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 (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

For further consultation or questions contact:
Dr. Russ Daly, DVM, South Dakota State Public Health Veterinarian at russell.daly@sdstate.edu or 605-688-6589.