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NF01-483 Attending Fairs: Safeguarding Your Health and Nebraska's Livestock Industry

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Attending Fairs: Safeguarding Your Health and Nebraska's Livestock Industry

By Rosie Nold, Extension Youth Animal Science Specialist, and David R. Smith, Extension Dairy/Beef Veterinarian

What is the Concern?

The recent media attention on outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease in the United Kingdom and other livestock-related diseases is a reminder of the serious consequences of livestock diseases. Most diseases, including foot-and-mouth, cannot be transmitted from animals to humans, although a few diseases can affect both humans and animals. For your own health, it is important to use some simple sanitary practices when visiting places where livestock are housed or are being exhibited. Another concern is the spread of disease among animals. Even though many diseases do not present any direct risks to humans, human contact can help spread diseases to other livestock. Livestock disease outbreaks could be economically devastating to a state like Nebraska, which derives a large portion of its income from the livestock industry.

Because fairs, expositions and petting zoos are such an enjoyable activity for many people, it is important to keep these events as open and accessible as possible. However, it is equally important that visitors to these events understand that they play an important role in preventing the spread of diseases. These precautions are quite simple and are no different than what should be done to prevent the spread of colds or flu among people.

Precautions that Visitors Should Take:

Following these simple guidelines should help to prevent human illness, and lessen the chance of animal to animal spread of disease:

- Do not touch or pet animals, except at designated petting exhibits.
- Wash your hands after any direct contact with animals.
- Avoid eating in animal exhibit areas.
- Do not feed human food to animals.

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