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Stop the Spread of Flu at the State Fair

Every year at the California State Fair, thousands of individuals and animals come together as people of all ages interact with a wide variety of animals on display. From youth livestock competitions and horse racing to a petting zoo, the fair offers a wonderful opportunity for attendees to engage with these amazing creatures in a fun and educational way!

However, as agricultural fair organizers and exhibitors prepare for the fair with their agricultural animals or any other livestock, Sacramento County Public Health, in coordination with the CDC, urges you to take action to protect yourself, friends, family, other visitors and livestock from influenza A viruses.

According to the CDC, Influenza A viruses are more likely to spread in close contact settings, including settings where people and animals from many places come together, like fairs, exhibitions, and shows. While rare, influenza A viruses can spread from animals (including pigs, poultry, and cattle) to people and from people to animals. It is rare for people to get sick from these viruses, but when they do, the sickness can vary from mild to severe. In some cases, it can lead to hospitalization or death.

The CDC continues to monitor and respond to the public health challenge posed by a multistate outbreak of avian influenza A(H5N1) virus, or "H5N1 bird flu," in dairy cows and other animals in the U.S. As of June 26, there have been 129 dairy cattle herds with confirmed cases of A(H5N1) virus infections identified in 12 U.S. states. The three positive human cases this year have recovered. Based on the information available at this time, the CDC believes that the overall risk to the general public posed by this virus remains low; however, people who have exposure to infected birds or animals are at greater risk and should take precautions.

Here are some steps agricultural fair organizers and exhibitors can take to help keep your animals and our community safe:

- Plan to keep pigs, poultry, and cattle at the fair or exhibition for shorter periods of time while meeting exhibition timelines to show and exhibit the animal in order to prevent or interrupt the spread of flu between animals (72 hours or less is ideal).
- Wash your hands often with soap and running water after touching animals, animal-associated equipment, or their environments (like a barn or enclosure). If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

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- Where possible, avoid direct contact with pigs, poultry, cattle, and other animals that look or act ill.
- If your animals are sick or are from herds with a recent history of respiratory disease, keep them at home to prevent further spread of illness.
- Watch animals for illness (like loss of appetite, fever, tiredness, eye redness, signs of discomfort, cough, or runny nose) before and during the fair. In dairy cattle, decreased milk production can be a sign of influenza virus infection.
 - Call the fair veterinarian and/or the fair manager right away if you suspect illness.
 - Remove sick animals from the exhibition area right away.
 - If possible, avoid close contact with sick animals.
- Clean and disinfect all tacks, feeders, waterers, equipment, and show supplies before and after bringing them to the fair or show. Do not share equipment used for other animals.

If you develop flu-like symptoms, seek medical care and inform the healthcare provider about your contact with animals. To [learn more about the risks of Influenza A, visit the CDC website.](#)

By following these guidelines, we can collectively ensure the well-being and safety of all participants and animals at the state fair.