

Reducing the Risk for Transmission of Enteric Pathogens at Petting Zoos, Open Farms, Animal Exhibits, and Other Venues Where the Public Has Contact With Farm Animals

- Information should be provided. Persons providing public access to farm animals should inform visitors about the risk for transmission of enteric pathogens from farm animals to humans, and strategies for prevention of such transmission. This should include public information and training of facility staff. Visitors should be made aware that certain farm animals pose greater risk for transmitting enteric infections to humans than others. Such animals include calves and other young ruminant animals, young poultry, and ill animals. When possible, information should be provided before the visit.
- Venues should be designed to minimize risk. Farm animal contact is not appropriate at food service establishments and infant care settings, and special care should be taken with school-aged children. At venues where farm animal contact is desired, layout should provide a separate area where humans and animals interact and an area where animals are not allowed. Food and beverages should be prepared, served, and consumed only in animal-free areas. Animal petting should occur only in the interaction area to facilitate close supervision and coaching of visitors. Clear separation methods such as double barriers should be present to prevent contact with animals and their environment other than in the interaction area.
- Handwashing facilities should be adequate. Handwashing stations should be available to both the animal-free area and the interaction area. Running water, soap, and disposable towels should be available so that visitors can wash their hands immediately after contact with the animals. Handwashing facilities should be accessible, sufficient for the maximum anticipated attendance, and configured for use by children and adults. Children aged <5 years should wash their hands with adult supervision. Staff training and posted signs should emphasize the need to wash hands after touching animals or their environment, before eating, and on leaving the interaction area. Communal basins do not constitute adequate handwashing facilities. Where running water is not available, hand sanitizers may be better than using nothing. However, CDC makes no recommendations about the use of hand sanitizers because of a lack of independently verified studies of efficacy in this setting.
- Hand-mouth activities (e.g., eating and drinking, smoking, and carrying toys and pacifiers) should not be permitted in interaction areas.
- Persons at high risk for serious infections should observe heightened precaution. Farm animals should be handled by everyone as if the animals are colonized with human enteric pathogens. However, children aged <5 years, the elderly, pregnant women, and immunocompromised persons (e.g., those with HIV/AIDS) are at higher risk for serious infections. Such persons should weigh the risks for contact with farm animals. If allowed to have contact, children aged <5 years should be supervised closely by adults, with precautions strictly enforced.
- Raw milk should not be served.