



Let Children Safely Enjoy Your Petting Zoo or Farm

A Public Health Message to Operators of Temporary Petting Zoos or Open Farms

Your petting zoo or farm is designed to provide children and students with the joy of coming close to animals. You must remember, however, animals can carry diseases that can make humans ill, and proper precautions must be taken to ensure that the health and safety of all visitors are protected, especially children.

For your operation, the Fraser Health Authority recommends the following:

HANDWASHING:

- ◆ Staff/Volunteers must encourage all visitors to wash their hands after handling the animals and before consuming food or drinks.
- ◆ There should be a minimum of one handwashing station (see back page) with hot/warm water, liquid soap and paper towels immediately adjacent to the animal petting area. Washrooms in nearby stores or restaurants are NOT sufficient. The use of antiseptic hand wipes or gels is NOT a replacement for providing hand wash sinks.
- ◆ Automatic taps are recommended. Hand soap and paper towels should be in dispensers.
- ◆ Temporary hand wash stations should be installed when permanent facilities are not immediately available (see back page).
- ◆ The exit to the animal area should be controlled to ensure children pass by and use the handwashing facilities.
- ◆ Handwashing facilities must be accessible by all visitors, i.e. at the right heights for both children and adults or with raised standing areas provided for children (check to ensure setup does not present tripping or falling hazard).

OPERATION:

- ◆ The public should not be permitted access to any animal enclosure except under the direct supervision of trained personnel. These enclosures should be kept locked outside of regular business hours.
- ◆ Ensure that any manure is quickly and thoroughly cleaned up, and appropriately discarded. Straw and sawdust bedding should be replaced at least daily.
- ◆ Staff/Volunteers must report all animal bites or scratches, or other injuries resulting from animal contact to Health Protection Services with the Fraser Health Authority.
- ◆ Unpasteurized milk, dairy products or juices are NOT to be offered to any visitors.

ANIMALS:

- ◆ Potentially dangerous animals should not be included in a petting zoo. Reptiles and amphibians are not recommended.
- ◆ All animals must be in good health, and any animals with diarrhea must be excluded from display immediately.
- ◆ All animals must have up-to-date vaccinations for diseases applicable to the region. Vaccination records must be readily available when requested by the Fraser Health Authority.
- ◆ All animals must have a friendly disposition, and must be comfortable with extensive petting or handling.

SIGNS:

Ensure signs are erected at the entrance of the petting zoo or farm, which should include the following messages:

- ◆ ***Wash hands with soap and water and dry thoroughly:***
 - ◆ ***after touching the animals and***
 - ◆ ***anytime your hands get visibly soiled or dirty***
 - ◆ ***before having any food or drinks***
 - ◆ ***Parents/Adults should supervise the children's handwashing.***
 - ◆ ***Avoid touching your face and mouth before washing your hands.***
 - ◆ ***NO food or drink is to be brought into the animal contact area.***



Signs on handwashing should also be placed in appropriate places (such as eating areas, entrances and exits) reminding visitors to wash their hands when leaving animal contact areas, before eating, and when leaving the farm or zoo.

HANDWASHING SINKS & TEMPORARY HANDWASH STATIONS

Number of Handwashing Sinks Required:

Estimate number of visitors, e.g. 30 people will leave a contact area every 15 minutes and each person will take 1 minute to wash and dry hands. The facility will therefore need 2 handwash basins (30 people x 1 minute divided by 15 = 2).

Temporary Handwashing Station Setup:

Temporary handwashing stations can be set up on-site using a water jug (equipped with a spigot that allows the water to run free, without having to hold open), a clean chair, a small dish basin, a five-gallon receiving bucket and a garbage container. Fill the water jug with hot water, set it on the chair on a counter, and then set the dish basin directly beneath the spigot.

The procedure for handwashing using this temporary set-up is as follows: turn the water on, wash hands thoroughly with soap, and then rinse under the running water. The dish basin is located directly beneath the spigot hereby catching all of the water. Dry hands with paper towels and then empty the dish basin into the five-

gallon bucket. Wipe the dish basin with the used piece of paper towel before discarding it into the garbage container. The handwashing station is now ready for the next person. (Note: The receiving bucket must be emptied into an approved sewage disposal system or sewer when it becomes full).

If you have any further questions regarding petting zoos and farms please contact your local health unit or Public Health Inspector. For phone listings please check the blue pages under "Health" in your local phone directory. Alternatively you may visit the Fraser Health Authority web site at www.fraserhealth.ca



There must be an adequate number of handwashing stations

Make sure all children wash their hands after leaving the petting zoo or farm, and before they eat



Our thanks to Environmental Health Services, Capital Health Department in Edmonton for sharing their material regarding Petting Zoos.

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RECENT OUTBREAKS RELATING TO PETTING ZOOS AND FARMS

July 2005

- Arizona: 2 children hospitalized with E. coli 0157:H7 illness associated with a visit to a petting zoo.

March 2005

- Florida: 63 cases (mainly young children) of E. coli 0157:H7 associated with petting zoos at three regional fairs. The petting zoos at each fair had the same operator. Seventeen of the cases required hospitalization

October 2004

- North Carolina: 108 cases (mainly young children) of E. coli 0157: H7 were identified in an outbreak associated with visiting two petting zoos at a state fair. Twenty cases required hospitalization.

October 2003

- Surrey, British Columbia: 44 cases of E. coli 0157:H7 associated with visits by school groups and families to a farm petting zoo.