Petting Zoo Best Practices Checklist](#). Minnesota Department of Health, Zoonotic Disease Unit.

[Safe Interactions with Animals at Your Agritourism Business](#). Minnesota Department of Health.

[Tips for Keeping People Healthy at Petting Zoos and Farms](#). Public Health Seattle & King County.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Development of this material was made possible through grants provided to the Center for Food Security and Public Health. This document was developed and revised with funding from the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service through the National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. [Iowa State University is an equal opportunity provider](#).