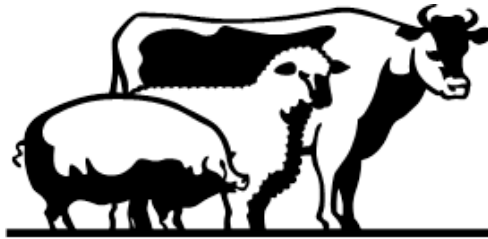


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ANIMAL HEALTH INFORMATION FOR VERMONT FAIRS, FIELD DAYS, AND FESTIVALS



Guidelines for Exhibitors to Minimize Animal Health Risks

As much of the country moves away from farms and into cities, Vermont strives to celebrate important agriculture roots. Agricultural fairs, school farms and programs, petting zoos, and exhibitions provide entertainment and educational opportunities for industry members and the public. However, bringing together people and animals from across the state and region increases certain health risks. Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI H5N1) was first detected in dairy cattle this spring and continues to spread between cattle and herds in multiple states. In response to this emerging disease threat, USDA announced a [federal order](#) requiring pre-movement testing for interstate movement of lactating dairy cattle.

The Agency of Agriculture (Agency) is not restricting the movement or exhibition of lactating dairy cattle beyond that which is outlined in the federal order but recommends fairs carefully consider best practices and biosecurity for their events, especially pertaining to milking practices and the disposal of milk collected on site. Carefully read the guidelines below. If you would like to review specific options for your fair, please contact the Agency at 802-828-2421.

In addition to the disease threat associated with HPAI H5N1, the risks of *Salmonella*, rabies exposures, injuries, and other health problems among visitors, especially children or vulnerable adults, remain. This document outlines the **requirements** that must be followed when moving livestock into or throughout the state and **recommendations** to decrease the spread of disease and mitigate other risks. Both are intended to protect human and animal health. It is the shared responsibility of everyone who participates in these events to work together to protect herd health and public health, and the Agency appreciates your attention to safe practices. More information on these recommendations and requirements can be found at our [Fair, Shows, and Exhibition website](#).



Mandatory requirements for animals attending a fair, field day, or festival

Agency Animal Health Specialists will complete site visits and monitor for compliance with the following requirements. To decrease disruptions to participants and events, fair personnel should ensure exhibitors are aware of the following **requirements**:

Livestock and Poultry Originating from Within Vermont

All livestock originating from within VT are required to be identified with **official individual identification prior to leaving the farm**. Livestock include dairy and beef cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, and camelids. Official individual ID includes metal NUES or RFID ear tags, scrapie tags for goats and sheep, an official registry tattoo accompanied by breed registration paperwork, and microchips in camelids.

Vermont-origin poultry must have been tested and found to be negative for pullorum-typhoid (p-t) within the current calendar year.

Livestock and Poultry Originating from Outside of Vermont

All livestock and poultry imported into Vermont from other states or provinces must comply with the [Rules Governing the Importation of Domestic Animals Including Livestock and Poultry](#). Livestock import requirements vary by species so please review the importation requirements carefully and contact the Agency animal health office at 802-828-2421 for specific information.

General Requirements:

- A Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (CVI) dated within 30 days of the animal's importation into Vermont
- Identification with an official identification device (examples include official metal or RFID ear tags, scrapie tags for goats and sheep, an official registry tattoo accompanied by breed registration paperwork, and microchips for camelids)
- An import permit (horses are exempt)

Disease Testing Requirements:

- **All lactating dairy cows must have a negative HPAI PCR test completed by an accredited veterinarian within 7 days prior to movement into Vermont.** Cows may return home on the same test provided the event does not exceed 10 days.
- Horses must have a valid negative Coggins test within 12 months of importation into Vermont
- Camelids are required to have a negative brucellosis test within 30 days of importation and a negative tuberculosis test within 90 days of importation into Vermont.
- Out of state poultry over 20 weeks of age must originate from an National Poultry Improvement Plan p-t Clean status flock or test negative for p-t within 30 days of importation into Vermont.
- Additional tests for livestock and poultry may be required if traveling from outside of New England. Interstatelivestock.com provides easy look up for requirements based on state



of origin and species, or exhibitors are encouraged to review [Rules Governing the Importation of Domestic Animals Including Livestock and Poultry](#)

NOTE: It is illegal in Vermont to use animals as awards or prizes. For complete information about this law, please review [Title 13, Chapter 008: Humane Treatment of Animals](#).

Recommendations for animals attending a fair, field day, or festival

The following **recommendations** are intended to protect the animals and people attending events throughout Vermont. They represent **best practices** that may be implemented by event managers and /or exhibitors but are not mandatory or required by the Agency.

