

Checklist for Petting Zoo Operators: Zoonotic Disease Prevention

For petting zoo operators: Use this checklist as a tool for the design and operation of your animal exhibit in a manner that is safe for animals and visitors alike.

For those selecting a petting zoo to hire: Use this checklist to evaluate potential petting zoo vendors.

These best practices are based on the [Compendium of Measures to Prevent Disease Associated with Animals in Public Settings, 2017](https://www.nasphv.org/Portals/0/Compendium_of_Measures_to_Prevent_Disease_Associated_with_Animals_in_Public_Settings_2017.pdf) (nasphv.org)



FACILITY DESIGN

- Handwashing stations
 - Running water
 - Accessible for children and persons with disabilities
 - Plan in place for restocking paper towels, soap, and water
- Hand sanitizer (*should only be used when soap and water for handwashing is not available. Sanitizer is not effective against some potentially harmful germs*)
 - Plan in place for restocking sanitizer
- Petting of animals only allowed over/through barriers (*fences*); visitors not allowed into pens
- No transport of manure/soiled bedding through public areas
- Transition area at entrance between non-animal and animal areas
 - Stroller and bag storage
- Transition area at exit as people leave animal space to non-animal space
 - Hand washing stations positioned near exit so visitors can't miss them

VISITOR EDUCATION

- Signage in transition area at entrance
 - Animals can carry germs that can make people sick
 - No food or drink allowed in animal areas
 - No hand-to-mouth activities in the animal area (*drinking, eating, bottles, pacifiers*)
 - Children under 5-years old, senior citizens, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions or a weakened immune system should be extra careful around animals

- Signage in transition area at exit
 - Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water immediately after visiting the animals
- Staff members present to educate visitors that:
 - Animals can carry germs that make people sick
 - There are things we can do - or not do - to make sure we don't catch those germs
- Staff members present to encourage safe animal contact:
 - Remind visitors to refrain from hand-to-mouth activities in the animal area (*drinking, eating, bottles, pacifiers*)
 - Remind parents to supervise children with the animals
 - Remind visitors to wash their hands after visiting the animal area

STAFF EDUCATION

- Review best practices and recommendations from the Compendium (*mentioned above*) annually
 - Educate staff about the risk for disease and injury associated with animals
 - Educate staff on how diseases are transmitted from animals to people
 - Educate staff on prevention messages that should be shared with visitors
- Ensure staff feel comfortable explaining these concepts to visitors
- Explain staff members' role(s) in the petting zoo
 - Teach people about animals
 - Teach people how to enjoy animals safely by following these best practices

ANIMAL CARE AND MANAGEMENT

- Animals that have diarrhea, otherwise sick or injured are immediately removed from the exhibit
- Manure/soiled bedding removed promptly
 - Limit visitor contact with manure/soiled bedding through use of double barriers, sweeping up walkways, use of solid bottom fencing, etc.
- Surfaces that contact both animals and people (*pen dividers*) are cleaned at least daily with soap and water
- Animals housed appropriately for their space (*not crowded*), minimizing stress and pathogen shedding in their feces

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