

Resources for California Youth Agriculture Leaders, Members & Families During COVID-19 Pandemic

Recommended Precautions Regarding On-Farm Management

Drafted: 4/3/2020- Version 1.1
Sources Current as of 4/1/2020

The rapid emergence of COVID-19 in the United States has required changes in the way we interact with each other in a shared environment, to minimize the further spread of this virus in our communities. Therefore, it is necessary to act in a manner that incorporates Governor Newsom's [Executive Orders](#) to prevent the spread of the coronavirus and protect California families and communities. To that end, the CDFA recommends the following precautions and approaches for youth rearing livestock:

Staffing and Care for Livestock on Shared Farms (School Farms or Private Residences with Animals from Multiple Owners)

i. Allow Access Only to Essential Personnel

- In circumstances where owners have private facilities that may house livestock, such as appropriately zoned backyards, it is recommended to raise animals apart from animals owned by others to encourage adherence to social distance guidelines.
- Limit activities to essential animal husbandry actions only: animal care, feeding, watering, and cleaning pens.
- Restrict facility access to essential personnel only.
- Prohibit non-essential persons (non-project school members, friends, family members, members of the public) from entering the facility.
- Where possible, do not carpool with non-household members to reduce unnecessary exposure.

ii. Monitor Human Health

- Encourage individual human health check-ins prior to gathering; this can be done privately by an adult leader responsible for assigning shifts.
 - Prohibit access to the facility by anyone who reports having or is showing any symptoms of COVID-19 or who has been exposed to a person with symptoms within the past 14 days.
 - Symptoms include cough, shortness of breath, and/or fever. More information from the CDC about COVID-19 can be found [here](#).
- Individuals who are immunosuppressed or have [preexisting conditions](#) that could increase their risk of serious outcomes from COVID-19 infection should reduce their exposure to others in the group or not enter the facility at all.
- Limit farm entry and exit route(s) to one point and require hand-washing stations or hand sanitizer for all individuals entering and exiting the farm.



iii. Design and Review a Schedule to Minimize Unnecessary Exposure

- Establish and communicate an action plan before arriving at the farm.
- Ensure everyone knows what they are responsible for accomplishing (and touching) during the assigned time at the farm.
- Clearly write instructions for the feeding and care of the animals, and mark pens and cages to ensure accurate feeding.
- Discuss with participants the importance of accurate feeding.
 - Clearly mark individual or specialized feed supplies.
 - Clearly identify any medicated feed, especially the last day of feeding.
 - If incorrect feeding happens, report immediately to the owner to ensure appropriate residue testing.
 - Ensure species-specific feeding: pig to pig, lamb to lamb, even if there are feed shortages. Trace mineral and vitamin balances vary between species, and can unknowingly lead to toxicity in other animals.
- Feed pickup and delivery may be delayed during this time of uncertainty. Calculate how much feed will be necessary for your animals and keep on-hand prior to moving animals in. Conduct periodic inventory of feed and other exhaustible supplies in order to report shortages and allow time for a new supply to come in.
- To limit personnel interaction, consider continuous animal care shifts. For example, one household may provide care for the morning and afternoon feedings for 2 days at a time, then switch to the next set of kids for 2 days, instead of switching off morning and night between different household groups.
- When people from more than one household are present at the facility, always maintain a social distance of at least 6 feet between people, except in the case of an emergency to animal or human life. Where possible, encourage each household unit to function as a group whose duties and movements do not intersect with other household groups.
- During any single shift, limit the total number of individuals feeding to those absolutely necessary to accomplish the activity in an allotted time (i.e. if you can have feeding completed in two hours vs. one to reduce the total number of exposed kids; this will be dependent on the amount of animals and conditions of each farm).
- Use an online schedule form to limit number of individuals on the farm at a time.
- Ensure communication of care between shifts. Students not on the shift should be available at the beginning and at the end of feeding shift by phone.
 - Ensure all individuals with animals on the property have each others' phone numbers, as well as the property owner and their veterinarian.
 - Facetime or speaker phone may be useful if cell service is available.
 - Phones should be charged prior to exiting the vehicle and cleaned and disinfected before and after entering the premises.



- Reduce numbers of people entering the facility while maintaining social distance but ensure an adequate adult presence to meet your school/ organization's requirements and personal safety needs
 - Visit the [Cal/OSHA](#) website for Guidance on Requirements to Protect Workers from Coronavirus

Veterinary Care, Communication, and Animal Health

With the shortage of personal protective equipment anticipated across the country, many veterinarians and veterinary clinics are reducing non-essential farm visits.