General Recommendations for Event Organizers:

- 1) Adopt and implement the Animal Health Recommendations (see below) for Vermont Fairs, Field Days and Festivals.
- 2) Fair organizers should ensure all livestock are identified with an official individual identification.
- 3) Utilize the services of a local veterinarian to monitor your event's exhibition animals for contagious diseases and to provide necessary veterinary services.
 - a. All animals should be in good physical condition and be free of visual evidence of infectious, contagious, or parasitic diseases at time of arrival and during the event.
- 4) Provide the following biosecurity recommendations to exhibitors intended to reduce animals' exposure to infectious diseases:
 - a. Abide by all animal health requirements established by the event organizers and make sure that your animals are vaccinated according to your veterinarian's recommendations.
 - b. While at the event, use appropriate means of limiting contact of your animals with the public and with other animals. (e.g., use of signs, ropes or other barricades).
 - c. Do not share feeding, watering, cleaning or grooming equipment among animals from multiple farms or herds/flocks.
 - d. Supply your own feed and bedding and keep it separate from animals that are not your own.
 - e. Clean and disinfect milking units between cows (please see "HPAI Recommendations" below for more information.)
 - f. Avoid using stalls recently occupied by other animals unless the stalls have been cleaned and disinfected.
 - g. Have disinfectant available for cleaning and disinfecting equipment when necessary.
 - h. Quarantine animals returning to the farm from an event for at least two weeks before reintroducing the animals into the herd or farm population. Cattle returning from an event should be isolated from resident animals at the home farm for a minimum of 30 days.
- 5) Provide handwashing stations and post information about proper handwashing in areas that house livestock and poultry. Examples of handouts can be found on the Agency's [Fair, Shows, and Exhibition website](#).



- 6) If fairgrounds or premises will host multiple livestock events over the season, livestock barns and stalls should be cleaned and disinfected between events.
- 7) Superintendents should consider practices that will limit contact among and between animals and people such as creative use of barriers, signs, space or physical separations between groups of animals and walkways.
- 8) If suspicious activity is observed or if signs of illness or disease occur in exhibition animals or fair attendees, contact the appropriate authorities and personnel.

HPAI H5N1 Recommendations:

Due to the ongoing threat of HPAI H5N1 in dairy cattle, the Agency recommends only featuring in-state dairy cattle. Review the [federal guidance for exhibitions](#), available on the Agency's website, and carefully review the recommendations in this document to reduce the likelihood of HPAI introduction into Vermont and subsequent spread during the 2024 exhibition season.

Many of the best practices outlined above are also the focus of HPAI H5N1 prevention recommendations. These techniques are foundational biosecurity concepts and should be applied with additional emphasis to cattle and milk. Cattle infected with HPAI H5N1 can remain asymptomatic while shedding virus, and raw milk from infected cows has been shown to have high levels of live HPAI H5N1 virus. Below are general recommendations to protect cattle exhibited within Vermont from this emerging animal health threat. If you would like assistance with specific HPAI prevention strategies for your event, please contact the Animal Health office at 802-828-2421.

- 1) Consider HPAI H5N1 testing for all lactating dairy cattle before their arrival at the fairgrounds even if they originate from within Vermont. See **cattle health recommendations below**.
- 2) Exhibitors of lactating dairy cattle should utilize their own milking equipment while at the event. Sharing or use of communal equipment should be specifically discouraged due to the potential risk of milk contamination.
- 3) If allowing the use of the communal milking parlor, milking equipment and parlor contact surfaces must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected between herds to decrease cross contamination. Please have fair personnel monitoring the facility at all times during use to ensure compliance with cleaning and disinfecting of this high risk area.
 - a. Separate the public viewing area from the milking area with splash protection like windows or sufficient distance to reduce the risk of human contact with raw milk.
- 4) Limit the public's and/or other animals' exposure to raw milk by carefully cleaning and disinfecting contact surfaces in any areas used to house milking animals.
- 5) Do not co-house multiple species in one barn. Cattle, poultry, pigs, and small ruminants such as sheep and goats should be kept in separate species-specific buildings or areas to minimize the risk of exposure between species.
- 6) Handwashing stations are the gold standard and should be provided in all animal housing areas, along with instructions re. proper hand washing practices. In the absence of handwashing stations, ensure hand sanitizer is available at barn entrances and that the supply remains adequate for the duration of the event.



- 7) Have a veterinarian on call and a quarantine plan in place should an animal exhibit clinical signs of illness while at the fair.
- 8) Ensure an appropriate milk disposal plan is developed, reviewed and adhered to throughout the event. **Milk from the fair should be pasteurized before disposal and may not be fed to livestock, including calves or pigs.**
- 9) Post signage in line with recommendations made by the [Vermont Department of Health](#) and [CDC](#).
- 10) HPAI continues to be prevalent in wild waterfowl. The Agency recommends omitting all waterfowl, especially ducks, from exhibitions this year. Ducks often show no sign of illness when infected with HPAI and yet spread the disease to other domestic birds. If you choose to allow ducks and waterfowl at your event, please see below for additional recommendations and safeguards.

