

Section:
4-H Ontario Livestock Project
Subject:
Animal Health & Safety Guideline



## Introduction

Disease prevention and control are keys to ensuring a 4-H project animal stays healthy throughout the 4-H year. There are many steps 4-H Members can take to help prevent a 4-H project animal from becoming ill. This includes steps to reduce the risks of contracting an infectious / contagious disease and having the 4-H project animal become ill. Infectious / contagious diseases are a threat to every livestock operation, and in some cases are risks to people. Prevention is absolutely necessary whenever possible. *4-H Ontario Livestock Policy O-L-09 outlines that all club leaders are encouraged to review the following information to ensure animal health and safety.*

## Health Management Best Practices for 4-H Project Animals

- Should be housed individually or in a small group
- Housed in a clean, well ventilated environment
- Ideally kept separate from other livestock on the property
- Feed a healthy balanced diet
- Provide an ample source of clean, fresh water
- Have a vaccination and parasitic control protocol for the farm
- Keep an immunization record for the specific project animal
- Routinely observed for signs of disease and parasites
- Take appropriate medical steps to correct problems early before they become significant
- Keeping project animals healthy and strong will help it to fight off possible infections and disease, while allowing it to reach its full growth potential

## Potential Signs of Illness

- Reduced feed and/or water intake
- 'Dull' appearance (i.e. droopy ears, hanging head, lethargic, reduced activity level)
- Breathing heavily, coughing, sneezing, runny nose
- Excessive scratching or rubbing and/or a poor hair coat
- Loss of body condition and/or body weight
- Failure to gain weight and grow

## Your Responsibilities

- If the project animal becomes sick or infected and is not responding to treatment one week before a show, contact the 4-H Club Leader to ensure other arrangements can be made
- Leaders are encouraged to have plans in place to assist Members in completing their project if their animal becomes ill and cannot be shown
- Consult professionals for assistance addressing health concerns you are unfamiliar with or when animals are not responding appropriately to treatments applied

**ATTENTION: DO NOT TAKE SICK OR INFECTED ANIMALS TO A SHOW!  
DO NOT MAKE YOUR MISFORTUNE ANOTHER PERSONS PROBLEM!**

Date:

April 2014

Page:

1 of 2

## Fact Sheets

Section:
4-H Ontario Livestock Project
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### **Show Best Practices**

*Help prevent disease transmission by:*

- Using only your own clean bucket and pails for water and feed
- Using water directly from a tap/hose and not from a trough
- Clean and disinfect your equipment before and after the show
- Provide a clean method of transportation (i.e. trailer, cage)
- Avoid contact with other animals at the show that appear ill to you
- Notify a 4-H Club Leader or person in charge about any animal health concerns
- Wash or clean your project animal after attending a show
- Return project animal to a housing area separate from other livestock for several days if possible

### **Why should I care?**

- Presenting a positive image at all times of yourself and your project animal
- You are representing your 4-H Club, Association, Community, and Province
- Public image of Agriculture to the general public attending shows
- Care and concern of the project animal itself
- Respect of, and for, your fellow show persons and animals
- Disease awareness can help prevent a small problem from becoming a larger problem!

### **Get started on the right foot!**

It is strongly recommended that early in the 4-H year, Livestock Clubs have a Veterinarian attend a meeting to provide education on animal health including what signs and symptoms Members should be aware of. This meeting should include 4-H Members, 4-H Club Leaders, parents and the owners of the 4-H project where possible. A healthy 4-H project animal is everyone's responsibility and right.

**Remember, prevention is the best cure!  
Have a rewarding 4-H show season!**

Direct requests for more information on the Livestock Project Animal Health and Safety Guideline

Coordinator, Programming & Livestock  
4-H ONTARIO  
111 Main Street N, Box 212  
Rockwood ON N0B 2K0  
Tel: 519-856-0992  
Fax: 519-856-0515  
E-mail: [livestock@4-hontario.ca](mailto:livestock@4-hontario.ca)

Date:

April 2014

Page:

2 of 2