Minimize the need for urgent veterinary care through the following:

- Be proactive by making the most of your animal health management practices and nutrition to prevent disease occurrence.
 - Segregate new animals added to the herd or when bringing large groups of animals together at the same time-this includes those not from the same breeder or home farm. Isolate at least a week to allow time for animals to show clinical symptoms and reduce potential spread.
- i. Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR)**
- If your organization already has established a veterinarian-client-patient-relationship (VCPR)...
 - a. Consider planning and communicating ahead of time with your veterinarian(s) how you and your organization will handle a veterinary emergency under current social distancing guidelines. Ask your veterinarian which services she/he is continuing to provide and which services have been suspended.
 - b. Discuss which urgent veterinary health care issues could come up while social distancing is being practiced and how to address (or postpone them), while adhering to current social distancing guidelines.
 - If there is not already a VCPR, a plan should be developed for animal health emergencies. Remember, a veterinarian may provide veterinary advice or provide a prescription for animal drugs only within an established VCPR, for which the state of California has specific [requirements](#). The owner (or adult guardian of owner under 18 years old) must give consent prior to veterinary care.
- ii. Practice Biosecurity Upon Arrival at the Farm**
- All individuals shall wash hands upon entry to the farm; wear clean clothes and shoes as part of the farm biosecurity plan.
 - Maintain your stock of sanitizer and cleaning materials on-site, and keep several complete sets to ensure a continuously available supply.
 - Use of dedicated clothing or coveralls for on-farm is recommended. Coveralls should be removed and placed in a plastic bag upon exiting the farm.
 - All individuals shall wash hands and change all clothing upon arrival at home.



iii. **Cleaning and Disinfection**

- COVID-19 can survive in the air up to 3 hours, on copper up to 4 hours, on cardboard up to 24 hours, on stainless steel and plastic up to 72 hours (For more information, the research is available [here](#)).
- The CDC disinfection guidelines for COVID-19 are found [here](#).
 - A list of approved disinfectants for tougher surfaces (not to be used on leather) is found [here](#).
- Individuals should touch only the equipment they need to use to complete assigned tasks. Equipment and supplies shall not be shared between any two persons.
- Every surface can be a source of virus transmission, including the gates, locks, sides of pens, feed scoops, tops of feed bins. Ensure disinfection before using equipment. At the conclusion of work tasks, all surfaces and equipment used should be disinfected.
- Where possible, an individual's facility gear shall be limited to that person's use only and should remain with them, within a designated bucket or within their designated personal storage area.
- As best as possible, keep individual animal waters and feed bunks in a fixed position within the pen, to ensure feed or water is provided without touching these items or without removing them from pens.
- Automatic waterers (visually checked twice daily) may be helpful in reducing time on farm and handling of water hose and spigot.
- When disposing of trash, use a hands-free, closed-lid trash receptacle.

iv. **Interstate Movement of Livestock**

- Currently, we are not aware of federal restrictions on interstate movement of livestock.
- At this time, each state is issuing their own directives regarding continuation of fairs and regulating animal movements; therefore, it is important to check with the state of origin or destination state for any changes in requirements or additional restrictions.
 - For State Regulations for Importing Animals, click [here](#).

v. **Human-to-Animal Transmission**

- The American Veterinary Medical Association currently [reports](#) that, "There is still no evidence that pets can transmit COVID-19 to people or other animals." Additionally, there are currently no published reports suggesting there is a risk of transmission of the virus by other domestic animal species, such as livestock, to either humans or other domestic animals.
- Healthy individuals can interact with livestock as normal, including walking, feeding, and grooming.



- It is recommended that those ill with COVID-19 limit contact with animals until more information is known about the virus. Have another individual be designated to care for the animal until its owner is healthy.

vi. Fairs and Auctions

- Fairs are held under the jurisdiction of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, Fairs and Exposition Branch. Link [here](#).
- Please contact the local fairgrounds for an update on the status of the local event and the California Department of Public Health's [website](#) for the most updated gathering guidance by county.

The Latest California COVID-19 Web Updates, Are Available at the Following:

- California Department of Public Health [website](#).
- California State's COVID-19 webpage <https://covid19.ca.gov/>
 - Essential Needs [webpage](#)

Checklist of Group Facility Documents

- Feeding/ Watering Schedule (online or physical copies)
- Instructions for each farm visit (posted at farm or emailed to leader)
 - Husbandry instructions for each animal
 - List morning and night separately (may have different regimens)
- Cleaning & Disinfection Plan (for individuals, animals, and equipment)
- Contact sheet: include parent and youth member, where appropriate
- Veterinary authorization or contact information for human and animal emergencies