



2022 Recommendations for Shows and Exhibitions

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As spring gives way to summer in Oregon, it is time once again for livestock producers to begin preparing to attend fairs and exhibitions. While these events showcase the hard work that producers have invested in their livestock, they can also pose an increased risk for exposure to infectious diseases. While nothing is ever without risk, following some basic biosecurity principles (as well as some targeted restrictions in some higher-risk situations) can go a long way in reducing the risk of disease outbreaks at shows and exhibitions.

AVIAN INFLUENZA

The United States has been fighting Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) for several months, with the first cases nationally detected in February 2022. So far, Oregon has been fortunate that we have had only three cases identified in domestic poultry flocks, but nationwide, HPAI has been identified in 366 flocks across 36 states. While we hope that the risk of HPAI exposure will decrease as the weather heats up and migratory waterfowl (the reservoir of Avian Influenza viruses) move north, the risk is likely to persist at some level through the summer and it remains unknown whether the virus will return with next Fall's southern migration.

Although nothing is zero risk, the Oregon State Veterinarian is currently not prohibiting poultry exhibitions in Oregon, and with enhanced biosecurity and a few modifications, it is still reasonable to hold poultry shows at fairs in Oregon. At this time, it is up to the individual fair organizers to determine whether to cancel based on local risk factors. If we detect more cases of HPAI in Oregon, ODA may restrict exhibitions and all events where comingling of birds occurs.

Fairs should remain vigilant and employ enhanced biosecurity, including:

- Utilize a licensed veterinarian to inspect all animals for signs of illness prior to entrance into the barn
- Encourage frequent hand washing
- Restrict the public from touching exhibition birds
- Ensure that poultry and swine are housed in separate barns
- Clean and disinfect frequently
- Discourage out-of-state poultry from showing, any out-of-state poultry must meet ODA import requirements
- Do not share equipment

- Report and remove any sick bird immediately
- Exhibitors should be encouraged to isolate all exhibition birds away from the home flock for 30 days upon returning from the fair

Due to the increased risk of asymptomatic infection and long-term shedding of HPAI virus, the Oregon State Veterinarian is strongly recommending that **waterfowl not be allowed at public exhibition** this summer.

EQUINE HERPES MYELOENCEPHALOPATHY (EHM/EHV-1)

This spring, the West Coast has experienced a significant number of Equine Herpes Myeloencephalopathy (EHM/EHV-1) cases, many of which have been associated with shows and exhibitions. Over the past month, Oregon has experienced 3 such neurologic EHV-1 cases. Despite some geographic similarities, the epidemiological investigations performed in each case do not indicate any connection between the horses diagnosed.

While EHV-1 cases can be distressing to horse owners, the virus that causes these neurologic cases is one of the most common respiratory viruses in horses and is carried by many adult horses in its latent, non-symptomatic form. Periods of stress, such as transportation or shows can cause this latent virus to become active within an individual horse and may allow spreading to additional horses. The neurologic form of this infection occurs most often when the virus undergoes a mutation within an individual horse. A rare version of this virus that may be more likely to cause neurologic symptoms does exist, but most cases diagnosed this year have been the respiratory (“wild type”) form of the virus.

At this point in time, the Oregon State Veterinarian is currently not recommending any restriction on horse shows or exhibitions because of the recent EHV-1 cases. Enhanced biosecurity, including inspections by a licensed veterinarian upon arrival (before entering the barn), along with routine cleaning and disinfection are recommended to help prevent the introduction and spread of EHV-1 and other respiratory diseases at shows and exhibitions.

RABBIT HEMORRHAGIC DISEASE

The first case of Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease (RHD) in Oregon was reported in March 2021. Since that time, outbreaks in feral domestic rabbits occurred in Clackamas and Deschutes Counties, with several outbreaks among owned domestic rabbits also occurring in Deschutes County. The last case of RHD reported in a domestic rabbit was in June 2021. While no new cases have been detected in domestic rabbits, additional cases have been found in wild Black-Tailed Jackrabbits in Central and Eastern Oregon.

While the risk posed to shows and exhibitions by RHD is believed to be relatively low, continued enhanced biosecurity for rabbits and inspection by a licensed veterinarian upon arrival is recommended.



Biosecurity Recommendations for Fairs and Exhibitions

The same preventative measures we used to control COVID-19 in humans such as social distancing, hand washing, frequent cleaning/ disinfection and current vaccination also apply to animals to protect animal health at the fair. We can all start by following biosecurity principles and keeping ourselves and our animals one cow apart. Disease prevention, early detection, and removal of a sick animal is very important to protect animal welfare and public health. One way to detect disease early is to use a rectal thermometer to take and chart temperatures to look for trends. Often increases in rectal temperatures will precede any signs of illness. Notify your fair veterinarian or superintendent immediately if this occurs.

BEFORE THE FAIR

Disease prevention starts before exhibitors leave home. Only healthy animals should be entered in the fair. You should also:

- Make sure veterinary health inspections and vaccinations are current for all animals you take.
- Follow veterinary guidelines on vaccination and withdrawal times.
- Clean and disinfect tools, equipment, and trailers, since these items could carry disease.
- Take and record rectal temperatures for one week prior to the fair to identify “normal”.

DURING THE FAIR

The fair environment can be stressful for animals, making them more likely to become sick. To limit this risk, follow these guidelines:

- Limit contact between animals.
- Limit contact between people and animals.
- Avoid sharing equipment with other exhibitors.
- Change your fair clothing, including shoes, before going home.
- Take and record rectal temperatures daily and monitor for changes in trends or behavior. Notify your veterinarian or superintendent with concerns.

AFTER THE FAIR

If your animal returns from the fair, here are steps to protect your farm from disease.

- Keep animals returning from the fair isolated for at least 30 days.
- When doing chores, always care for your animals that attended fair last.
- Watch all your animals daily for signs of illness including a lack of appetite, fever, or changes in behavior. Contact your veterinarian immediately.