General Animal Health Recommendations:

While **not required**, the Agency recommends that fairs institute the following practices to ensure the health of all participating livestock and poultry.

- *Veterinary Exam*
Vermont residents should ensure that their livestock and poultry are healthy and do not pose a risk to other animals. This can be best accomplished through a veterinary exam prior to transporting animals fairs and exhibitions. A veterinarian can also help apply official ID and vaccinate for rabies.
- *Rabies Vaccination*
The Agency strongly recommends that all animals at the event over 3 months of age for which there is an approved rabies vaccine, including cattle, horses, sheep, dogs, cats and ferrets, have a current rabies vaccination. The vaccination should be administered at least 28 days prior to the event and remain current for the duration of the event according to the vaccine label. Vaccination within 28 days of the start of an event can be accepted for younger animals whose age prevents them from being vaccinated at least 28 days in advance of the start of the event. Although an approved rabies vaccine does not exist for goats, camelids, swine, and wolf-hybrids, it is acceptable for veterinarians to administer the vaccine in an off-label manner.

Poultry Recommendations

In addition to the requirements listed in the previous section, poultry should be free of visual evidence of the following diseases and conditions: avian influenza, infectious bronchitis, coryza, pullorum-typhoid, fowlpox, external parasites, and laryngotracheitis.

If allowing ducks to be exhibited, please review the [biosecurity recommendations to decrease transmission of HPAI](#). Ducks raised with access to outdoor ponds and possible exposure to wild waterfowl pose the greatest risk of HPAI infection and transmission to other animals. While ducks will often not show signs of illness, they can easily spread HPAI to chickens, turkeys, or other poultry. For this reason, ducks raised in duck/waterfowl exclusive flocks are the at the greatest risk of bringing HPAI to an event as illness will be more apparent in mixed-species flocks.



Cattle, Sheep, Goat, and Camelid (alpacas, llamas, etc.) Recommendations

In addition to the requirements listed earlier in this document, livestock should be free of visual evidence of the following diseases and conditions: foot rot, mange, pinkeye, ringworm, warts, cowpox, and open or draining wounds.

Cattle Shipping Fever Vaccination - It is recommended that cattle have a shipping fever vaccination, which includes IBR, BVD, PI3, and BRSV, within 6 months but no less than 14 days prior to the event.

HPAI Testing – Though not mandated by the USDA federal order or the Agency, fairs should consider requiring HPAI H5N1 testing of in-state lactating dairy cattle within 7 days prior to movement to the fair. Cows can shed HPAI H5N1 virus without showing signs of illness and pose a disease transmission threat to other livestock and the public. Pre-event testing of Vermont-origin cattle will help ensure those resident animals pose no greater disease risk than the animals originating from outside of Vermont while these cohorts are exhibited together at the event and after returning home.

- Animals from any herd experiencing clinical signs consistent with HPAI H5N1 should not attend fairs, exhibitions, or comingling events:
 - o Clinical signs may include a decrease in feed consumption with a simultaneous decrease in rumination and rumen motility; respiratory signs including clear nasal discharge; and subsequent acute drop in milk production. Additional clinical signs may include abnormal tacky or loose feces, lethargy, dehydration, and fever. Severely affected cattle may have thicker, concentrated, colostrum-like milk or produce no milk at all.

Equine Recommendations

All horses originating from *outside* of Vermont must travel with a negative equine infectious anemia test (Coggin's test), but even horses that originate from *within* Vermont should have a negative Coggin's test dated within 12 months of the event. Equine should be free of visual evidence of the following conditions: mange, ringworm, soring, strangles, and open or draining wounds.

Equine Vaccination for Flu and Rhino (EHV1) between 14 days and 6 months prior to the event is recommended.

Swine Recommendations

In addition to the requirements listed earlier in this document, swine should be free of visual evidence of the following diseases and conditions: erysipelas, atrophic rhinitis, mange, and open or draining wounds.

Rabbit Recommendations

Rabbit hemorrhagic disease (RHDV2) is still considered endemic in the western US. While there is a vaccine currently available in Vermont, biosecurity should still be the focus of prevention. Consider restricting to only Vermont-origin rabbits. A recent veterinary exam and strong biosecurity can reduce the risk of RHDV2, Pasteurella, mites, and other contagious diseases.

For additional rabbit show and exhibition recommendations and biosecurity information, please visit the Agency's website for [rabbit hemorrhagic disease](#).



If you have questions or comments, please contact the Agency's animal health office at (802) 828-2421 or agr.animalhealth@vermont.gov.

